

North Bay Consolidation Committee

May 27, 2025 | 12:00 pm
via Teams

AGENDA

1.0 Call to Order

1.1 Attendance

1.2 Approval of Agenda

Motion:

That the agenda for the North Bay Consolidation committee meeting for May 27, 2025 be approved.

2.0 Draft feasibility report re sale and disposition of 320 Ski Club Road (formerly Widdifield SS)

3.0 Next Meeting Date – early June prior to June 10 Board meeting

4.0 Adjournment

Motion:

That we now do adjourn at am.

Report to North Bay Consolidation Committee Regarding the Feasibility of Expedient sale and Disposition of Property at 320 Ski Club Road North Bay

Executive Summary

The full report is being prepared for the Board of Trustees in accordance with a motion approved at the June 11, 2024 Board meeting:

Motion: 24-06-07 L. Sargent/J. Fuscaldo

That the Director provide a report to the Board at the June 2025 Committee of the Whole regarding the feasibility of moving forward expediently with the sale and disposition of the property located at 320 Ski Club Road North Bay formerly known as Widdifield SS after the North Bay Consolidation Committee meets. – CARRIED

The report details the current status of 320 Ski Club Road, including current occupation and care of the building. It also addresses associated *Education Act* Regulations regarding sale of Board properties and the implications of selling the property on Ski Club Road. The report outlines the current necessary use of 320 Ski Club Road and cost implications of displacement of these operations should the building be sold. Finally, the report provides information regarding the potential use of proceeds of disposition, including whether proceeds of disposition can be directed toward other projects.

On June 8, 2023, the *Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act, 2023, S.O. 2023, c. 11 - Bill 98*, came into force. Bill 98 amended the Education Act to add section 193.1, which required a board to provide the Minister with any information requested by the Minister “*respecting school sites, parts of school sites or other property of the board and respecting the board’s plans for current and future school sites, parts of school sites and property of the board*”. Bill 98 includes clarity on the ability of the Minister to make regulations governing the sale, lease or other disposition of school sites, parts of school sites or other property of a board. On December 6, 2023, the Minister of Education released a new regulation regarding the disposition of real property, *O. Reg. 374/23: Acquisition and Disposition of Real Property*.

In the fall of 2023, boards were required to submit a property inventory template to the Ministry of Education that listed all properties owned or leased by the board including vacant land, open schools, administrative buildings and leased land and buildings. Staff were required to identify if there was a future school board need within the next ten years for an owned property not currently open to students. The Ski Club Road building was identified as not occupied by students, but as one of a several properties under review for future use. It was noted that the Ski Club Road property is in use and there is a strong possibility this building would be required to accommodate students in the next ten years. The Ministry of Education has since completed two intake periods for Standard Disposition Process as per *O. Reg. 374/23*, including one completed in May 2025. The Ministry initiates the intake period by sending a pre-populated Disposition Intake Form to boards, which includes board-owned vacant properties the Ministry has identified as subject to mandatory disposition.

No board properties have been identified by the Ministry of Education for mandatory disposition at this time, including the Ski Club Road property.

320 Ski Club Road is the only property owned by Near North District School Board (NNDSB) in North Bay that is not currently in use as an official school or administrative building. As a result, this is the only NNDSB North Bay property with the viability to hold student population in future. Ministry of Education regulation 374.23 2 states, **2. (1) If a board has identified, through the reports and information required under section 193.1 of the Act, that a school site or other property of a board is not currently being used and the site or property is not needed to meet the board's current pupil accommodation needs or its pupil accommodation needs for the next 10 years, the Minister shall,**

(a) consider whether additional factors need to be considered or consultation needs to be completed before a decision can be made with respect to whether the property must be disposed of; and

(b) after considering any additional factors and completing any consultation referred to in clause (a), notify the board whether it is required to dispose of the property and if so, that the board shall,

(i) sell the property, or

(ii) lease or otherwise dispose of the property, if the Minister approves.

The regulation clearly indicates that this is a decision to be made by the Minister of Education given the current NNDSB status.

The Ski Club Road property is currently also the only viable property to hold a variety of NNDSB operations including but not limited to storage, housing various board departments and personnel, shipping/receiving, and accommodating the storage and transfer of a variety of board assets and operations required in order to close and dispose of other properties including in the event of further future consolidations.

Although the Ski Club Road building is not currently open to students, or operated as a school, the building is not vacant. The building is purposefully occupied and maintained in reasonable operational order for use by a variety of departments including:

- North Bay Maintenance Facility including grounds, general maintenance, electrical, plumbing
- Administrative Offices
- Classroom Resource Centre
- Special Education Equipment Storage and Redistribution
- Resource storage and redistribution
- Alternate bus transfer location
- Short term Leases

The Ministry has recognized boards need to be careful with the sale of properties. O. Reg. 374/23 includes potential future need (within the next ten years) as a factor in determining whether a property should be disposed of by a school board. Property

disposition must be carefully considered. The cost of acquiring the same or similar property in the future, will be substantially more expensive.

In March 2021, a request for an opinion of market value for the Ski Club Road property was obtained. The market analysis estimated limited value for developers due to extensive costs associated with demolition and servicing of the site.

The assessed value at the time of the report was \$9,198,000 as per MPAC.”

While the property has great value under NNDSB ownership, the estimated sale value would see a significant loss to the Board. Should a like property be required in the next ten years, NNDSB would not be in a position to make a purchase of that significant value.

Should the property be identified for disposition, the following steps would be required if the Ski Club Road building were to be permanently shut down and disposed of:

- Relocation of maintenance departments and potential lease of property of sufficient size.
- Relocation of stored classroom furnishings and potential lease of alternate storage facility
- Relocation of classroom resource centre and potential lease of alternate storage facility
- Relocation of administrative offices and potential lease of alternate facility or considering an addition to the Airport Road property.

None of these options are optimal due to significant ongoing leasing costs and lack of sufficient available funding.

The sale of the Ski Club Road site would not only result in the loss of much needed space for the departments and operational purposes noted above, but would result in the loss of potential future use of the facility as a community hub which would generate potential income from the use of fields, gyms, conference space, theatre etc. More importantly, immediate sale would eliminate the availability of this space for pupil accommodation leaving no alternative for Alliance and/or other school relocation, if required.

In April 2024, the Ministry of Education released [Education Capital Policies and Programs Manual](#) and the following is noted:

Proceeds of Disposition School Facilities

POD generated through the sale of school property (i.e., land with or without facilities) must be used for the repair and renewal of existing schools. School boards are to follow the expenditure requirements that are aligned with the School Condition Improvement (SCI) program. School boards are to spend a minimum 80% of their POD to target key building components and systems, with the remaining up to 20% addressing other

locally identified renewal needs.

If the potential disposition of the Ski Club Road property is being considered to provide POD for capital improvements at other school facilities, the information noted above must be carefully reviewed and considered prior to identifying the use of POD as a determining factor for the decision.

The building remains and is necessarily occupied by several operational departments of the board. It is maintained in order to make best use of the building in its current state, and to ensure a key board asset is not left vacant. It is fiscally responsible to maintain the building in a state of acceptable repair whichever way the board eventually moves. It will secure a higher price if sold. If not sold, the building will be in reasonable condition for ongoing board utilization.

The property must be occupied and maintained properly to reduce the potential for vandalism, which is a significant threat to empty properties. Left unaddressed, vandalism, break-ins and squatting clearly damage vacant property. Derelict buildings lose significant value. Regular upkeep of the building and the property is critical. Vandalism must be avoided, and the building and grounds maintained so that the public is aware that the building is not vacant. Understanding the risks and implementing proactive protection strategies like occupancy and regular maintenance of the property and grounds is essential in safeguarding this NNDSB asset. This multi-use facility is maintained for its current use in a fiscally responsible manner.

Conclusion

There are variety of compelling reasons and significant implications that deter boards from disposing of such valuable assets. Based on the available data, it would not be prudent to engage in the disposition process of the Ski Club Road property at this time.