

Tensions run high as McCallion, opposition clash; Meeting comes day after inquiry concludes

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A day after Mississauga's yearlong judicial inquiry came to an end, tensions were running high at city council, with several clashes between Mayor Hazel McCallion and members of the opposition faction that voted to probe her alleged misconduct.

As well, for a second consecutive week, council failed to address the contents of a report from the city's integrity watchdog into leaked city documents. Integrity commissioner **George Rust-D'Eye** has asked for guidance on whether to continue probing the leaks -- which caused controversy last month when the National Post reported details of an internal city memo offering to bankroll councillors' attendance at the Mayor's 90th birthday gala this weekend -- but rather than suggest a way forward, members of council raised concerns about the optics of influencing his investigation.

"We're in a little bit of a grey area.... If we are to say to him, don't do a thing or go ahead and do it, are we interfering with his role by even answering?" Councillor Jim Tovey asked during Wednesday's meeting.

"He's asked for your feedback, so no you're not interfering with his role, because he has specifically requested you to provide him with some feedback," city solicitor Mary Ellen Bench responded.

Mr. Rust-D'Eye's probe stalled last month when he

was unable to pinpoint the source of the leaks, though he said the public distribution of confidential documents may pose a "serious systemic problem" for Mississauga. To date, council members have not weighed in publicly on whether they want him to continue his investigation, which has already cost the city more than \$600 for every hour of Mr. Rust-D'Eye's time.

Another controversial probe -- the police investigation, launched last year, into an anonymous letter-writer's allegations of vote tampering in the October election -- was also discussed Wednesday, with Ms. McCallion noting Peel police had provided the city with an update this week.

"They have discovered nothing of any fraud.... The anonymous letter is not justified," the Mayor concluded. Police informally reported the same findings late last year.

Councillor Sue McFadden appeared puzzled by the Mayor's update, saying two of her colleagues -- councillors Ron Starr and Pat Saito -- had provided

contrary information, indicating police had made progress on the case by discovering the letter writer's identity. Both denied having said anything of the sort, prompting a testy exchange between the Mayor and Ms. McFadden.

"You must be dreaming," the Mayor barked at the Ward 10 councillor.

"No, I'm not dreaming. That was something that was very specific that was mentioned to me," Ms. McFadden said. As she continued speaking, the Mayor repeatedly tried to interject, prompting a frustrated outburst from Ms. McFadden: "I have the floor, Madam Mayor."

The Mayor also repeatedly chastised rebel councillors for pecking away at BlackBerrys while their colleagues were speaking.

The Mayor ended the meeting by congratulating council for a productive session --complete, she said, with "no controversy."

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