

Mississauga News

Leaked e-mail violates City's conduct code: Report

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The City of Mississauga's integrity commissioner says the leaking of a confidential e-mail to the media was a "breach of trust" that could represent a "serious systemic problem for the City."

In his 33-page report on the circumstances surrounding the release of two internal e-mails to the media, **George Rust-D'Eye** said the leaking of the communication that was marked confidential violated the City's Code of Conduct section that states: "No (councillor) shall disclose or release by any means to any member of the public any confidential information acquired by virtue of their office, in either oral or written form, except where required by law or authorized by Council to do so."

Earlier this month, an e-mail from City manager Janice Baker offering to purchase each councillor a pair of \$350 tickets to Mayor Hazel McCallion's 90th birthday celebration was leaked to media. A second e-mail, discussing the leak and marked confidential with a line stating the e-mail could not be forwarded without the author's permission, was also sent to the press.

The commissioner's report, which he'll present at the next meeting of Council, said that passing along internal e-mails without permission will lead to, "a serious lack of confidence and trust by staff, and the public generally, in the ability of the Council as a whole to manage the affairs of the City."

It further stated that it, "constituted a clear breach of confidentiality and breach of trust owed by the City to members of its staff, bordering on contempt," and that the leak could represent a "serious systemic problem for the City."

Rust-D'Eye, who has not determined the identity of the person who leaked the communication, also stated in the report that the information in the e-mails was clearly of public importance.

The commissioner said he'll ask Council if he should continue his investigation.

Ward 9 Councillor Pat Saito, who sent the request to Rust-D'Eye asking if leaking e-mails was a breach of the Code of Conduct, welcomed the report.

"The commissioner has made it clear in his report that the distribution of the e-mail marked confidential was a violation, a clear breach of trust and confidentiality," said Saito. "I hope the person who did this has learned their lesson and behaves more professionally in the future. It's very disappointing when a request for confidentiality is not respected by an elected official."

Ward 6 Councillor Ron Starr said Council should be respectful of e-mails sent internally.

However, not all councillors felt the report was necessary.

Ward 10 Councillor Sue McFadden said the issue could have been resolved without calling on Rust-D'Eye.

"I think that it was a complete waste of money to even get him involved," she said. "Why didn't we all just sit down and discuss this as members of Council rather than jump into an investigation?"

The report also stated that Rust-D'Eye believed there was nothing improper about Baker making councillors aware of the offer to purchase tickets.

"In my opinion, there was nothing unusual or inappropriate in the actions of the City manager in drawing to the attention of the members of Council the invitation she had received in the way that she did," said the report.

The offer was eventually withdrawn and Council unanimously passed a motion stating it would not purchase tickets to the party.

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