

TRUSTEE'S PROPOSAL GAINS PLENTY OF ATTENTION

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amendments to the motion, including one failed attempt in which he proposed striking out an almost full page of action items from it. During the meeting, he also attempted to have the motion postponed indefinitely twice, and early in the meeting he unsuccessfully proposed an "objection to the consideration of the question" which would have removed the flag raising motion entirely.

The proposal generated significant attention both

locally and beyond. The petition in support of the motion had over 15,000 signatures at press time and there were more than 200 official delegations submitted to the board on the matter. A number of organizations also provided their stance on the flag-raising. Notably, the Halton elementary branch of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association issued its support for raising the Pride flag.

Supporters of raising the flag argue it would help LGBTQ+ staff and stu-

dents feel accepted and help address significant mental health issues within that community.

Opponents say the Pride flag is contrary to the message of Jesus Christ and that it represents immoral behaviours. Others argued the flag is divisive, wouldn't solve the problems it was supposedly addressing and issues like mental health and feelings of acceptance would be better addressed through practical responses like specialized training for teachers.

Trustee Peter DeRosa questioned the motives around the motion and the decision to bring it forward now.

"A decision frankly that is untimely given our common struggle with COVID knowing it will divide our Catholic family again among unreconcilable lines that have existed for centuries. Most important to me, is the expectation that have been created over the last few weeks in the young minds of our most vulnerable students and possibly consequences if tonight's results disappoint them," said DeRosa.

The HCDSB has a history of generating controversy around LGBTQ+ issues. In 2011, the board gained attention for banning Gay-Straight Alliance Groups before they were pressured to rescind that decision.

Trustees on both sides of the debate called out the aggressiveness with which some in the public had responded to the motion.

"My faith, my morals, my motives have all been questioned," said Brenda Agnew, the trustee who put forth the motion. "For those who think this is political popular pandering I can assure you it's none of those things. My sole motivation is about saving lives, student lives, and those lives are worth any of the hatred and bigotry that has been thrown at myself and some of my fellow



Carolyn Hotchkiss photo

Nicole Hotchkiss is disappointed the Pride flag will not be raised at Halton Catholic schools.

trustees since this motion first made its way to the public."

The Pride flag has been a controversial topic when similar motions have been brought forward at Catholic boards across the province. Notably, the Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board has been flying the Pride flag since 2019, only at its board office during the month of June.

Other trustees proposed alternative ideas like flying the Pride flag only at the Catholic Education Centre or developing their own style flag.

Trustee Vincent Iantomasi wanted staff to take a closer look at its flag policies before looking into such a motion.

"The national flag is an unmistakable symbol of unity of inclusiveness for all Canadians no matter their sexual orientation, race or colour. I believe in upholding the dignity of the Canadian flag, which means it should always be

"I am disappointed. I am repulsed with the extensive amendments made which gutted the original motion."

- Nicole Hotchkiss

flown on its own," said Iantomasi.

STORY BEHIND THE STORY: A bid to have the Pride flag raised at Halton Catholic schools has sparked a firestorm of attention and debate in recent weeks. We wanted to pursue the contentious issue to its conclusion and share how those on either side felt about the decision.

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Q How might Covid-19 affect closings for a new construction home?

A In an agreement of Purchase and Sale for a new construction home, there is a Taron Addendum called a Statement of Critical Dates. There is typically a First Tentative Occupancy Date, a second Tentative Occupancy Date, and a Firm Occupancy Date. If the Vendor cannot complete construction and be ready for the first date, then as long as they give proper notice, they can extend the date two times without being liable for Delayed Closing Compensation.

There is also a provision for extending the dates due to "Unavoidable Delay." This is defined as "an event which delays Occupancy which is a strike, fire, explosion, flood, act of God, civil insurrection, act of war, act of terrorism, or pandemic, plus any period of delay directly caused by the event, which are beyond the reasonable control of the Vendor and are not caused or contributed to by the fault of the Vendor." The Covid-19 is a pandemic, so delays as a result of this would allow the Vendor to extend the closing dates. If the Vendor does need to extend closing for this reason, they will need to send a notice to all Purchasers.

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