

ARTICLE FROM OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN JULY/AUGUST 2009 NEWSLETTER

WHAT'S A LOBBYIST REGISTRAR?

By guest writer, Linda Gehrke, Toronto's Lobbyist Registrar

Open and transparent; these are words that should be synonymous with City government. The Office of the Lobbyist Registrar works hard to make this happen.

Had your business licence revoked or trying to secure a contract with the City and want to talk to your member of Council about it? Or perhaps you want to start a grassroots campaign for or against a by-law that directly affects your business? If you are nodding your head you may need to register with our office.

You may be asking, who or what is a lobbyist and why do they need to register?

You need to register because not doing so could land you in front of a judge. It is an offence under the *Provincial Offences Act* not to register and it will cost you a lot of money if you are convicted.

So how does the lobbyist registry work?

Before communicating with a public office holder, a lobbyist has to register and say what they're lobbying for. After talking to someone in the City, a lobbyist has three days to go back into the registry and say who they contacted and how. You can do this online at www.toronto.ca/lobbying or drop by our office.

Our office also investigates complaints about breaches of ethical standards and lobbyists not registering.

So if you need to talk to someone in public office about a by-law, resolution, permit, license or an application make sure you get advice about whether you need to register with the Office of the Lobbyist Registrar.

Where can you find us?

We are at 112 Elizabeth Street, Toronto, just south of Dundas Street West. We are open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday to Friday. You can ask a Lobbyist Registry Advisor for information about the lobbying by-law, registering as a lobbyist, searching the registry and to make a complaint about unregistered lobbying or a breach of the lobbyists' code of conduct. You can visit us, call us at 416-338-5858 or e-mail us at lobbyistregistrar@toronto.ca.

For more information, to register as a lobbyist and search the lobbyist registry, please go to www.toronto.ca/lobbying.