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Charges sworn out against fluoride proponents

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Charges have been sworn out against the Ontario Dental Association and two of its leaders for a potential breach of the Municipal Act.

Robert Fleming, executive director of WaterlooWatch, swore out charges in front of Justice of the Peace A. Magoulas on Monday at the Provincial Offences Court in Kitchener. The complaint states that the Ontario Dental Association, president-elect Dr. Harry Hoediono and past-president Dr. Ira Kershin, breach section 94 under the Municipal Elections Act by proposing to incur expenses with respect to a question on the municipal ballot.

Fleming's charge claims they failed to file a notice of registration at the time of the offence, June 17, before campaigning as a candidate to the upcoming fluoride question appearing on the Oct. 25 municipal ballot.

Fleming said that paper copies of fluoridation literature including handouts, a brochure and soft-cover bound booklets were handed out to the voting public in attendance for what was supposed to be the first of three proposed water fluoridation debates being held at the Hauser Haus at the Waterloo Memorial Recreation Complex.

A notice of hearing has been issued for the Provincial Offences Court at 77 Queen St., N., in Kitchener for Nov. 8.

In the proceeding, Fleming charges that the parties named didn't file their notice as a candidate to the question before the Sept. 10 cut off.

Fleming said he went to both municipalities and local police before pressing charges as a private citizen. He said there was some confusion as to how the election law was applied.

Fleming was the first registered campaigner to the question and said dentists should be held to the same standard in respect to the law.

"I have difficulty trusting dentists who won't follow the law the rest of us must follow," said Fleming.

The Ontario Dental Association responded to the charges laid by Fleming.

"The ODA intends to fully dispute all charges, and takes the position that it was not in violation of the Municipal Elections Act, and that the charges are invalid," the organization said in a statement. "As it relates to the June 17th Rogers cable organized media event, we were asked to participate and provide information by the press.

"We did so, on a voluntary basis, as we would for any media request related to oral health care."

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