

▼ From Front

Parents will have chance for input

While admitting the e-mail message was hers, Mrs. Christensen did express some concern over how the private e-mail came into the hands of a reporter.

However, she did back down on her choice of words. "I don't think it is an unwarranted choice of words," says Mrs. Christensen, who has never made any secret of her disappointment of how the Blackburn saga played out.

The board made the decision to build a new middle school to replace the aging Blackburn Junior Secondary and at the end of December

sent parents notices detailing public meetings to talk about the proposed changes.

Not all parents were in favour of the shift to a middle school concept and began lobbying the board to rebuild the school as a junior secondary. Parents, feeling they were being ignored by the board, formed the Rural Communities for Blackburn, and embarked on an aggressive campaign.

"Parents would call media conferences and no one would ever call us," says Mrs. Christensen. "I found it very difficult to respond to the charges and

accusations. The whole thing got out of control and we wound up in a very difficult position."

Mrs. Christensen says the board will involve parents in the construction liaison committee. But she notes that the committee will be smaller than the one that helped oversee the construction of Heather Park Middle School. "That was a brand new program, while this time it will be remaining a junior secondary, so there's no need to add programs."

For her part, Mrs. Moore says her group would like to see more parental involvement.

▼ From Front

Ethanol project backers remain optimistic

zoning from future use to heavy industrial.

But the patch of land in question is not without its challenges.

The property lies adjacent to the Rustad Brothers site on the B.C. Rail industrial grounds and Sintich Road and has limited space because of a ravine that runs through the property.

The site also has transportation issues, including the lack of rail access for delivery of wood waste. That means waste would have to be trucked down a steep and narrow road to the plant.

The city has talked about building a road,

and the boundary road project, which would mitigate some of the transportation problems but would further cut into the property and reduce the land available for the plant. The plant would also not fall into the city's fire protection area.

In addition, ravines and general slope of the land may affect the plant's stability.

"Development services is very supportive of the concept but is not convinced this location is a suitable one for such a plant," wrote city planner Kent Sedgewick in his report to council.

According to Mr. Ward

and business partner Gordon Biddle the project has financial backers, tentative environment ministry approval, and access to the right technology.

Using the technology of former UBC professor Dr. Laszlo Paszner, the plant will move the production of ethanol from wood waste from the experimental stage to the commercial stage.

"I don't think we'll have any problems there," said Mr. Biddle Monday.

Ethanol has long been looked at by a number of different communities, including one by the Peace River Regional District which has access to wheat

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Harris says leader is staying put

about survival," he says. "We do not intend to sit as independents, unless they expel us."

The Alliance caucus met yesterday and at press time it was unknown what steps the remaining MPs might take.

Dick Harris is the Alliance party whip and says the disagreements over leadership have been very distracting to the party.

"Vigilante politics don't work in a civilized democracy," says Mr. Harris, who represents Prince George-Bulkley Valley.

According to Mr. Harris, who metes out whatever punishment caucus decides upon, says Mr. Day was elected leader and "has a very strong mandate to continue. I would never encourage Stock to step down from leadership at the behest of a small group of MPs."

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