

Mississauga leak probe not about finding source; Council agrees to focus on code-of-conduct questions instead

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A motion asking that Mississauga councillors allow their home and work computers to be searched to discover who leaked an embarrassing memo was withdrawn Wednesday. But the MissyLeaks scandal lives on.

Instead of taking up Councillor Katie Mahoney's motion, council debated the request for an investigation forwarded earlier to the city's new integrity commissioner, **George Rust-D'Eye**. At issue was what he was being asked to probe: Who leaked the memo, or whether the leak was a breach of the city's code of conduct.

The memo, from city manager Janice Baker, offered each councillor or senior staffer two, \$350 tickets to Mayor Hazel McCallion's 90th birthday party next month.

After its public release sparked an outcry about misuse of tax dollars, Mahoney demanded an all-out search to discover who'd sent it to the media.

Councillor Pat Saito said she had asked **Rust-D'Eye** only to rule on whether the leak violated the city's code. But his follow-up questions to councillors - asking whether they had forwarded the memo or knew who did - left some worried that a witch hunt was proceeding.

Councillor Eve Adams, who said the real issue was the ticket offer itself, called the probe "a waste of taxpayer money" that made her wonder why the city had hired an integrity commissioner.

"We were looking for a new level of transparency and accountability . . . but we're now using this tool to hunt down a whistleblower."

Councillors eventually agreed the real issue was whether the leak violated the code, and that money shouldn't be spent to track down a culprit.

City solicitor Mary Ellen Bench pointed out that council cannot direct Rust-D'Eye as to how he conducts an investigation once it has started, but added that a clarification could be made.

Council later voted unanimously to declare the city would not offer councillors money to attend McCallion's birthday bash.

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