



EDMONTON
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

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Edmonton Catholic Schools puts the construction of Archbishop Joseph McNeil School on hold

At a meeting of Board members last evening, the Edmonton Catholic School Board made a decision to put the construction of the Archbishop Joseph MacNeil elementary and junior high school on hold. "At this time we are putting construction at the site on hold and are considering all of the options open to the Board to continue building this school," said Charlie Koester, Board Chairperson.

The Board expressed its concern that the Subdivision and Development Appeal Board (SDAB) made an error in judgement in venturing into areas beyond its jurisdiction. "Edmonton Catholic Schools has followed due diligence and due process in the development of this new school and we will continue to do so", said Koester. "This school would house our students and staff, and we consider that a tremendous responsibility. Whatever steps we take next, we have no intention of risking the health and safety of students or staff, and we have no reasons to believe this site poses undue risks to the health and safety of our students and staff. This school poses no greater threat to children than does the 5 cups of coffee I drink every day" says Board Chairperson Charlie Koester. "There are in fact, some studies that show that children exposed to Electromagnetic Fields (EMF's) have lower rates of cancer."

The proposed school site is designed as an inclusive campus site and has been zoned to include an elementary and junior high Catholic school, a Catholic high school, a public K-8 school, a public high school, playing fields, an ice rink and swimming pool. "This decision by the SDAB has major implications across this community, potentially triggering widespread concern about homes, community facilities, health and teaching facilities – any structures anywhere in the vicinity of power lines", said Koester. "It is a decision that could also affect many citizens who like us, have received development permits to build 356 feet or closer to power lines".

"Construction work on this site will stop effective immediately, and when we have a written decision in hand on November 8th, the Board will decide on appropriate next steps. It is clear that a new school in Terwillegar could be delayed from its start date of September 2003 as a result of the SDAB position. We are very disappointed. This community has wanted and needed an elementary and junior high school for some time, and we will continue to work with parents and others to clarify the issues as we pursue all our options. We want to ensure this community has access to a safe, convenient, well planned and well developed school for their children".

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