

# Students prompted board policy reversal

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LeMay had come under fire for saying the board would not allow GSAs in its schools just as they don't allow certain other clubs like Nazis. She has since apologized for the remark.

Oakville Trustee Anthony Danko and new Burlington Trustee Jane Michael voted against replacing the policy, which banned GSAs.

Danko also brought a motion forward, after the equity policy vote, asking trustees to reaffirm LeMay as board chair. LeMay had been elected to the position in December but came under heavy criticism outside the board for her comments. Trustees voted unanimously to retain LeMay as chair.

"The most compelling voices on this (equity policy) issue have come from some of the students in our care, who have expressed to us that they don't always feel included and they have not always felt safe, and we need to listen to the voices of our students. Those voices are for us the most significant, and we are responding to that articulated need for support," said Catholic board education director Michael Pautler.

"We will create safe and supportive forums for all of our students, including our youth who are gay, straight or questioning their sexual orientation. In these gatherings, students can safely discuss issues and concerns and examine ways to address homophobia, bullying, discrimination and harassment of any kind," he added.

Whether those groups will be called Gay-Straight Alliances or something else is still to be determined.

Prior to trustee discussion

and vote on the then current policy, the board heard from a delegation of young adults opposed to the ban of GSA groups, including an impassioned plea for tolerance from a gay man who is a former Halton Catholic board student.

"My high school experience was mostly positive with (school) staff who made my experience as pain-free as possible," James Hopkins told trustees.

However, he still felt the brunt of intolerance at times, he said, noting some fellow students "shouted horrific obscenities at me; some spat at me. Most days I can't understand why or how I became who I am."

In appealing to trustees to overturn the board's previous equity policy, Hopkins stressed, "You don't have to be gay to be a member of a Gay-Straight Alliance."

In supporting the OESC interim policy, Milton Trustee Diane Rabenda called it "an active and living document and an acceptable temporary" policy. "... the safety of our students is our top priority."

Danko stood firm against changing the equity policy.

"I'm opposed to rescinding the current equity policy because by doing so we'll wind up being in the position of having ignored recommendations made by the bishops of Ontario."

Feb. 8 is the next meeting of the policy committee, which is comprised of all nine elected trustees. The earliest the current OESC interim equity and inclusion policy could come back to the board for discussion and a vote on making the interim policy permanent or possibly rewording it is at the Feb. 15 regular board meeting.



Town council recently designated 519 (right) and 521 Main St. S. as heritage properties. The Glen Williams buildings are known as Laidlaw House (519) and the Frazier Shop (521). The frame building at the corner of Main and Prince St. has housed numerous commercial enterprises over the decades and famed department store founder Timothy Eaton once worked at the property when it was a grocery store.

Photo by Ted Brown

## Glen Williams Main St. buildings designated heritage properties

By CYNTHIA GAMBLE  
Staff Writer

The Town has designated as heritage properties, 519 and 521 Main St. S. in Glen Williams— one of them the shop where famed Canadian Timothy Eaton worked his first job.

Council gave staff the go ahead at a recent council meeting to begin the notification process and by the end of December no one had appealed the proposed designation. Council ratified the designation at its Dec. 16 meeting.

The properties are known as Laidlaw House (519 Main St.) and the Frazier Shop (521 Main St.). The current owners of the properties, Lynn and Brian R. Kennedy, requested the designation.

According to a Heritage Halton Hills report, prepared by John Mark Rowe, the 1847 frame building (built by Thomas Frazier) at the corner at the Main and Prince Sts. is the village's oldest commercial building.

Throughout its history it was a tailor shop, grocery store, post office, ice cream shop, among many other things. It was in its evolu-

tion as a grocery store that Timothy Eaton, a recent immigrant from Ireland, was hired to be clerk and bookkeeper. Eaton, who would become the future founder of the T. Eaton department stores, came to Glen Williams to live with his aunt Margaret Eaton who had just married a local man.

James S. Laidlaw built the home next door in 1858 - it was always part of the same property as the store. By the turn of the 20th century it became the home of the Wheeler family, longtime Glen residents.

The store entered the 21st Century as an east coast arts and craft outlet known as Best's Harbour, owned by Edie-Pat and Carl Best. The store was converted into Reeve and Clarke Books by the current owners, the Kennedys, while the house became the law office of Brian Kennedy.

Rowe stated reasons for designation for the Frazier Shop and Laidlaw House are several including its design value as a Victorian commercial building and home, its historical association with Eaton, and cultural relevance to the community as a landmark on the Glen Williams corner.

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