

The Record

November/December 2010

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*I have been meeting individually
with the newly elected Councillors.*

*In addition, the other three
Accountability Officers and myself
held an information session for the
Councillors about each of our roles.*

*Read about what Fiona Crean,
Toronto's Ombudsman has to say.*



Your Ombudsman

It's about the year's end

I just want to say



At this year's end

It has been a whirlwind of activities over the past couple of months, with the publication of our latest investigation results, our office move and a string of community visits and Councillor meetings.

We recognized the following United Nations International Days: World Aids Day on December 1st, Persons with Disabilities on December 3rd, Anti-Corruption on December 9th and Human Rights Day on December 10th.

Along with recognizing those days, I attended the annual Harmony Movement celebration which this year honoured Jessica Lee, a young aboriginal woman who epitomizes the ideal of a youth leader for social change.

On November 12th, I attended the 8th annual First Light event of the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture. Schools without Borders, a youth-led organization dedicated to making learning more accessible for young people, held a wonderful event to raise funds for its endeavours.

I also ran several workshops on the role of the ombudsman and

our services in the city: one to an English as a Second Language class in Malvern, another at an educational event sponsored by the Metro Toronto Chinese & South East Asian Legal Clinic and a third with Pro Bono Law Ontario.

Closer to home, I have been meeting individually with the newly elected Councillors. In addition, the other three Accountability Officers and myself

held an information session for the Councillors about each of our roles.

We have re-issued our publication called, *Defining Fairness: The Office of the Ombudsman and the City of Toronto Public Service Working Together* which you can find on our website.

Speaking of our website, we are revamping it and hope to re-launch early in the New Year.

At long last, I've signed up for Twitter * and am enjoying the new source of information exchange!

Fiona Crean
Ombudsman

* You can find the Ombudsman on Twitter @TO_Ombuds



Presenting at the Metro Toronto Chinese & South East Asian Legal Clinic

A Duty to Care

Municipal Licensing and Standards (MLS) inspected a tree on a senior's property at a neighbour's request and issued an order requiring its destruction. The order was difficult to understand, vaguely worded and the owner was a senior with dementia.

As the case raised broader issues about how the City treats people with dementia and diminished capacity,



The Ombudsman's latest investigation report

the Ombudsman decided to investigate the complaint on her own initiative.

Over a period of nine months, the owner's son, Mr Z, attempted to negotiate with the City on his mother's behalf but got nowhere. The City misapplied a by-law in cutting down the tree when there was a cheaper alternative - and then charged the owner thousands of dollars for it.

The Ombudsman found that the City failed at every turn to deliver the level of service residents are entitled to expect. The City made no attempts to adapt

their procedures for someone who they knew was unable to understand the consequences of the order, let alone defend or negotiate on their own behalf.

The Ombudsman made 17 recommendations, 13 of which are designed to improve communication and public service generally and are specifically intended to meet the needs of residents with dementia and diminished capacity. The remaining three recommendations include: an apology to the resident and her son; a reversal of all levies

charged for the removal of the tree; and replacement of the tree.

The City did not dispute the Ombudsman's findings and acknowledged the need to immediately address the range of systemic issues identified.

You can read the entire report on our website: ombudstoronto.ca

what's new

Announcing our new location



375 University Avenue

Following our office move, we are now located at 375 University Avenue, Suite 203 just south of Dundas Street West, just west of City Hall. St Patrick station is the nearest TTC stop and we are fully accessible.

We are open 8:30 am to 5 pm daily and by appointment outside our regular business hours. Looking forward to your visit!

New to the team

Lauren Hollywood starts next month as our Administrative Assistant. She has been working on a contract for the City's Integrity Commissioner, was an executive assistant to a partner of a Toronto immigration law firm and has considerable experience in the retail business. Lauren has a degree in English and hails from New Brunswick.

***Wishing you
all a safe and
happy holiday
from all of us!***

talk to us

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The Office treats all
communication in confidence.

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website:** ombudstoronto.ca

about Toronto's Ombudsman

Fiona Crean is the City of Toronto's first Ombudsman and the Office opened in April 2009.

Her years as Ombudsperson for York University and Executive Director of the Ontario Ombudsman's Office have given her significant experience in conflict resolution, good governance and promoting accountability in the public sector.

Prior to taking on her post, Fiona worked for a number of years at the Ontario Human Rights Commission and was the Assistant Deputy Minister in the Ontario Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, responsible for addressing systemic racism and sexism.