

Mayor's Statement at Council – October 12, 2011

I wish to make the following statement to Council and the citizens.

As you know, last week I thanked the Commissioner for his work. While the details of his recommendations will need to be studied to determine their application to each municipality I am sure that the Commissioner's report will make an important contribution to clarifying standards that should apply to municipal officials not only in Mississauga but across the province.

The Commission has found that I was in conflict of interest with respect to WCD. As you know, I acknowledged from the outset that I was in conflict of interest with regard to WCD. I declared this to Council, as I was required to do under the Act.

I did not attempt to influence either Council or City staff. This was confirmed by the Commissioner.

The Commissioner declared that I complied with the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act. The Commissioner and his lawyer stated that I did not breach the Act, and the Act did not apply to my discussions with the private parties.

However, the Commissioner found that it was inappropriate for me to play my usual role as a catalyst in moving the WCD project forward; that common law principles applied to these discussions, outside the statute. The Commissioner has now recommended codifying common law principles in the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act.

I endorse the Commissioner's suggestion that there has to be a practical, low-cost way to ensure that municipal councillors can seek advice and understand these issues. In this regard, I support his recommendations for substantial reforms at the provincial level, changes in the Mississauga code of conduct, and an expanded role for integrity commissioners.

I look forward to working with Council and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario to achieve these objectives.

It is gratifying to know that the Commissioner recognized that I have always put the interests of the City first and complimented me on my stewardship of Mississauga. I will continue to do so in the new environment set out by the Commissioner. Those doing business with Mississauga can be assured that we will be operating under the highest ethical standards.

The Commissioner has asked me to lend my personal support to his recommendations and I will. I support his contribution to updating the ethical infrastructure for elected municipal officials. Council has been working toward this objective, and it will continue to be a priority.

Staff will be coming forward with a report outlining what action Council should take on the Commissioner's recommendations and a report to AMO and the Province regarding changes to the legislation.

I accept the Commissioner's findings. If I ignored an unwritten rule by supporting a project that Council and I believed was critical for the growth of Mississauga and which we have been striving to attain for some 20 years, then I apologize. It was never my intent to ignore the rules. I only wish there had been clarity at the time as to what the rules were or an integrity commissioner had been in place for consultation. I followed the rules as I understood them.