

April 21, 2008

His Worship Mayor Fred Eisenberger.
And all Members of Council
City of Hamilton
C/O Office of the City Clerk
City Centre
77 James Street North, Suite 220
Hamilton, Ontario, L8R 2K3

Your Worship;

RE: ONGOING BREACHES OF COUNCIL CONFIDENTIALITY

As discussed with you personally on Monday, March 31, 2008 (Eisenberger/Dolbec), the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce Board has authorized me to formally notify you of our concern with respect to an apparent ongoing practice of some members of Council, who do seem to feel at complete liberty not to respect the confidentiality requirements of “in camera” meetings, and/or in sharing of clearly “Confidential” documents with others not authorized to receive them.

When breaches of confidentiality take place, it not only affects the credibility of Council, but also transcends to reflect on the credibility of our community as a whole. Collectively, we must make every effort to ensure that the City of Hamilton is perceived in the best possible light, and leaks of confidential information do nothing to enhance our status, or reputation, as a City; but, indeed, has exactly the opposite effect.

From a purely practical viewpoint, this practice also has the inherent material risk of disrupting business transactions in progress, and limiting the City’s own good due process to unfold successfully, as it should. It is obvious that, in transacting business with third parties, allowing certain matters to be made public prematurely can quickly handicap potential transactions from occurring before they “even get off the ground”. At the very least, they sow seeds of distrust; and are not conducive to establishing good will, and business relations with outside parties.

We fully realize that **almost all members of Councils do behave ethically** and do keep “in camera” matters legitimately confidential. We are obviously talking about a clear minority here.

Nevertheless, intentional leaks to media or others of obvious confidential matters, particularly for personal gain or political advantage, or otherwise to pursue an individual agenda, is thoroughly culpable behavior that should not be tolerated at any time.

I would also suggest, at the very least, it is a matter that should be referenced to the City's proposed Integrity Officer, when this office is finally up and running.

I do hope that the majority of Council, generally being persons of good will and good character, with the best of intentions, will accept these comments in the spirit but which they are intended. Further, we are confident that they will demonstrate the solid leadership required in this matter.

In short, we trust that Council will take the appropriate prompt and immediate action in addressing this issue effectively.

Sincerely,

Tyler MacLeod, President,
Hamilton Chamber of Commerce

CC: All Directors, Hamilton Chamber of Commerce, including Chairs of our Ancaster and Dundas Divisions.

All members of the Chamber's Government Affairs Committee; and

All local Media