

Mississauga News

Culture of secrecy

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Page: 1

Section: Editorial

The tempest in the teapot at City Hall over who leaked a non-confidential memo to the media demonstrates more than ever the culture of secrecy that dominates Mississauga City Hall.

Instead of being concerned about the blatant abuse of taxpayers' monies - City Manager Janice Baker recommended all City Councillors and senior managers be given, at taxpayers' expense, two \$350 tickets each to attend the mayor's 90th birthday party - several city councillors are tied up in knots that the public was informed about the plans.

Ward 6 Councillor Ron Starr, Ward 8 Councillor Katie Mahoney and Ward 9 Councillor Pat Saito have suggested everything from searching private homes to firing staff in efforts to determine who distributed the memo and punish the offender, while Mayor Hazel McCallion found nothing dubious about residents paying for highly-paid elected officials and senior staff to attend her big bash.

And, now, Saito plans to ask the City's new integrity commissioner, George Rust-D'Eye, to launch an investigation into who broke the vow of silence at City Hall. What Rust-D'Eye should be investigating is how much taxpayer money City Council spends treating itself to frivolities such as the mayor's party.

While he's at it, perhaps he should take a look at how many other secrets the City's most senior managers and elected officials have hidden from the residents who fund City Hall.

Nobody who's read a newspaper or listened to a newscast in the past year should be surprised by these actions and responses. In fact, McCallion's October campaign was centered around electing councillors who wouldn't argue with her.

What is surprising is just how far some - certainly not all - councillors are prepared to go to keep taxpayers' business out of taxpayers' sight and to protect their dirty little secrets.

We need real integrity and transparency at City Hall, not the facade we've lived with for the past few years.

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