

# Ex-teacher protests to Peel board over meeting bylaw

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Paul Fromm's teaching licence was pulled because of his political activities

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A former Peel District School Board employee whose teaching licence was pulled because of his political activities is questioning a bylaw change that gives the chair more power at school board meetings.

Paul Fromm, who previously taught at Applewood Heights Secondary School and the Britannia Adult Education Centre, spoke out to trustees at the headquarters of his past employer during the Aug. 29 regular meeting over an addition to section G-3 of the board's bylaws that passed last June.

"You are the elected managers of the this board of education, but we, the taxpayers, are the owners, and we have a right to come before you and to speak," said Fromm.

The section in question reads: "Delegations who use offensive language, make any disorderly noise or disturbance, resist the rules of the board, disobey the decision of the chair or of the board, or behave in a manner that is not consistent with board policies and the Ontario Human Rights Code, may be ordered by the chair to discontinue the prevention and/or leave the board room or meeting room or premises."

So if the chair thinks a delegate violates the human rights' code, they can have that individual booted from the property.

Fromm, who was fired from the Peel board in 1997 after he



Rob Beintema/Metroland

**Former high school teacher Paul Fromm made a delegation to the Peel Board of Education to speak about a recent bylaw change regarding public attendance at meetings.**

wouldn't cut ties with known racists, wants the bylaw addition done away with. He was unaware at the time of this delegation that the change had already gone through.

Arguing that what is deemed "offensive language" can be broad and subjective, he said, "I don't think anybody has a right

not to be offended over contentious issues."

The former Mississauga mayoral candidate also questioned how the board would interpret the human rights code.

The bylaw addition came about after months of tense board meetings last school year around opposition to Muslim prayer in

Peel schools. Attendees are still required to provide photo ID and sign in before entering board meetings, a security measure that was implemented last spring to quell disruptions.

Though a response will be provided to Fromm at the next board meeting, chair Janet McDougald shared her thoughts on the ex-

teacher's delegation.

"I would disagree with Mr. Fromm - I think the board has proven itself in that we are more than willing to listen to people's issues, complaints, criticism as long as it's done in a respectful way," said McDougald.

"And for him to suggest that we cannot determine, or the chair of the board cannot determine, what is respectful, I think is misguided. We all understand what respect means."

She's confident that the board will be able to detect when language or actions at meetings are "discriminatory."

McDougald is familiar with Fromm, whose teaching certificate was revoked by the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) in 2007.

According to his OCT decision notice, Fromm previously attended events run by white supremacist groups such as a Heritage Front celebration for Adolf Hitler's birthday in 1991 as well as a National Alliance event in 1994, where he shared the stage with former Ku Klux Klan head David Duke.

The OCT decision also states that Fromm co-founded the Citizens for Foreign Aid Reform and the Canadian Association for Free Expression - two organizations that support "beliefs and values contrary to the principals of multiculturalism and tolerance."

McDougald noted that the board was open to Fromm's comments, despite his controversial history.

"The very fact that we didn't shut him down because of past practice or activities shows that we are open to that (listening to his delegation)," she said. "He was very respectful and he will get a respectful response."

~With files from John Stewart