

# OMBUDSMAN TO INVESTIGATE INCIDENT AT NIAGARA COUNCIL MEETING

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## OMBUDSMAN TO INVESTIGATE INCIDENT AT NIAGARA COUNCIL MEETING

December 14, 2017

*Ontario Ombudsman Paul Dubé today informed the Regional Municipality of Niagara that he will conduct a formal investigation into an incident at a council meeting on December 7, when a journalist and a citizen blogger were reportedly asked to leave the premises and had their property seized.*

(TORONTO – December 14, 2017) Ontario Ombudsman Paul Dubé today informed the Regional Municipality of Niagara that he will conduct a formal investigation into an incident at a council meeting on December 7, when a journalist and a citizen blogger were reportedly asked to leave the premises and had their property seized.

“This matter has raised serious concerns about the actions and processes of the municipality, and has understandably drawn high public interest,” said Mr. Dubé, whose office received several complaints related to the incident.

The investigation will be conducted by the Special Ombudsman Response Team (SORT), which has handled scores of large-scale investigations into issues affecting millions of Ontarians. The team will begin its work – including interviewing the relevant parties and reviewing documentation – immediately, Mr. Dubé said. In addition to the general issues raised, the investigation will also consider whether the meeting violated the open meeting requirements of the *Municipal Act, 2001*.

The Ombudsman is an independent officer of the Ontario legislature who resolves and investigates some 20,000 public complaints per year about provincial government bodies, municipalities, universities and school boards. Most complaints are resolved without need for formal investigation: Of the more than 5,800 complaints received about municipalities since the Ombudsman’s mandate was extended to include them in 2016, this is the fifth to become a formal investigation.

Anyone who has specific information related to the matter under investigation is invited to contact the Ombudsman’s Office via the [confidential complaint form](#) at [www.ombudsman.on.ca](http://www.ombudsman.on.ca), or by calling 1-800-263-1830.

The investigation will be completed as quickly as possible, Mr. Dubé said. Under the *Ombudsman Act*, he may find the actions of a public sector body to be (among other things) contrary to law, unreasonable, unjust, oppressive, improperly discriminatory or wrong – and make recommendations for improvement. Although the Ombudsman’s recommendations are not binding, they are almost always accepted and implemented, and have resulted in broad government reforms.

For further information, please contact:

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# Ombudsman Ontario

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