

07-03-2024

Dear Mayor and Council,

We have recently been informed of the Council's decision to give the WWS one year to vacate the Spruce Grove site. This decision will likely have a profound negative impact, displacing 170 K-12 students from 134 enrolled families, closing 45-50 daycare spots, and the loss of 45 jobs.

This decision has come as a surprise, especially after a year of ongoing discussions in good faith with municipal staff to explore potential options for a long-term agreement. We were optimistic about developing facilities that could serve educational and daycare needs while also providing community amenities such as meeting spaces, art studios, and recreational facilities accessible to the public during non-school hours. Therefore, we are deeply surprised, saddened, and confused by this unexpected and sudden decision.

We understand the following:

- The Council plans to disallow any further lease agreements with the Whistler Waldorf School at the Spruce Grove site beyond June 2025.
- This decision was made in a private meeting on June 25, 2024, and the Council is not able to disclose the details of that meeting.
- We understand that municipal staff left that private meeting with instructions to negotiate a lease with the Whistler Waldorf School with a firm end date of June 2025 with no room to allow for additional time, rent reductions or other concessions that would aide our institution to make appropriate plans to move to another site.
- We are permitted to write letters and attend meetings to ask questions and provide comments.

We seek clarification on several points:

- Are we correct in understanding that the Council has instructed municipal staff to cease all work and communication related to the school and daycare on the Spruce Grove site?
- Are the Council members aware that this decision will likely displace over 220 students from their school and daycare?
 - Has the Council conducted a thorough analysis of the impacts this closure will have on the local school and daycare system? If so, could you share the findings of that research?

- Are the Council members aware that the closure of the school will result in the loss of employment of 45 individuals?
- As elected representatives, does Council feel that they have followed due process in making this decision? Do you believe that making a decision of this magnitude without broader community consultation is best practice?

We have the following requests:

- We request that you reconsider this decision and work with us to develop a viable solution for the school's future.

Specifically, we propose:

- Reconsidering municipal staff's proposal to allow us to explore the possibility of remaining on the Spruce Grove site with a consolidated footprint and/or
- Actively support the school by proposing a motion directing municipal staff to investigate the feasibility of establishing a new school and daycare site on other municipal land and extend the Spruce Grove lease until the investigation is complete and a permanent site is secured.

In conclusion, we wish to underscore that we are an integral part of this community, and you, as our local government, hold the responsibility to represent our interests. Together, we are grappling with childcare, daycare, and education crisis. Making a lease decision that will likely result in the closure of a school and two daycare programs without engaging the community in discussion during this critical time seems imprudent. No external entity is coming to solve this for us; it falls upon our local government and community.

Rarely do we encounter situations where both the resources and the determination to address systemic issues align. This is one of those pivotal moments. We firmly believe that solutions are within reach, but shutting down existing facilities only exacerbates the problem, steering us away from potential resolutions. We urge you to collaborate with us in tackling this pressing crisis. Failing to seize this opportunity will be a regrettable oversight, but by acting, we can make significant strides in alleviating our community's childcare challenges.

Thank you for considering our questions and concerns.

Yours sincerely,


Whistler Waldorf School Board Trustees



