

# Ford's child-care task force meets in secret <sup>[1]</sup>

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## EXCERPTS:

The head of Mayor Rob Ford's task force on child care says its three remaining meetings might be held behind closed doors, after two other councillors cried foul for being turfed from its first meeting.

Councillor Giorgio Mammoliti told the Star Thursday night, after Janet Davis and Kristyn Wong-Tam were ordered out of a city hall committee room and the door closed, that the three remaining meetings - Oct. 19, Oct. 26 and Nov. 3 - would be open to the public and councillors.

But on Friday Mammoliti (Ward 7 York West) he said that might not be the case. "A decision on that hasn't been made yet," he said.

Ford has said Toronto can no longer afford to fund 2,000 child-care spots subsidized by the city alone. He has asked the province to help pay for them and formed the task force to explore cheaper ways to provide more spots for low-income Torontonians.

Davis (Ward 31, Beaches-East York) and Kristyn Wong-Tam (Ward 27, Toronto Centre-Rosedale) tried to attend the first meeting Thursday night but were ordered out of the room by Mammoliti and told by Ford's staff "the mayor did not want us there."

According to the meeting's agenda, participants included Dr. Rachel Langford, director of Ryerson University's school of early childhood education, and several daycare centre operators.

Davis said four of the daycares involved are private and two are non-profit, raising the possibility of privatization.

Wong-Tam noted she and Davis both sit on the Community Development and Recreation committee, which oversees child care.

"I believe the best decisions come from consultation and collaboration so this is very disappointing," she said.

"It's part of a pattern of secrecy and back-room dealing from the mayor's office that we've seen with Transit City, the (decision not to make a) Olympic bid and the Port Lands discussions."

Davis said closing the door "raises suspicions and makes the public question motives and the child-care sector very nervous."

Mammoliti (Ward 7, York West) accused Davis and Wong-Tam of "intimidating the hell" out of potential members who hadn't yet committed to participate.

"Councillor Davis started snapping pictures and Councillor Wong-Tam started moving name cards around so she could sit down," he said. "It was intimidation, it was politics at its worst, and I made the call to protect those members."

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-reprinted from the Toronto Star

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