Peel District School Board ARC
Park Royal (Clarkson) and Erin Mills (Erindale)

Ancillary to 2012-01-24 Presentation of Issue # 3
"Misrepresenting Community Preferences"
dan.anderson@sympatico.ca

For purposes of the Board's expressed intention to respond to the Jan 24 delegation presentation, the comments below provide ancillary information for item # 3 regarding concerns about "Misrepresenting Community Preferences", primarily because some trustees seemed to either take particular exception to that issue or been uncertain of the circumstances as a result of the initial Board response to the issue.

I should note that rather than trying to sandbag the Trustee and ARC Chair on these issues at the Jan 24 meeting, I had communicated with them at the time that the issues arose and I also emailed the two of them in the week prior to the Jan 24 meeting indicating that I was planning on making a presentation on a range of issues and specifically asking that they reconsider the position they had taken on the issues outlined under issue # 3, but received no substantive response.

Issue # 3 is perhaps the least significant issue relative to the other issues in the attached Jan 24 presentation **but it is still a very serious matter**, and taking into account the initial response from the Board the additional information below seems appropriate, and it should be noted that **at this stage, the considerations identified in issue # 3 might most directly be addressed by the following**:

a) An acknowledgment to the Board, by the ARC Chair (and/or the Trustee), that they were aware Sept 26 that they had in fact been mistaken regarding their assumption that a survey had been distributed to 4,000 homes by the Park Royal Community Association and that the assertion made to the ARC members immediately prior to the Sept 14 ARC vote, that the "(Park Royal) community preference was for two schools to close", was in effect a groundless assertion unsupported by the facts.

b) Assuming that the ARC website materials will continue to be available, or accessible in archived form, for some period of time, the belated insertion of an appropriate correction on the Board website indicating that the assertions made during that Sept 14 meeting were incorrect and that no such community survey had taken place.

c) With regards to helping to clarify the Trustee's earlier role in the undermining of the arrangements for an Aug 3 community meeting in Park Royal involving parent reps and the Park Royal Community Association, an acknowledgement by the Trustee whether he did not forward on to the parent reps the invitations that were provided to him, and some sort of explanation with an identification of the length of time (in hours or days) between the time when he received the invitations to forward to the Park Royal parent reps, and the time when he established an understanding that the meeting was canceled.

The following additional background information might be helpful.

As noted at the Jan 24 Board meeting, immediately prior to the Sept 14 ARC vote, the ARC Chair told ARC members that for Park Royal the "community preference was for two schools to close", based on a 4,000 person community survey that had a very low response rate.

In the ARC Chair's Sept 26 2011 email correspondence with the Park Royal Community Association, the ARC Chair (and supposedly the Trustee, who had been interfacing with the PRCA on such issues) acknowledges having made an incorrect assumption that a survey had accompanied a newsletter that was

described as being delivered to 4,000 homes (**"we assumed that the survey had been included in the newsletter"**). In fact, as near as I can determine, there was no such community survey.

I am a member of the PRCA. There are something like only 200 members, because the organization was resurrected only about two years ago, with a new executive.

I have requested, from both the PRCA executives and the ARC Chair / Trustee, a copy of whatever survey was provided to some individuals (regardless how wide the distribution was) or a copy of the report that the PRCA gave to the ARC Chair / Trustee, but neither group has responded to the request.

I first approached the PRCA in June 2011 to try to arrange, along with a parent advocate from Elmcrest, a community meeting involving members of the Park Royal community association and any Park Royal parent reps who might be interested, to address some of the key issues focused on the Park Royal community, and look at then having a broader-based community meeting.

We formed a 3-member PRCA committee for that purpose.

We met with the Trustee and the ARC Chair who stated they were not supportive of our efforts but would not oppose them.

The original intent of the committee was for the PRCA executives to make direct contact with some of the ARC parent reps, some of whom were known to the PRCA executives and/or for whom they had contact information. After some initial exchange of information a broader-based community meeting could be arranged.

At the first committee meeting, however, one of the two PRCA executives on the committee stated a fairly strongly-held personal view that two schools should close in the area, which was the position currently being identified by the Trustee and the ARC Chair. The other executive appeared to have mixed motivations. None of the six PRCA execs that we came into contact with had children in the affected schools. We requested contact information for other PRCA executives and/or to pass our contact information to them, but they refused our request.

Subsequently the PRCA executives stonewalled committee communications but did not identify any concerns. My understanding from the communications is that the Trustee had spoken with the PRCA executives and undertook to be a conduit for any invitations that were to be sent to the seven Park Royal parent/community reps.

After extended stonewalling by the PRCA execs, we were finally informed that the invitations had already been sent out but I subsequently received an email, two days prior to the meeting, identifying that the PRCA execs were dropping me from the committee because of the concerns I had expressed about the prior stonewalling.

The other parent advocate (Shan Peruma from Elmcrest who some of you would know from his Jan 11 2012 ARC-related presentation at the Board offices) remained on the committee, but was also being stonewalled on communications. The meeting was to be held at an office location that had been arranged by Shan, but on the evening of Aug 3 when the meeting was to be held, no one appeared and he subsequently determined that the meeting had been canceled.

My understanding from communications is that the parent reps never received the invitations from the Trustee, unless the Trustee selectively sent invitations to some parent reps and not others, or the invitations were lost in the mail or in an email firewall etc.

Another alternative is that the PRCA execs lied about sending out the invitations, but there is no reason to assume that is the case.

As far as I know it would supposedly be a statement of fact that the Trustee did not send out the invitations, based on the understanding that the parent reps did not receive the invitations.

The Peel Board Chair expressed concerns about what she called "allegations" that the Trustee did not send out the invitations to the parent reps. Certainly at the Jan 24 Board meeting and in prior communications there was no statement from the Trustee at any time that he had sent out the invitations, or that he had not received the invitations.

It is troubling that the undermining of a PRCA-based community meeting within Park Royal was subsequently followed by the misrepresentations at the Sept 14 and Oct 4 meetings regarding a 4,000 person community survey that supported the position of advocating the closure of two out of three schools in Park Royal.

It is also troubling that the Peel Board website continues to state that such a community survey took place and that the "community preference is to close two schools" in Park Royal.

Attached is a copy of the newsletter that was distributed by the Park Royal Community Association.
Attached: "PRCA Sept 2011 newsletter.pdf"

In addition to the cursory reference to the ARC process and a lack of any accompanying survey (and in the context that there are only about 200 members of the PRCA, including myself), you will note the comment: "We are eager for your opinion; however, only comments from PRCA members will be included in a report to the ARC. Therefore, become a PRCA member and add your voice to this issue." There was no reference to a survey as such, nor was there a suggestion that you would receive a survey questionnaire to fill out if you contacted the PRCA.

Clearly this seemed to be more just an attempt to recruit members. Even if a detailed questionnaire labelled "survey" had been attached it could not have legitimately been referred to as a community survey when the intent of the PRCA execs was to disregard responses from non-members.

Please reference the original comments for issue # 3 in my Jan 24 presentation regarding the refusal to insert a correction notice on the Board's website and failure to make appropriate disclosures when the issue arose at the Oct 4 public meeting.

Also attached: "1- presentation to PDSB 2011-01-24a (D Anderson).pdf"
" 1- PDF of PowerPoint on Peel School Board ARC 2012-01-24 (D Anderson).pdf"

Sincerely,
Dan Anderson