

Catching up on ethics

Spurred by an ongoing inquiry into municipal conflict of interest, Mississauga city council voted unanimously last week to appoint an integrity commissioner and introduce a formal code of conduct. This is a welcome sign that Canada's sixth-largest city is finally getting serious about ethical issues.

The reforms follow similar measures instituted in Toronto, in the wake of the MFP computer leasing inquiry, and in Vaughan, after a string of highly questionable actions by various elected officials.

Mississauga council appointed lawyer George Rust-D'Eye, one of the country's foremost experts on municipal law, to a one-year term as interim integrity commissioner. During that time, a search is to be conducted to secure someone on a long-term basis.

Rust-D'Eye's appointment and the new code are both to take effect on Dec. 1, when the next city council takes office. Had the code been in effect and the commissioner in place even a few years ago, Mississauga might well have been spared the inquiry that's now underway.