

Good afternoon Mayor Brocanier, Councillors, members of the media, and the public.

My name is Dennis Nabieszko. I live at 800 Hudson Street in Cobourg with my wife. We have lived here for 7 years and I am here as a resident of the New Amherst community and not in any other capacity. Cobourg is my home and New Amherst is my community. I am very proud to be living here. I am here representing many of the residents of this community and I am here today to provide evidence on why this school should not be built on this site and why we urge Council to vote NO on this rezoning proposal.

First, I want to acknowledge the many residents who came out today. Even though I am standing here before you doing this delegation, these are the people who are truly the ones speaking to you here today. They are here to see you represent them and make the right decision.

When people's lifestyle and well-being are affected, emotions can run high. I just want to take the emotion out of this and present you with the evidence.

You have seen and read the letters for both sides of this issue of which almost all in favour were from either executives and managers of the New Amherst developer, the New Amherst Homes builder, their suppliers and sub-contractors, employees, and the school board. The vast majority of the residents oppose the school. You are mostly aware of what those reasons are so I will not outline them again other than to highlight the key ones as I go through my delegation.

Almost all residents in attendance here today are here because they are opposed to the school for many valid reasons, but also because of how they have been consistently misled by New Amherst and their representatives over the last several years about the New Amherst community and the school situation.

New Amherst alleges they have never marketed this neighbourhood as an adult lifestyle and retirement community. This is misleading and simply not true. Many of you have seen the video on the Internet with the caption reading "New Amherst - Adult Lifestyle and Retirement Community, Cobourg, Ontario". It has been advertised like that for six years and is still there, attracting new buyers, even though New Amherst Homes continues to deny any responsibility or ownership of this advertising.

An interesting observation and fact is the lack of any public playgrounds in the community. Why have no public playgrounds been built in this community? This is not a criticism, it is just an observation I leave with you.

New Amherst did not let residents know about the proposed school for almost a year and came forward with a community meeting, only after much negative reaction. They held a Community information meeting only on April 12 and the room was overflowing with over 150 people. The majority of the residents were upset about not being informed by New Amherst that the school rezoning proposal was even going on. Residents who moved into the community in the last few months spoke of being told by New Amherst sales staff that there was no school to be built in the community or omitted informing them that there was a proposal for a school in progress.

New Amherst is claiming how important a school is to this community, but they did not think so four years ago when they asked that the designated land for a school be rezoned to residential. That was opportunistic and this request for rezoning is also opportunistic. For the last four years, people moved into the neighbourhood with no expectation of a school being built on this site, or the previously designated site

They have misled residents and are now misleading Council.

I am also concerned with the school board and their apparent lack of proper planning in preparing this school proposal. In their most recent letter to the Town, they identify a 2016 census where there is a population in Northumberland County of 1,240 with French as their mother tongue. No study has been done as to how many of those are elementary age children and would be eligible to attend this school.

No one is really sure how many children will be attending because we have seen no proper studies on this. Planning should not be "If we build it, we hope they will come."

Let me continue with the evidence and briefly outline areas where this rezoning does not meet Cobourg's Official Plan.

The Director of Planning concludes that the rezoning conforms to the official plans. I do not agree. This proposed school is supposed to contribute to the well-being of area residents through the provision of a community oriented educational facility. As you, Deputy Mayor Henderson pointed out during the March 19 public meeting, "Community based schools, where all of your students are bused in does not develop a community based school."

Section 2.5 of the Cobourg Official Plan states that to support a healthy community, it is important to "provide for a range of recreational, educational and cultural facilities and activities to meet the needs of all residents. This school does not provide an educational facility that meets the need of any of the residents. Most of the residents are 55 and over. No students of elementary school age from this community are likely to attend this school in the foreseeable future. This school does not meet that criteria of Cobourg's Official Plan.

In Section 2.7 of Cobourg's Official Plan, it is described that compact, mixed use development should be encouraged ... that fosters walkable neighbourhoods. This proposed rezoning does not foster a walkable neighbourhood but completely emphasizes just the opposite – all of the children to be bused or driven in.

In their application, the consultant's report states that "The New Amherst Community has been designed on new urbanist principles which includes walkability, and priority to pedestrians over auto travel...." This again, contradicts the Official Plan on what is being proposed here: and that is priority of school buses and cars over pedestrians and children.

There is a misunderstanding that many residents are claiming this is only an adult lifestyle and retirement community. Residents understand that this is not just an adult lifestyle community. They have absolutely welcomed all families with children and teenagers. They welcome everyone. The issue is not about this being an adult lifestyle community. The issue is about how New Amherst has misled residents in what they were buying into and continue to mislead residents, new buyers, and Council.

Many residents have bought what is likely their final home based upon what they have been told will be built around them; that is, what is going to be built on the land that is zoned around them. When a zoning change that is this significant is brought forward, they have a right to be openly told about it very early in the process and for their ideas and concerns to be heard. When the evidence shows that this school does not meet the criteria of the Official Plan and the needs of the residents, the rezoning should be rejected. Rezoning should be the exception, not the norm.

Once a residential sub-division is approved and people begin purchasing homes based on the existing zoning at that time, any application which materially impacts or alters the lifestyle expectations of a majority of existing residents should not be eligible for consideration without a majority of the residents agreeing to the change.

The evidence is clear. This rezoning should be rejected.

A significant majority of residents oppose the school for valid reasons.

All of the children will be transported in.

It is likely no children from this community will attend for many years to come.

This is not a community oriented school and does not meet the criteria in Cobourg's Official Plan as an educational facility that meets the need of any of the residents.

Based on this evidence, it is clear that this school does not belong in this neighbourhood.

We respectfully urge all of Council to vote NO on this rezoning request.

Thank you.