

Midtown reps feeling sidelined

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By [Kris Scheuer](#)

Some midtown councillors say they are being treated like bench-warmers at city council.

Despite introducing motions at December's city council session, Eglinton-Lawrence rep Karen Stintz says she's doubtful her ideas will see the light of day anytime soon.

"Council can only debate what's on the mayor's agenda," she said following the latest council session.

The agenda is made up of issues that first go before council's boards and committees such as the board of health or the executive committee.

Because not all politicians are on every committee, should one want a new issue added to an agenda for debate, they table a motion and introduce it to council as a whole.

Councillors need two thirds of their colleagues to vote to add a motion to an agenda before it can even be debated.

"Or it will go to the mayor's Executive Committee," said Stintz, who is not on the 13-member executive. "I have documented every motion I've moved. All have been referred back to Executive Committee and then to (Miller's) office. It just gets killed."

Earlier this year, the mayor's fiscal review panel of experts recommended a series of ideas on governance and economic initiatives.

Stintz's latest motion was to request action on a recommendation by that panel.

One of the key recommendations of the panel is that the city develop a cost reduction strategy, states her motion.

Stintz asked city staff to prepare a report to council on how the panel's recommendations can be implemented.

Her motion was referred to the Executive Committee.

During a council debate on who gets appointed to this powerful committee, St. Paul's councillor Michael Walker expressed a desire to have more voices heard.

"You don't have democracy without contrary opinions," said Walker, who is not on executive.

Four other motions by various politicians were also referred back to the executive, including one by Walker.

He wants finance reforms to be in place before the 2010 municipal election. In 2004 and 2005, council voted to prohibit campaign donations from corporations and unions.

The city needed the province's permission to act on these for the 2006 municipal election but did not get the approval in time. With the passing of the City of Toronto Act in 2007, council now has the authority to decide for itself, states Walker's motion.

"There is no reason to delay now," read the motion, which was referred back to the executive.

Eleven other motions that went to council were adopted.

Eglinton-Lawrence councillor Howard Moscoe proposed one of the endorsed motions.

Moscoe requested council to urge the CRTC to exempt independent, registered political candidates from the new National Do Not Call List that will reduce the number of telemarketing calls people receive.

His motion stated, the new rules "should respect the reasonable need for candidates to contact their constituents and potential voters".

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