

May 21/10

# Province eyes land for new Riverview school

■ **Wendell Street property must undergo environmental impact assessment before sale**

BY JACQUES GALLANT

TIMES & TRANSCRIPT STAFF

A potential site for the new kindergarten to Grade 8 school in Riverview has been identified.

"If you drive up to the end of Wendell Street, that's where the new school is supposed to be built," indicated District 2 Education Council (DEC) Chair Harry Doyle at the council's monthly meeting Tuesday night. "The land is 30 acres and we're hoping to build two entrances to the new school, one coming from Wendell Street and the other coming from the bridge."

The site is located relatively close to the school it is to replace, Gunningsville Elementary.

Early on, the Town of Riverview had suggested offering a parcel of land to construct the new educational institution, which is expected to also include a recreational component.

In the end, however, the government decided to make the deal itself.

"The project went so fast and the province was so anxious to move ahead that they decided to deal directly with the owner of the property," stated Riverview Councillor-at-Large Don Lenehan, in attendance at Tuesday's meeting.

But he emphasizes that the town is still highly involved in the building process.

"We're basically negotiating with the district to discuss what they and the parents would like to see at the school. It's really a great situation for everyone, because the school and the town will be sharing facilities. Right now we're waiting for parents and principals to come back to us with their wish lists. We'll then be going back to town council with the information we've gathered in the summer and see what will need to be added in our 2011 budget."

The councillor added that the town was immensely pleased with the government's rapid response, as well as with the work of the DEC.

For now, the purchase of the land hasn't been finalized, but Doyle is optimistic.

"The province is conducting an environmental impact study on the property right now before purchasing it, but everything should be fine."

The council chair further indicated that discussions are going exceedingly well with the Town of Riverview.

"There have been talks of building tracks and ball fields, everything that you would normally see attached to a school. A new arena has even been mentioned. But right now our number one priority is to build that school and have it opened for September 2012", he says.

The DEC is hoping that in the next month or so, the Department of Education will have digested the recommendations put forward, hired an architect and begun discussing with all parties involved the design of the building.

The new school will replace Gunningsville and Lower Coverdale schools, as well as relieve some of the pressure on Riverview Middle School. Likely to cost in the area of \$24 million, it has been stated in the past that it will be able to accommodate approximately 600 students.