

Mississauga News

Leaked e-mail a 'breach of confidentiality': report

Thu Jan 27 2011
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Section: News
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The City of Mississauga's integrity commissioner says the leaking of a confidential e-mail to the media could represent a "serious systemic problem for the City."

However, because **George Rust-D'Eye** was unable to determine who was responsible for the leak, he couldn't conclude that the act was a violation of the City's new Code of Conduct, which applies only to members of Council.

The commissioner's 33-page report on the circumstances surrounding the release to the media of two internal e-mails - one of which was marked confidential - did say that passing along the confidential e-mail without permission, "constituted a clear breach of confidentiality and breach of trust owed by the City to members of its staff, bordering on contempt."

The report, to be presented at the next meeting of Council, further states that passing along e-mails, whether marked confidential or not, could 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."

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 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."

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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* This story was updated at 4:50 p.m. on Jan. 27

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