

Appendix A  
Code of Conduct Council, Committees and Local Boards



**COMPLAINT PROTOCOL**

**PART A: INFORMAL COMPLAINT PROCEDURE**

1. Any person or a representative of an organization who has identified or witnessed behaviour or an activity by a Member that they believe is in contravention of the Code of Conduct (the “Code”) may wish to address the prohibited behaviour or activity themselves as follows:
  - a) Advise the Member that the behaviour or activity contravenes the Code;
  - b) Encourage the Member to stop the prohibited behaviour or activity;
  - c) Keep a written record of the incidents including dates, times, locations, other persons present, and any other relevant information;
  - d) If applicable, confirm to the Member your satisfaction with the response of the Member; or, if applicable, advise the Member of your dissatisfaction with the response; and,
  - e) Consider the need to pursue the matter in accordance with the formal complaint procedure outlined in Part B, or in accordance with another applicable judicial or quasi-judicial process or complaint procedure.
2. All persons and organizations are encouraged to initially pursue this informal complaint procedure as a means of stopping and remedying a behaviour or activity that is prohibited by the Code. With the consent of the complaining individual or organization and the Member, the Integrity Commissioner may be part of any informal process. However, it is not a precondition or a prerequisite that those complaining must pursue the informal complaint procedure before pursuing the Formal Complaint Procedure in Part B.

**PART B: FORMAL COMPLAINT PROCEDURE:**

**Integrity Commissioner Requests for Inquiries**

1.
  - a. A request for an investigation of a complaint that a Member has contravened the Code of Conduct (the “complaint”) shall be filed with the Municipal Clerk. **A CODE OF CONDUCT - FORMAL COMPLAINT FORM / AFFIDAVIT** must be completed and submitted along with a \$125.00 deposit. Once received, the Clerk will send the complaint directly to the Integrity Commissioner by mail, E-mail, fax or courier in the form attached to this Protocol as Schedule “A”.
    - i. All complaints shall be signed by an identifiable individual (which includes the authorized signing officer of an organization).
    - ii. A complaint shall set out reasonable and probable grounds for the allegation that the member has contravened the Code.
    - iii. The complaint shall include:

- the name of the alleged violator,
  - the provision of the Code allegedly contravened,
  - facts constituting the alleged contravention,
  - the names and contact information of witnesses; and,
  - contact information for the complainant during normal business hours.
- b. For any Inquiry which has not been completed before nomination day for a regular election, as set out in section 31 of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, as amended, the Commissioner shall terminate the inquiry on that day.
- c. If an Inquiry is terminated due to non-completion before the nomination day, the Commissioner shall not commence another inquiry in respect of the matter unless, within six weeks after voting day in a regular election, as set out in section 5 of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, as amended, the person or entity who made the request or the member or former member whose conduct is concerned makes a written request to the Commissioner that the inquiry be commenced.

### **Initial Classification by Integrity Commissioner**

2.

- a. Upon receipt of the request, the Integrity Commissioner shall make an initial classification to determine if the matter is, on its face, a complaint with respect to non-compliance with the Code and not covered by other legislation or other Council policies as described in subsection (3).
- b. If the complaint is not, on its face, a complaint with respect to non-compliance with the Code, or the complaint is covered by other legislation or a complaint procedure under another Council policy, the Integrity Commissioner shall advise the complainant in writing as follows:
- i. If the complaint, on its face, is an allegation of a criminal nature consistent with the Criminal Code of Canada, the complainant shall be advised that if they wish to pursue any such allegation, the complainant must pursue it with the appropriate police force;
  - ii. If the complaint, on its face, is with respect to non-compliance with the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, the complainant shall be advised that the matter will be referred to the Municipal Clerk;
  - iii. If the complaint, on its face, is with respect to non-compliance with a more specific Council policy, with a separate complaint procedure, the complainant shall be advised to pursue the matter under that procedure; and,
  - iv. In other cases, the complainant shall be advised that the matter, or part of the matter, is not within the jurisdiction of the Integrity Commissioner, with any additional reasons and referrals as the Integrity Commissioner considers appropriate.

- c. The Integrity Commissioner shall determine whether a report to Council is warranted for a specific complaint that is not within the jurisdiction of the Integrity Commissioner.
- d. The Integrity Commissioner shall report annually to Council on complaints not within the jurisdiction of the Integrity Commissioner, but, where possible, shall not disclose information that could identify a person concerned.

### **Integrity Commissioner Investigation**

#### **3.**

- a. The Integrity Commissioner is responsible for performing the duties set out in this Protocol independently, and shall report directly to Council in respect of all such matters. The Integrity Commissioner shall file an annual report to Town Council respecting the advice, education and investigations carried out in the previous year, and developments or recommendations of significance related to the role of the Integrity Commissioner.
- b. If the Integrity Commissioner is of the opinion that a complaint is frivolous, vexatious or not made in good faith, or that there are no grounds or insufficient grounds for an investigation, the Integrity Commissioner shall not conduct an investigation, or, where that becomes apparent in the course of an investigation, terminate the investigation.
- c. Other than in exceptional circumstances, the Integrity Commissioner will not report to Council on any complaint described in subsection (b) except as part of an annual or other periodic report.

#### **4.**

- a. If a complaint has been classified as being within the Integrity Commissioner's jurisdiction and not rejected under section 3, the Commissioner shall investigate and may attempt to settle the complaint.
- b. Upon receipt of a formal complaint pursuant to the Code, and where the Integrity Commissioner determines that the complaint meets the criteria to be investigated, the Integrity Commissioner may elect to conduct an informal investigation or alternatively to exercise the powers of a Commission under Parts I and II of the *Public Inquiries Act*, as contemplated by Subsection 223.4(2) of the Act.
- c. If the Integrity Commissioner elects to conduct an inquiry under the *Public Inquiries Act*, he/she shall report to Council and seek instructions before proceeding, setting out the reasons for the investigation and providing an estimate of the expected cost and time that the investigation will require.
- d. When the *Public Inquiries Act* applies to an investigation of a complaint, the Integrity Commissioner shall comply with the procedures specified in that Act and this Complaint Protocol, but, if there is a conflict between a provision of the Complaint Protocol and a provision of the *Public Inquiries Act*, the provision of the *Public Inquiries Act* prevails.

#### **5.**

- a. The Integrity Commissioner will proceed as follows, except where otherwise required by the *Public Inquiries Act*.

- i. Serve the complaint and supporting material upon the Member whose conduct is in question with a request that a written response to the allegation by way of affidavit or otherwise be filed within ten business days; and,
    - ii. The Integrity Commissioner may serve a copy of the response provided upon the complainant with a request for a written reply within ten business days.
  - b. If necessary, after reviewing the written materials, the Integrity Commissioner may speak to anyone relevant to the complaint, access and examine any of the information described in subsections 223.4(3) and (4) of the *Municipal Act*, and may enter any Town work location relevant to the complaint for the purposes of an investigation and settlement.
  - c. The Integrity Commissioner may make interim reports to Council where necessary and as required, to address any instances of interference, obstruction or retaliation encountered during the investigation.
6.
  - a. The Integrity Commissioner shall report to the complainant and the Member generally no later than 90 days after the making of the complaint.
  - b. Where the complaint is sustained in whole or in part, the Integrity Commissioner shall also report to Council outlining the findings, the terms of any settlement, or recommended corrective action.
  - c. Where the complaint is dismissed, other than in exceptional circumstances, the Integrity Commissioner shall not report to Council except as part of an annual or other periodic report.
  - d. Any recommended corrective action must be permitted in law and shall be designed to ensure that the inappropriate behaviour or activity does not continue.
7. If the Integrity Commissioner determines that there has been no contravention of the Code of Conduct or that a contravention occurred although the Member took all reasonable measures to prevent it, or that a contravention occurred that was trivial or committed through inadvertence or an error of judgement made in good faith, the Integrity Commissioner shall so state in the report and shall recommend that no penalty be imposed.
8. The Municipal Clerk shall process the report for the next meeting of Council.
9. Once the report is final and the Integrity Commissioner has determined that the complaint was not frivolous or vexatious, the Municipal Clerk shall return the \$125.00 deposit to the complainant. The deposit will be returned in cash to maintain the confidentiality of the complainant.

### **Council Review**

10.
  - a. Council shall consider and respond to the report within 90 days after the day the report is laid before it.

- b. In responding to the report, Council may vary a recommendation that imposes a penalty, subject to Section 223.4, subsection (5) of the *Municipal Act*, but shall not refer the recommendation other than back to the Integrity Commissioner.
- c. Upon receipt of recommendations from the Integrity Commissioner, Council may, in circumstances where the Integrity Commissioner has determined there has been a violation of the Code of Conduct, impose either of two penalties:
  - i. a reprimand; or,
  - ii. suspension of the remuneration paid to the Member in respect of his/her services as a Member of Council or a local board, as the case may be, for a period of up to 90 days.
- d. The Integrity Commissioner may also recommend that Council take the following actions for remedial purposes:
  - i. removal from membership of a committee;
  - ii. removal as chair of a committee;
  - iii. repayment or reimbursement of monies received;
  - iv. return of property or reimbursement of its value;
  - v. a written and/or verbal request for an apology to Council, the complainant, or, both.

## **Confidentiality**

### **11.**

- a. A complaint will be processed in compliance with the confidentiality requirements in sections 223.5 and 223.6 of the *Municipal Act*, which are summarized in the following subsections.
  - i. The Integrity Commissioner and every person acting under her or his instructions shall preserve secrecy with respect to all matters that come to his or her knowledge in the course of any investigation except as required by law in a criminal proceeding.
  - ii. All reports from the Integrity Commissioner to Council will be made available to the public.
  - iii. Any references by the Integrity Commissioner in an annual or other periodic report to a complaint or an investigation shall not disclose confidential information that could identify a person concerned.
  - iv. The Integrity Commissioner, in a report to Council on whether a Member has violated the Code of Conduct, shall only disclose such matters as in the Integrity Commissioner's opinion are necessary for the purposes of the report.

