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Community confused over hub details
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Re: Letter to the Editor "Location opposed by majority" February 27, 2009

It is unfortunate that there is so much misinformation about the Rexdale Community Hub project. There were two petitions. One, from the St. Andrews Group that did not support the community hub at the old Father Henry Carr site presented to me at a public meeting on Feb. 3. As a result of that meeting, another petition was circulated and a similar number of residents were in complete support of continuing the discussions with the Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) to establish the hub. Both petitions were presented to city council on Feb. 23.

Some of those opposed felt they had not been consulted ahead of time. To clarify this situation it should be noted that when discussions first began, the TCDSB told the steering committee for the Rexdale Community Hub that they would handle all communication about the potential disposition of Father Henry Carr with the Archdiocese and St. Andrews Church, including its parishioners. That was why, after we found out there was concern in the parish community, the meeting arranged with Father Carlos to discuss the hub was cancelled by the board because a decision had not yet been made to declare the property surplus. The steering committee then made an arrangement with the board that the committee would hold a meeting about the community hub on Nov. 3, 2008 and the board would hold its meeting with the parish about the surplus process on Nov. 6, 2008.

The TCDSB did meet with Father Carlos about a year ago. He wanted to establish a Catholic Community Hub at Father Henry Carr, but his discussions with the Archdiocese, Share Life and TCDSB did not result in any funding. So, the agencies and the city continued to consider the site for a community hub for all people. Also before all this, the board, incorporating input from the community, had adopted a recommendation in their Long Term Accommodation Plan to consider the establishment of a community hub at the Father Henry Carr site.

There has also been substantial misinformation about the planned usage of the community hub that has created a fear factor among the parishioners. Publicly, the concern is about parking and congestion. This will be addressed by the city as it does for any facility. Prior to the school closing approximately 80 teachers used the current parking lot on a daily basis. The community hub patrons would not use the current lot as the board has assured the church and the elementary school that the lot will be retained for their use only. Additional parking would have to be provided for the hub. The congestion on Panorama Court was also raised. The street parking is a result of underground garage repair. This is a problem that will correct itself.

Only \$1 million of the \$3.2 million is being provided by the city for capital improvements. The community hub is intended to be operationally self-sufficient through the rent paid by the agencies. The Thistletown Community Centre meets the needs of the type of service it provides and can not accommodate all the services being considered for the hub. There is a covenant on the majority of the grounds at the back that cannot be built

upon. This is not a large site and parking accommodates current use with no room for expansion.

There is a Question and Answer document on the Rexdale Community Hub that can be requested by emailing community@toronto.ca I hope this clarifies some of the concerns.

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Councillor, Ward 1 - Etobicoke North