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Your morning briefing

13.12.2017

Headlines

The lawyer for spurned PC candidate **Vikram Singh** argued in court yesterday that a recording between the former Hamilton—Ancaster—Dundas party hopeful and PC campaign chair **Walied Soliman** should be made public. At an earlier stage of the court proceedings, and Ontario Superior Court judge sealed the recording on the grounds that it was privileged. Singh's lawyer argued that privileged material must "contain at least a hint of compromise." When asked to comment by *QP Briefing*, **Patrick Brown** declined to "speculate" on the case.

The NDP unearthed an Order in Council in which the government directed hydro companies to promote Fair Hydro Plan savings on ratepayer bills. In question period **Andrea Horwath** called the move "using public money for partisan purposes." The Order in Council was signed off on in June, and the direction lasts until July 2018, one month after the election.

The Ontario Hospital Association is sounding the alarm on overcrowding, citing stats that half of the province's hospitals are over 100 per cent capacity, with one up to 140 per cent capacity. The international standard is 85 per cent, the *Star* article notes. The group is requesting an additional 4.55 per cent in health care funding, which amounts to an extra \$815 million annually.

In case you missed our stories Tuesday:

- Dispute over secret recording between PC campaign chair and spurned candidate comes before the court
- Omnibus health-care accountability legislation passed despite opposition objections
- In Brief: The missing \$32 million, the missing \$100,000 apology, and the missing 25,000 students, and more

In other news:

John Vanthof issued a passionate plea for improved highway safety during Tuesday's question period. The *Timmins Press* follows up with details on the regional issue that has the NDP MPP calling for improved winter maintenance.

TVO looks at craft beer's popularity outside of major Ontario cities, and finds it's a way for people to say cheers to where they live.

The Ontario Municipal Board has rejected Hamilton city council's proposed ward boundary changes, and instead backed a plan proposed by independent consultants. The OMB is due to weigh in on Toronto's ward boundary changes by the end of the year.

GTA municipalities still lead the country in childcare costs, says a new report from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. The median monthly cost for infant childcare in Toronto is \$1,758, the report notes.

Stouffville mayor **Justin Altmann** won't apologize. Altmann, whom you may remember from such municipal moments as making a replica chain of office to wear around town, was ordered by council to apologize for creating a bizarre *Homeland*-style wall in his office washroom. The apology was recommended by the integrity commissioner, and had to be delivered in an open council session within 90 days. But Stouffville just had its last council session before the December 22 deadline, and Altmann declined to stand up and deliver his penance. The mayor said in November he would fight the decision.

And in the opinion pages:

- **Thomas Walkom** writes that pot legislation isn't about protecting kids, but about making money for government.
- In the *Toronto Sun*, the Fraser Institute's **Ben Eisen** argues the PC minimum wage proposal is too similar to the Liberals', and what's needed is a fundamental shift.
- The *Ottawa Citizen*'s **David Reevely** writes about the likely doomed effort by downtown councillors to introduce a levy to make up the city's infrastructure gap, and says that it's a worthwhile conversation to have.

Bills

Resuming the debate adjourned on December 6, 2017 on the motion for Third Reading of Bill 166, An Act to amend or repeal various Acts and to enact three new Acts with respect to the construction of new homes and ticket sales for events.

Third Reading of Bill 177, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various statutes.

Committees

9 a.m.

Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills will meet as follows: Bill Pr76, An Act to revive J. Van Elsen Holdings Limited, Bill Pr77, An Act to revive Streetwise Holdings Limited, Bill Pr78, An Act to revive 608524 Ontario Inc. Room No. 1.

Events

9 a.m.

Steven Del Duca, Minister of Transportation, will make an announcement. He will be joined by **Charles Sousa**, Minister of Finance; **Amrit Mangat**, MPP for Mississauga-Brampton South; **Vic Dhillon**, MPP for Brampton West and **Harinder Malhi**, MPP for Brampton-Springdale. ServiceOntario, 1 Gateway Blvd., Brampton.

9 a.m.

Representatives of the Ontario Coalition for Lab Reform (OCLR) present a new report on the province's community medical laboratory testing. Media Studio, Queen's Park.

9:15 a.m.

Chris Ballard, Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, and **Parminder Sandhu**, Chair of the Green Ontario Fund board of directors, will make an announcement. MaRS Discovery District, West Tower Atrium, 661 University Ave., Toronto.

1 p.m.

MPP **France Gélinas** and Ontario Council of Hospital Unions (OCHU) to discuss solutions to the workplace violence crisis. Media Studio, Queen's Park.

1:45 p.m.

Amherstburg Fire Chief and Deputy join MPP **Taras Natyshak** to discuss emergency preparedness. Media Studio, Queen's Park.

4:30 p.m.

Organized by the Confederation of Toronto Chinese Canadian Organizations, a demonstration to mark the first Nanjing Massacre Commemorative Day in Ontario. One thousand expected to attend. South Lawn, Queen's Park.

7 p.m.

The second in a series, Wynne holds a town hall meeting in Brampton. Century Gardens Recreation Centre, 340 Vodden Street East, Brampton.

In brief: The missing \$32 million

12.12.2017

Responding to a question by PC energy critic **Todd Smith**, Energy Minister **Glenn Thibeault** mistakenly said today that the Independent Electricity System Operator is still in discussion with nine companies to recover \$32 million in funds. That number represents the difference between the \$168 million in recouped settlements and what the IESO says is \$200 million in ineligible costs.

Thibeault's office later clarified that there are \$32 million in disputed costs, which doesn't mean that the IESO is actively trying to recoup all of that money — in fact, it is only trying to recoup a very small portion of that.

The \$168 million represents the most the IESO thought it could get out of the process without a prolonged court battle, while it maintains that the other funds should have been paid too.

Thibeault's office told *QP Briefing* that new controls have been put in place to ensure that overcharging does not occur again, and that the program eventually will be phased out with the introduction of market renewal.

In a scrum on Tuesday, PC Leader **Patrick Brown** weighed in on the overcharging scandal, and reiterated the party's call to have all \$92 million — the number the Auditor General cites, rather than IESO — paid back by Dec. 31. Due to the fact that settlements have already occurred, that is unlikely to happen.