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Latcham Hall board dispute

Resident calls for councillors' resignations

By **JOAN RANSBERRY**
 Staff Reporter

The chairman of a now defunct town-appointed board is calling for the resignation of two Whitchurch-Stouffville councillors, charging that they orchestrated an unfair move to get rid of the board.

Guy Castonguay, chairman of the former Latcham Hall Board, said he was shocked, hurt and bewildered after council disbanded without any notice the six-member board that he chaired.

On Tuesday, with the exception of Councillors Ivanka Bradley and Mike Watson, Whitchurch-Stouffville Council went along with a move by Councillors Cliff Dunkeld and Mark Kostandoff, both hall board members, to dissolve the two-year-old board.

Duties of the board will now be carried out by town staff. No other hall boards will be touched, stressed Mayor Wayne Emmerson.

Emmerson told *The Tribune*

not alerting the board prior to the council meeting was a mistake.

"It was an error in judgement. We should have talked to them," he said.

Kostandoff agreed. "Maybe it was a mistake," he said.

Dunkeld defended council's action. The matter was put to council without notice because "we didn't want them (board members) to go out and make public statements before it went to council," said Dunkeld.

Castonguay wants to know why the board was disbanded. "We never complained about the workload so why is it an issue?" he asked.

While no board member complained about the workload, council agreed that volunteers shouldn't have to do so much, explained Kostandoff.

"Some (board members) got calls in the middle of the night. We can't expect this of volunteers."

Pride stopped the volunteers from complaining about the workload, Kostandoff said. "It

was pride. I think they were too proud to say anything."

Kostandoff said he's surprised at the board members' reaction. "They shouldn't feel grieved by this. They did wonderful work. There was never anything improper done."

The option of disbanding the board was discussed at the Feb. 3 board meeting, Kostandoff explained.

"Yes, disbanding was discussed. It was mentioned as a way we'd relieve all of the work," he said.

However, the issue of the workload was not discussed at that or any other meeting, Kostandoff said.

In a press release issued by ex-board member Sue Sherban, she states that council got rid of the board because some members took a recent hall rental problem to the local media.

Emmerson denies this. "The board just wasn't working out," said Emmerson. "Let's just get on with it."

Castonguay and Sherban are

questioning statements made at the council meeting. Meanwhile, Castonguay wants Kostandoff and Dunkeld to resign from council.

"I think Kostandoff and Cliff (Dunkeld) should hand in (their) resignations. I'm very disappointed with Cliff (Dunkeld). He joined the board

on Dec. 11. He attended two meetings. How does this make him an authority on what we do?"

Dunkeld attended the only two meetings scheduled since he was appointed to the board.

Kostandoff's attendance at board meetings last year was (Please see page 8)

Province may force zero budget says school board's vice-chair

By **MIKE ADLER**
 Staff Reporter

York Region public school trustees must pass a zero increase budget this spring — or the province may force them to do it, the public board's vice-chair claims.

The Education Improvement Commission — not yet even created by the government — will have power to approve or change 1997 school board budgets, Karen Barker said last week.

And Education Minister John Snobelen, displeased that many boards raised mill rates last year, will have the power to stop them, she argued. "The board cannot increase taxes this year," said Barker, a Newmarket trustee.

"Our indication is that any budget that has a tax increase attached to it would automatically be sent back to the board," she said.

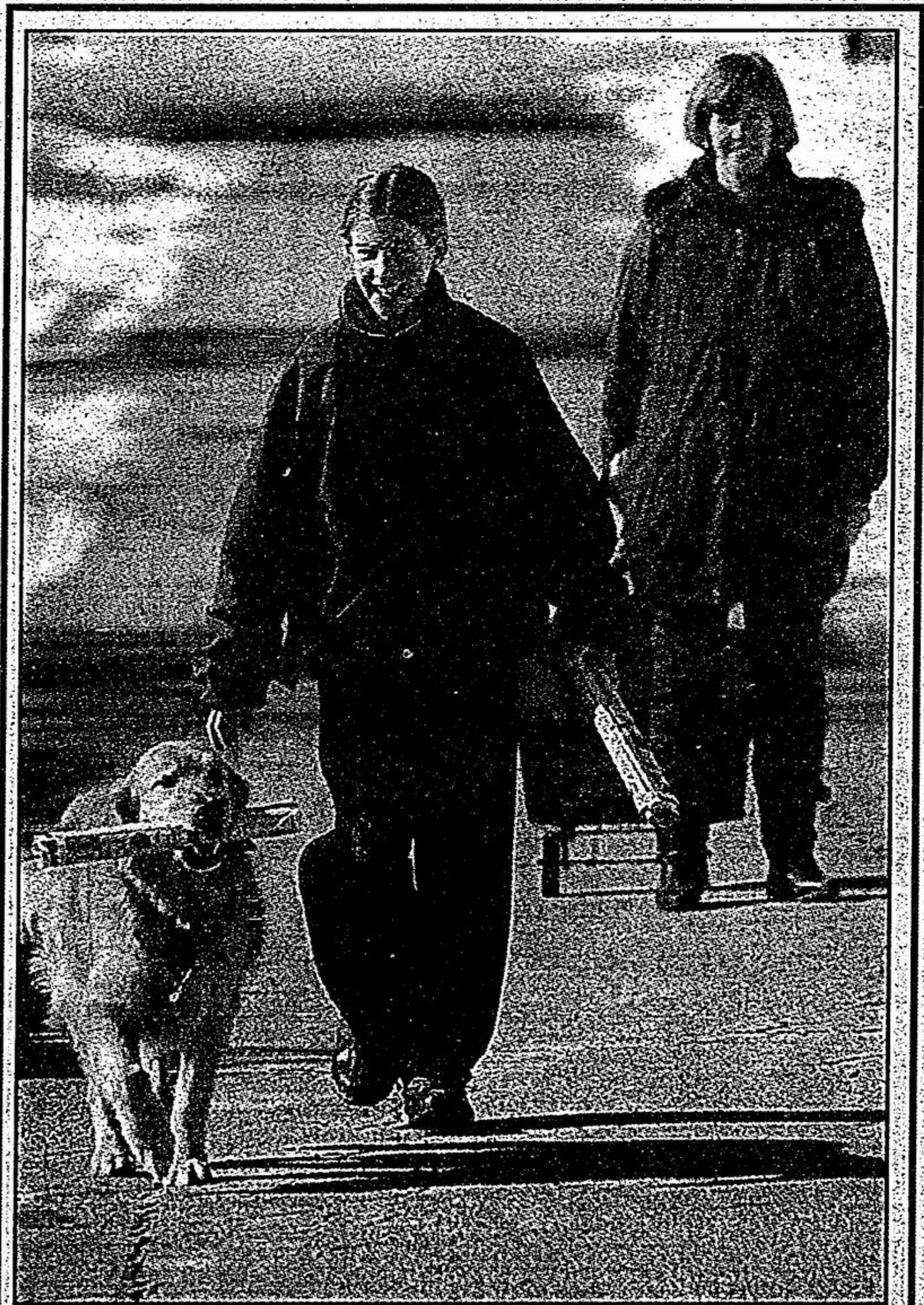
Barker, the board's chief labor negotiator, made her remarks in response to teachers' union demands for full restoration of preparation time. Without the 1.84 per cent tax increase it has levied in previous years, "we have to find another \$8 million," Barker added, noting most of the board's budget goes to pay teachers.

"It's not hard to make some conclusions on where the cuts will have to be made," she said.

The board's finance superintendent, however, cautioned that not much is known on how the commission — which would be created if Bill 104 becomes law — will operate. "Until they issue their guidelines nobody knows what they will do," said Bruce Richardson.

The group of appointees would, under the law, be able to make any change that it considers


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Helpful friend

Sarah Voss, 12, gets help delivering Weekenders from her golden retriever Whiskey recently. Also helping out with the delivery service on Lane Street in Clarendon was Sarah's mom Aleta.

Photo/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

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