

Parking ticket from polling station frustrates voter

by Julia Le
Oakville Beaver Staff

Would you bother voting if you had to pay \$35?

An Oakville resident is arguing that you probably wouldn't after he received a \$35 parking ticket the morning of election day near St. Jude's Anglican Church on William Street.

Sean Harraher, 31, describes how exercising his democratic right in the recent provincial election has left a sour taste in his mouth.

He admits that he and several other residents parked in a no-stopping zone, but argues there wasn't much parking available in the area.

An event at the church (a school graduation ceremony) that was acting as a polling station attracted a number of people early in the morning, he said.

With no legal spots open, Harraher said he parked at the southwest corner of William and Thomas streets, careful not to block any intersections or impede traffic in any way.

"I left a note on the dash of my car in bright red ink that read, 'Voting.

No available parking in neighbourhood, 8:53 a.m.," he said, adding that he was in a rush because he had to head to Toronto for work immediately after voting.

But when Harraher returned to his car at 9:05 a.m., he and several other cars that had parked along William Street were each slapped with a \$35 parking infraction notice by the Town of Oakville.

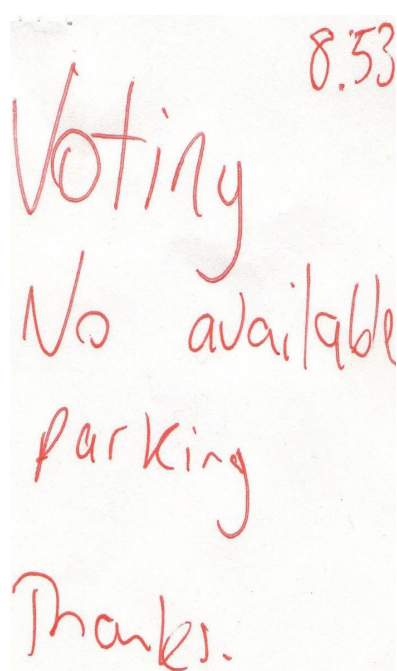
A day later, the incident still wasn't sitting well with him.

"My view is on a day where we're supposed to be exercising our democratic right to vote, there shouldn't be stumbling block after stumbling block," he said.

He's questioning why there wasn't some level of leniency from the Town enforcement officers and why Elections Ontario chose a location, he believes is a poor choice, for a polling station.

"I am of the generation that is often labelled 'lazy' and 'indifferent' as people aged 18-32 historically have low voter turnout," he said. "I would imagine some first-time voters arrived at the voting station, noticed all the voters being ticketed, and figured it wasn't worth the hassle."

Dan Cozzi, the Town of Oakville



The dashboard note left by an Oakville voter who was unable to find a legal parking spot at his polling station. | submitted photo

director of engineering and construction, said while officers can show some discretion in issuing a ticket in some cases, when it comes

“

I will go to jail before I pay one cent of the ticket. We read about the voting process being impeded in far off lands. But it should not be happening in a country as great as Canada, even if it is due to incompetence more than corruption.

Sean Harraher
Oakville

to no-stopping zones and restricted areas, they simply can't.

He confirmed there were some tickets issued in the area because cars were parked illegally.

Meanwhile, Elections Ontario Communications Co-ordinator Peter Berry couldn't speak specifically about the St. Jude's Anglican Church location, but said polling stations are normally chosen based on a range of accessibility criteria.

"Our aim is to make voting easy and make it accessible," he said, explaining convenience to people's homes and ample parking are factored in when a polling location is chosen.

Noting some challenges area returning officers have when it comes to a snap election like yesterday's, he

said it's a huge task securing 8,000 polling locations and leases across the province in the short amount of time.

If there are any concerns, he is encouraging residents to contact Elections Ontario by calling 1-888-668-8683, emailing info@elections.on.ca or writing a letter to 51 Rolark Dr., Toronto, Ont., M1R 3B1.

On principle, Harraher said he's not paying the ticket that he received Thursday.

"I will go to jail before I pay one cent of the ticket," he said. "We read about the voting process being impeded in far off lands. But it should not be happening in a country as great as Canada even if it is due to incompetence more than corruption."



Commercial Patio Furniture

NEW / SCRATCH'n DENT / OVERSTOCK
Made in Italy and U.S.A.



2750 Coventry Road, Oakville
Friday June 20th 9AM to 5PM
Saturday 21st & Sunday June 22nd 8AM to 1PM



Happy to Serve Our Community!



On May 30th, Oakville's own Smileworx Dental hosted their second annual Dentistry From The Heart charity event to provide a day of free dentistry to the community for those in need. "This year was even bigger and better than last year," says Dr. James Younger, owner of Smileworx Dental. Dr. Younger is clearly proud of his entire team. "We had people here as early as 2am to be first in line for dental care. It really is a wonderful way to be able to give back to our community. For those in need who can't afford vital dental care, this is a small step towards providing them access."

By the end of the day, the team at Smileworx treated more than 50 people, donating the equivalent of over \$11,000 of dentistry.

The Smileworx team would especially like to thank their generous sponsors: Black Forest Pastry Shop, O'Finn's Irish Temper, Water World, The Running Company, Sinclair Dental Supply, and our volunteers who donated their time.

New families and patients are always welcome at Smileworx Dental, located in downtown Oakville at the corner of Navy Street and Lakeshore Road East (across from the library). Free underground patient parking is available.

Smileworx Dental provides Family and Cosmetic Dentistry services as well as Implant tooth replacement. Anyone interested in finding out more about their charity event or becoming a patient at Smileworx Dental is welcome to contact the office at 905-845-5566 or visit their website at www.smileworx.ca