

Committee of the Whole (2) Report

DATE: Wednesday, October 14, 2020

WARD(S): ALL

TITLE: OFFICE OF THE INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER AND LOBBYIST REGISTRAR ANNUAL REPORT, JANUARY 2019 – JUNE 2020

FROM:

Suzanne Craig, Integrity Commissioner and Lobbyist Registrar

ACTION: FOR INFORMATION

Purpose

Under Part B of the Complaint Protocol for the Vaughan Council Code Ethical of Conduct (the “Code”), the Integrity Commissioner shall submit periodic reports to Council setting out the activities of the Office, all complaints received and on their disposition.

Report Highlights

- The Integrity Commissioner and Lobbyist Registrar is a statutory office with direct reporting to Council.
- The Office of the Integrity Commissioner and Lobbyist Registrar applies the Code standards to the actions and behavior of Members of Council and monitors the communications of lobbyists with public office holders.
- The Code and the Mandatory Lobbyist Registry provide the basis for good governance with the municipal government of the City of Vaughan. The clear and consistent application of the rules and the reporting by the Integrity Commissioner and Lobbyist Registrar provide the public with a snapshot of the compliance by Members of Council with adherence to the ethical rules during their term of office.

Recommendation

1. That this report be received for information.

Background

This report covers the 2019 reporting year and up to June 30, 2020. Some of the investigations filed in 2019 were completed in 2020, hence my decision to include the first 6 months of 2020 in this report. The Annual Report sets out the Office's activities and decisions over the 2019 year. The activities of this reporting year began with the newly elected Vaughan Council which was sworn into office in 2018 and subsequently, 2019 was occupied with work on updates to the Code. These updates amended the Code and Code Protocol to include new rules that codify the expanded role of Integrity Commissioner passed under Bill 68.

Previous Reports/Authority

[Office of the Integrity Commissioner Annual Report and Lobbyist Registrar Update 2018](#)

Analysis and Options

In the 2019 reporting year, the Office received 7 informal complaints and 6 formal complaints in relation to the Code. Of the six formal complaints, an investigation file was opened on 2 of them, but the matters were dismissed. One formal complaint was mediated with recommendations to the Respondent as part of the settlement negotiations and 3 were subject of complete investigations. Of the two formal complaints that triggered the MCIA rules that were dismissed after opening a complaint investigation, the matters were discontinued. This decision was made as it became apparent in the course of the investigation, that there were insufficient grounds to continue and this Office did not elect to apply to a judge for a decision on whether the Members had breached the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act* ("MCIA").

In respect of the activities of the Office of the Lobbyist Registrar, in this reporting year there were no investigations concluded but several individuals contacted the Office to discuss whether they were required to register their communications that took place with elected officials. These queries reflected the fact that over a two-year period the City of Vaughan is moving towards a steady state of understanding of what the mandatory lobbyist regime entails, but this Office has identified that more needs to be done on the part of the Lobbyist Registrar to educate and inform individuals and businesses of the mandatory registry rules.

Financial Impact

N/A

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

N/A

Conclusion

The Office of the Integrity Commissioner and Lobbyist Registrar's operational strategy over this reporting year has been to prioritize the detection and deterrence efforts against activity that would significantly undermine the public trust in municipal government ethical decision-making. Working with members of the public and Members' staff, a significant amount of work of this Office in this reporting year has been dedicated to responding to Members' formal and informal requests for advice and identifying possible Code breaches prior to them occurring. With this strategic focus on facilitating compliance, the Office has continued its strong mandate of proactive consultation with Members, their staff and the public, with a view to encouraging interaction, dialogue and understanding of the day to day application of the rules of the Code and Lobbying By-law.

For more information, please contact: Suzanne Craig, Integrity Commissioner and Lobbyist Registrar, suzanne.craig@vaughan.ca

Attachments

1. Cover letter, August 31, 2020
2. Integrity Commissioner and Lobbyist Registrar Annual Report, January 2019 – June 2020

Prepared by

Suzanne Craig, Integrity Commissioner and Lobbyist Registrar ext: 8301

Approved by



Suzanne Craig

Integrity Commissioner and Lobbyist Registrar