

The Corporation of the Township of North Kawartha

By-law 2018-0103

Being a By-Law to Establish a Code of Conduct for Members of Council and to repeal By-Law #124/07

Whereas Section 223.2 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*, S.O. 2001, c. 25, as amended, provides that a municipality may establish codes of conduct for Members of Council of the municipality and of local boards of the municipality;

And Whereas the *Modernizing Ontario's Municipal Legislation Act, 2016* (Bill 68) was enacted and includes amendments to the *Municipal Act* and the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act* coming into force on March 1, 2019;

And Whereas the Council of the Corporation of the Township of North Kawartha considers it appropriate and proper to establish a code of conduct (the "Code") and to enact a by-law in this regard;

Now Therefore Be It Enacted by the Council of the Corporation of the Township of North Kawartha:

1. That By-Law #124/07 is hereby repealed along with any by-laws contrary to this by-law and
2. That the following Code of Conduct for Members of Council is hereby adopted:

Code of Conduct for Members of Council

Preamble

Members of Council have the privilege of attaining elected office. That privilege carries significant responsibilities and obligations with respect to the public trust. In order to strengthen the role of Council and to enhance public trust with respect to the obligations of its Members, this Code is established to govern and regulate the ethical conduct of all Members. This Code also supplements other existing Federal and Provincial legislation and Township by-laws and policies that govern Members' conduct which include but are not limited to the following:

- Criminal Code of Canada
- Municipal Act
- Municipal Conflict of Interest Act
- Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
- Occupational Health and Safety Act

- Ontario Human Rights Code
- Planning Act
- Township of North Kawartha Procedural by-law
- Township of North Kawartha Workplace Violence and Harrassment Policy

1. Purpose and Principles

- 1.1 This Code of Conduct for Members of Council (the “Code”) sets out and identifies the Township’s expectations for its Members and establishes rules for appropriate conduct. Members are to represent the public and to consider the well-being and interests of the Township as a corporate body and all of its ratepayers.
- 1.2 The public expects the highest moral and ethical standards of conduct from Members that it elects. The behaviour and actions of Members is expected to reflect the principles of accountability, transparency, and public trust. Adherence to these standards will protect and maintain the Township’s reputation and integrity.
- 1.3 The key statements of principle that underline this Code are as follows:
- (a) the decision-making process of Council is open, accessible and equitable and respects the Township’s governance structure;
 - (b) public office is not to be used for the personal financial benefit of any Member;
 - (c) Township residents should be able to have confidence in the integrity of their local government and of their Members; and
 - (d) the conduct of each Member demonstrates fairness, respect for differences and a duty to work with other Members together for the common good.

2. Definitions

2.1 In This Code:

- (a) “**applicant**” means a person who has applied for an investigation by the Integrity Commissioner of an alleged contravention of the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*;
- (b) “**application**” means a written request for an investigation with respect to an alleged contravention of the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*;

- (c) "**Clerk**" means the Clerk of the Township or his/her designate;
- (d) "**Code**" means the "Code of Conduct for Council Members" as established by Council pursuant to Section 223.2 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*;
- (e) "**complainant**" means a person who has filed a complaint in accordance with this Code;
- (f) "**complaint**" means a written objection filed with the Integrity Commissioner pursuant to this Code respecting a Member;
- (g) "**confidential information**" means any information in the possession of or received in confidence by the Township that the Township is prohibited from disclosing or has decided to refuse to disclose under the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* or other legislation, which includes but is not limited to:
 - (i) information that is disclosed or discussed at a meeting that is closed to the public pursuant to subsection 239(2), (3) or (3.1) of the *Municipal Act, 2001*;
 - (ii) information that is given verbally in confidence in preparation for or following a meeting that is closed to the public pursuant to subsection 239(2), (3) or (3.1) of the *Municipal Act, 2001*;
 - (iii) personal information as defined in subsection 2(1) of the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*;
 - (iv) advice that is subject to solicitor-client privilege or information that concerns litigation or potential litigation, including matters before administrative tribunals, affecting the Township;
 - (v) information that concerns any confidential matters pertaining to personnel, labour relations, or items under negotiation;
 - (vi) price schedules in contract tenders and information about suppliers provided in contract tender or requests for information, quotation or proposal submissions, if such information is given in confidence, implicitly or explicitly;
 - (vii) sources of complaints where the identity of the complainant is given in confidence; or

- (viii) any information lawfully determined by the Council to be confidential or required to remain or be kept confidential by legislation or order.
- (h) “**Council**” means the Council of the Corporation of the Township of North Kawartha;
- (i) “**gift**” means cash, fees, admission fees, advances, vouchers, invitations, objects of value, services, offers, personal benefits, travel and accommodation or entertainment that are provided to and retained by a Member, that could be seen to be connected directly or indirectly to the performance of the Member’s duties;
- (j) “**harassment**” or “**harass**” involves engaging in a course of behaviour, comment or conduct, whether it occurs inside or outside the work environment, that is or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome. It includes but is not limited to any behaviour, conduct or comment by a Member that is directed at or is offensive to another person:
- i) on the grounds of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, age, handicap, sexual orientation, marital status, or family status, as well as any other grounds under the provisions of the Human Rights Code; or
 - ii) which is reasonably perceived by the recipient as an intention to bully, embarrass, intimidate or ridicule the recipient.
- (k) “**Integrity Commissioner**” means the Integrity Commissioner appointed by Council pursuant to Section 223.3 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*;
- (l) “**local board**” is hereby defined as in Section 1(1) and Section 223.1 of the *Municipal Act*, as amended.
- (m) “**meeting**” means any legally-constituted meeting of Council, a Committee of Council or a local board;
- (n) “**Member**” means a Member of Council or a Member of a local Board;
- (o) “**social media**” means web-based applications and on-line forums that allow users to interact, share and publish content such as text, links, photos, audio and video;

- (p) **“staff”** means direct employees of the Township whether full-time, part-time, contract (including employees of staffing agencies) or casual (including students and volunteers);
- (q) **“Township”** means the Corporation of the Township of North Kawartha; and
- (r) **“Township property”** includes, but is not limited to, all real and personal property, facilities, vehicles, equipment, supplies, services, staff, documents, intellectual property, computer programs or technological innovations belonging to the Township.

3. Conduct of Members

A Member shall at all times conduct themselves with propriety, decency and respect and with the understanding that all members of the public, other Members and staff are to be treated with dignity, courtesy and respect, recognizing that a Member is always a representative of the Township and of their elected office. A Member shall at all times conduct themselves with decorum and in accordance with the Township's Procedure By-law during any meetings and in a manner that demonstrates fairness, respect for individual differences, and an intention to work together for the common good and in furtherance of the public interest.

4. Compliance With the Code of Conduct

4.1 This Code applies to every Member with necessary modifications applied in the discretion of the Integrity Commissioner.

4.2 A Member shall:

- (a) observe and comply with every provision of this Code, as well as all other policies and procedures adopted or established by Council affecting the Member, acting in his or her capacity as a Member;
- (b) respect the integrity of the Code and inquiries and investigations conducted under it; and
- (c) co-operate in every way possible in securing compliance with the application and enforcement of the Code.

4.3 No Member shall:

- (a) undertake any act of reprisal or threaten reprisal against a complainant, an applicant or any other person for providing relevant information to the Integrity Commissioner or any other person; or

- (b) obstruct the Integrity Commissioner, or any other municipal official involved in applying or furthering the objectives or requirements of this Code, in the carrying out of such responsibilities, or pursuing any such objective.

5. Transparency and Openness in Decision Making

Members shall:

- (a) conduct Council business and their duties in an open and transparent manner so that stakeholders can understand the process and rationale which has been used to reach decisions;
- (b) ensure the public has input and receives notice regarding Council's decision making processes in accordance with the Procedure By-law;
- (c) ensure compliance with the *Municipal Act*, *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*, *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, and other applicable legislation regarding open meetings, accountability and transparency.

6. Access to Information and Confidentiality

6.1 A Member shall:

- (a) only be entitled to have access to information in the possession of the Township that is relevant to matters before Council or a local board or that is relevant to their role as Members of Council. Otherwise, they have the same access rights to information as any member of the public, and
- (b) have a continuing obligation to keep information confidential, even if the Member ceases to be a Member.

6.2 No Member shall:

- (a) obtain access, or attempt to gain access, to confidential information in the custody or control of the Township except in accordance with the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*;
- (b) disclose, release or publish by any means, including social media, any confidential information acquired by virtue of his or her office, in any form, except when required or authorized by Council or otherwise by law to do so;

- (c) use confidential information for personal or private gain or benefit, or for the personal or private gain or benefit of any other person or body; or
- (d) disclose or discuss, through written, electronic or verbal communication, to any individual or corporate third party, any information that has been or will be discussed at a closed session meeting of Council or a local board until such time that Council or a local board has determined or has been advised by staff that the matter, or any part of the matter, can be made public subject to review by the head or designate under the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act or if directed to do so by a court.

7. Undue Use of Influence

- 7.1 No Member shall use their status as a Member of Council to improperly influence the actions or decisions of Staff or others to the private advantage of the Member or his or her family, staff, or business associates.

8. Staff Relations

- 8.1 Only Council as a whole and no single Member has the authority to direct employees, approve budgets, policy, and other such matters, unless specifically authorized by Council.

- 8.2 A Member shall:

- (a) respect staff and acknowledge that staff is required to provide objective advice while remaining neutral, carry out directions of Council as a whole, and administer the policies of the Township without undue influence from any Member.
- (b) Respect the administrative structure and direct any staff performance concerns through the appropriate senior supervisory staff.

- 8.3 No Member Shall:

- (a) maliciously or falsely impugn the professional or ethical reputation of any staff;
- (b) compel staff to engage in partisan political activities, or subject staff to threat or discrimination for refusing to engage in such activities; or

- (c) attempt to use their authority or influence to threaten, intimidate, or coerce staff or improperly interfere with the lawful exercise of the duties of staff.

9. Gifts

9.1 No Member shall accept a gift or personal benefit that is connected directly or indirectly with the performance of their duties unless authorized by one of the exceptions below.

9.2 Notwithstanding Section 9.1 the following exceptions are applicable:

- (a) gifts received as an incident of protocol or social obligation that normally accompany the responsibilities of elected office;
- (b) gifts that are not connected directly or indirectly with the performance or duties of office;
- (c) compensation authorized by law;
- (d) a reimbursement of reasonable expenses incurred in the performance of activities connected with a legitimate municipal purpose;
- (e) political contributions that are otherwise offered, accepted and reported in accordance with applicable law;
- (f) a suitable memento of a function with nominal value, honouring the Member or the Township;
- (g) food, lodging, transportation and entertainment provided by provincial, regional and local governments or other government agency, and by the federal government or the government of a foreign country;
- (h) food, beverages and/or admission fees provided by banquets, receptions or similar events if attendance is the result of protocol or social obligation consistent with the responsibilities of office, and the person extending the invitation has done so infrequently and that person or a representative of the organization is in attendance;

10. Use of Township Property

10.1 A Member shall:

- (a) only use Township property for activities relevant to their role as Members of Council; and

- (b) no member shall obtain any personal financial gain or advantage from the use of Township property.

11. Political Activity

- 11.1 Members may not use Township resources for any type of political activity including promoting or opposing the candidacy of any person to elected office in any municipal, provincial and federal campaign.

12. Harassment

- 12.1 No Member shall harass any other member, any staff, or any member of the public.

13. Encouragement of Respect for the Township and Its By-Laws

- 13.1 A member shall:

- (a) encourage members of the public and their colleagues to abide by the Township's by-laws and policies, including this Code; and
- (b) accurately communicate the decisions of Council even if they disagree with the majority decision of Council, and by so doing affirm the respect and integrity in the decision-making processes of Council.

14. Social Media

- 14.1 A Member shall:

- (a) adhere to any and all Township policies and guidelines, regarding social media use; and
- (b) always identify themselves without any attempt to cover, disguise or mislead as to their identity or status as an elected representative of the Township when using social media.

- 14.2 No Member shall:

- (a) use social media to publish anything that is dishonest, untrue, offensive, disrespectful, constitutes harassment, is defamatory or misleading in any way.

15. Role of the Integrity Commissioner

- 15.1 The Township shall appoint an Integrity Commissioner under Section 223.3 of the *Municipal Act, 2001* who is an independent officer and who

will report directly to Council and be responsible for carrying out his or her functions in accordance with the Municipal Act, 2001 and any other functions assigned by Council, in an independent manner.

15.2 The Integrity Commissioner shall provide the following services:

- (a) The application of the code of conduct for members of council and the code of conduct for members of local boards or of either of them.
- (b) The application of any procedures, rules and policies of the municipality and local boards governing the ethical behaviour of members of council and of local boards or of either of them.
- (c) The application of sections 5, 5.1 and 5.2 of the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act to members of council or of local boards.
- (d) Requests from members of council and of local boards for advice respecting their obligations under the code of conduct applicable to the member. All requests for such advice and the advice in response thereto, shall be provided in writing.
- (e) Requests from members of council and of local boards for advice respecting their obligations under a procedure, rule or policy of the municipality or of the local board, as the case may be, governing the ethical behaviour of members. All requests for such advice and the advice in response thereto, shall be provided in writing.
- (f) Requests from members of council and of local boards for advice respecting their obligations under the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act. All requests for such advice and the advice in response thereto, shall be provided in writing.
- (g) The provision of educational information to members of council, members of local boards, the municipality and the public about the municipality's code of conduct for members of council and members of local boards and about the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*.

16. Complaint/Application Process

16.1 A complaint that a Member has contravened the Code or a corporate policy of the Township may be initiated by any person, any Member of Council, or by Council as follows:

- (a) a complaint shall be made in writing and shall be sent directly to the Integrity Commissioner by mail, e-mail, fax or courier;

- (b) a complaint must be signed and dated by the complainant who shall be an identifiable individual (complaints may not be submitted by any group, organization or corporation);
- (c) a complaint shall include:
 - (i) an explanation, with specific reference to sections of the Code, as to why the issue raised is alleged to be a contravention of the Code;
 - (ii) any evidence in support of the allegation; and
 - (iii) any witnesses in support of the allegation must be identified.
- (d) the alleged violation shall have taken place within sixty (60) days of filing the complaint with the Integrity Commissioner;

16.2 If filed with the Integrity Commissioner after March 1, 2019, an application to the Integrity Commissioner to inquire into an alleged contravention of Sections 5, 5.1 or 5.2 of the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act* ("MCIA") may be made by an elector as defined in Section 1 of the MCIA or by a person demonstrably acting in the public interest, as follows:

- (a) an application shall be made in writing and shall be sent directly to the Integrity Commissioner by mail, e-mail, fax or courier;
- (b) an application must be signed and dated by the complainant who shall be an identifiable individual (complaints may not be submitted by any group, organization or corporation);
- (c) an application shall include:
 - (i) an explanation, with specific reference to sections of the MCIA, as to why the issue raised is alleged to be a contravention of the Act;
 - (ii) any evidence in support of the allegation; and
 - (iii) any witnesses in support of the allegation must be identified; and
 - (iv) a statutory declaration attesting to the fact that the applicant became aware of the alleged contravention not more than six weeks before the date of application in accordance with Section 223.4.1(5) & (6) of the *Municipal Act*, as amended.

- (d) an application may only be made within six weeks after the applicant became aware of the alleged contravention and otherwise in compliance with Section 223.4.1(5) & (6) of the *Municipal Act*, as amended.
- 16.3 The Integrity Commissioner shall undertake an initial review of a complaint or an application that has been filed and shall determine whether the matter relates to non-compliance with the Code or other corporate policy applying to Members or compliance with the MCIA. The Integrity Commissioner shall have no power or jurisdiction to investigate or otherwise deal with the complaint or application, if it is not alleging such a contravention, or if the complaint relates to the following matters:
- (i) **Criminal Matter** – if the complaint relates to an allegation of a criminal nature consistent with the Criminal Code, the complainant shall be advised that pursuit of such an allegation must be made through the appropriate police service;
 - (ii) **Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy** – if the complaint relates to a matter under the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the complainant shall be referred to the Clerk.
 - (iii) **Municipal Elections Act** – if the complaint relates to the enforcement of the Municipal Elections Act, the complainant shall be referred to the Compliance Audit Process if the matter relates to campaign finances or to such other avenues of investigation as dictated by that Act.
- 16.4 If the Integrity Commissioner determines that he or she does not have jurisdiction as described in Section 17.3 the Integrity Commissioner shall advise the complainant/applicant in writing accordingly.
- 16.5 The Integrity Commissioner may dispose of a complaint or application on the basis that it is not within the jurisdiction of the Integrity Commissioner in a summary manner and may do so confidentially or report same to Council. The Integrity Commissioner may also seek further information or clarification from the complainant/applicant and shall endeavour to apprise the complainant/applicant of subsequent steps and the processing of the complaint or application and any ensuing investigation.
- 16.6 If the Integrity Commissioner is of the opinion that a complaint or application is frivolous or vexatious or is not made in good faith, or that there are no grounds or insufficient grounds for conducting an investigation, the Integrity Commissioner may choose not to investigate or, if already commenced, may terminate any investigation, or may

dispose of the complaint/application in a summary manner. The Integrity Commissioner shall advise the complainant/applicant in writing of his or her decision and reasons for not undertaking an investigation or terminating it.

- 16.7 If the Integrity Commissioner has decided to commence an investigation (except where otherwise required by the *Public Inquiries Act, 2009*, if applicable), the Integrity Commissioner shall provide a copy of the complaint or application and supporting evidence to the Member whose conduct is in question with a request for a written response to be provided within ten (10) days. The Integrity Commissioner may provide the response from the Member to the complainant/applicant with a request for a written reply also within ten (10) days. A complainant/applicant may request that his/her complaint remain anonymous and, if approved by the Integrity Commissioner, the name will not be released.
- 16.8 The Integrity Commissioner shall review the written responses and may, if necessary, discuss the matter with anyone that the Integrity Commissioner considers is relevant to the complaint. The Integrity Commissioner may access and examine any of the information described in subsections 223.4(3) and (4) of the *Municipal Act, 2001* and may access any Township workplace relevant to the complaint, including any documents or records under the custody or control of the Township.
- 16.9 Before finalizing a report to Council which recommends sanctions, the Integrity Commissioner shall provide the Member with the basis for their findings and any sanctions that may be recommended. The Member shall have the opportunity to comment further, either in writing, verbally or in person to the Integrity Commissioner on the proposed findings and sanctions.
- 16.10 Upon conclusion of a complaint investigation, the Integrity Commissioner shall:
 - (a) issue a report to Council on the findings of the investigation and, where there is a finding of contravention of the Code, the report shall contain the detailed findings, any recommended sanctions, or any settlement; and
 - (b) provide a copy of the final report to the Member at the same time as the final report is made available to the Clerk and to the complainant at the same time as the report becomes public.
- 16.11 Upon conclusion of an application investigation, the Integrity Commissioner may, if he/she considers it appropriate, apply to a Judge

under section 8 of the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act* for a determination as to whether the member has contravened Section 5, 5.1 or 5.2 of the Act.

16.12 The Commissioner shall:

- (a) advise the applicant if he or she will not be making an application to a judge; and
- (b) after deciding whether or not to apply to a judge, provide a written report providing reasons for the decision.

16.13 The Integrity Commissioner's report on a complaint or an application shall be placed on an agenda for consideration at a public meeting of the Committee of the Whole or Council, in accordance with the Procedure By-law, as determined by the Clerk in consultation with the Integrity Commissioner.

17. Election Blackout Period

17.1 No investigation shall be commenced or continued, nor shall the Integrity Commissioner report to Council respecting an investigation, within the election period between nomination day and six weeks after voting day, except as provided in s.223.4 and 223.4.1 of the *Municipal Act*.

17.2 For the purposes of the October 2018 regular municipal election, the provisions contained in paragraph 18.1 shall be interpreted as if the provisions of s.223.4 and 223.4.1 as amended were already in force.

18. Penalties

18.1 Upon receipt of a final report with respect to a complaint and the recommendations of the Integrity Commissioner, Council may, where the Integrity Commissioner has determined there was a violation of the Code, impose either of the following two (2) penalties:

- (a) a reprimand; or
- (b) suspension of remuneration paid to the Member in respect of his or her services as a Member for up to ninety (90) days.

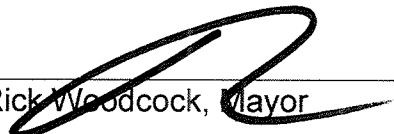
18.2 Council may also take the following actions:

- (a) removal from membership of a committee;
- (b) removal as chair of a committee;

- (c) request the repayment or reimbursement of monies received;
- (d) request the return of property or reimbursement of its value;

And That this By-Law comes into force on the 2nd day of October, 2018.

Read a first, second and third time and passed in open Council on the 2nd day of October, 2018.


Rick Woodcock, Mayor


Connie Parent, Clerk