



The Municipal Corporation of the Town of Fort Erie

By-law No. 43-2015

Being a By-law to Adopt a Council Code of Conduct and to Amend By-law No. 100-2013

Whereas the Municipal Act, 2001, as amended, subsection 223.2(1) authorizes municipalities to establish codes of conduct for members of council and local boards; and

Whereas By-law No. 100-2013 adopts a Council Code of Conduct and amends Council's Rules of Procedure By-law No. 145-06 to include the Code and also amends the Legal Expense Policy By-law No. 199-93; and

Whereas at its meeting held March 16, 2015, Council-in-Committee considered Administrative Report No. CS-07-2015 and recommended that By-law No. 145-06 be repealed and that the Code of Conduct be adopted separately by by-law;

Now therefore the Council of the Town of Fort Erie enacts as follows:

1. **That** the Council Code of Conduct attached as Schedule "A" to and forming part of this by-law is approved and adopted.
2. **That** By-law No. 100-2013 is amended by deleting sections 1 and 2.
3. **That** the Clerk of the Town is authorized to effect any minor modifications or corrections solely of an administrative, numerical, grammatical, semantical or descriptive nature to this by-law or its schedules after the passage of this by-law.

Read a first, second and third time and finally passed this 23rd day of March 2015.

Mayor

Interim Clerk

I, _____, the Clerk, of The Corporation of the Town of Fort Erie hereby certifies the foregoing to be a true certified copy of By-law No. 43-2015 of the said Town. Given under my hand and the seal of the said Corporation, this day of _____, 20____

1. Application

1. This Code of Conduct applies to all Members of Council and local boards (hereinafter referred to as "members" or "Members of Council").
2. Advisory Committees appointed by Council are largely comprised of citizen volunteers from the Town of Fort Erie who lend expertise, advice and make recommendations. The provisions outlined herein shall not apply to Advisory Committees, however, it is important to provide for Standards of Conduct. Accordingly, the conduct of Advisory Committee members shall be governed by the provisions of the Advisory Committee Standards of Conduct annexed hereto as Appendix "A". The Council Code of Conduct shall serve as a guide for Advisory Committee members.

2. Purpose

1. To maintain and enhance public confidence and trust in the integrity of members as well as the respect and confidence that society places in the institution of local government.
2. To demonstrate to the public that members are held to standards that place the public interest ahead of their private interests and to provide a transparent system by which the public may judge this to be the case.
3. To provide for greater certainty and guidance for members in how to reconcile their private interests with their public duties and functions.
4. To foster consensus among members by establishing common standards and by providing the means by which questions relating to proper conduct may be answered by an independent, non-partisan advisor.

3. Framework and Interpretation

1. The Code of Conduct is to be given broad, liberal interpretation in accordance with applicable legislation and the definitions set out herein. As a living document, the Code of Conduct will be brought forward for review when relevant legislation is amended, and at other times when appropriate to ensure that it remains current and continues to be a useful guide to Members of Council.
2. As long as all the facts known to the member are disclosed to the Integrity Commissioner and there is no change to these facts, then the member may rely on any written advice provided by the Integrity Commissioner.
3. Members of Council seeking clarification of any part of this Code may consult with the Clerk or Integrity Commissioner.

4. Key Principles

1. Members of Council shall be committed to performing their functions with accountability and transparency.
2. Members of Council shall recognize the public has a right to open government and transparent decision-making.
3. Members of Council shall at all times serve and be seen to serve the interests of their constituents and the Town in a conscientious and diligent manner and shall approach decision-making with an open mind.
4. Members of Council shall be committed to performing their functions with integrity, avoiding the improper use of the influence of their office, and conflicts of interest, both apparent and real.
5. Members of Council shall not extend in the discharge of their official duties preferential treatment to any individual or organization if a reasonably well-informed person would conclude that the preferential treatment was solely for the purpose of advancing a private or personal interest.
6. For greater clarity, this Code does not prohibit Members of Council from properly using their influence on behalf of constituents.
7. Members of Council are expected to perform their duties in office and arrange their private affairs in a manner that promotes public confidence and will bear close public scrutiny.
8. Members of Council must recognize and act upon the principle that democracy is best achieved when the operation of government is made as transparent and accountable to members of the public as possible.
9. Members of Council shall seek to serve the public interest by upholding both the letter and spirit of the laws of Parliament and the Ontario Legislature, as well as the by-laws and policies adopted by Municipal Council.

5. Statutory References

1. The Code of Conduct operates together with and as a supplement to the existing statutes as amended from time to time, governing the conduct of Members of Council, as follows:
 - (a) *Municipal Act, 2001*, S.O. 2001, c.25;
 - (b) *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c.M.50;
 - (c) *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c.M.56;
 - (d) *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, S.O. 1996, c.32; and
 - (e) *Ontario Human Rights Code*, R.S.O. 1990, c.H.19, as amended.

2. The Rules of Procedure, as amended, address the conduct of members during a Council meeting.
3. The Criminal Code of Canada also governs the conduct of members.
4. Other by-laws and policies of the Town of Fort Erie govern the conduct of members.

6. Definitions

For the purposes of this Code of Conduct:

- (a) **"benefit"** means anything (other than a gift) given that confers an advantage, including but not limited to discounted or free services, food or beverages for immediate consumption, activities or event tickets, unless payment in any form, including the exchange of goods or services, of equal or greater value is received by the individual or entity giving the benefit;
- (b) **"child"** means a child born within or outside a marriage and includes an adopted child and a person whom a parent has demonstrated a settled intention to treat as a child of his/her family or as defined under the current *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*, as amended from time to time;
- (c) **"Clerk"** means the Clerk of The Corporation of the Town of Fort Erie;
- (d) **"Code"** means this Code of Conduct as it applies to Members of Council and local boards;
- (e) **"complaint"** means a written allegation of a purported contravention of this Code;
- (f) **"confidential information"** includes any information in the possession of, or received in confidence by the Town that the Town is prohibited from disclosing, or has decided to refuse to disclose under the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (MFIPPA), or any other law. "Confidential information" also includes information of a corporate, commercial, scientific or technical nature received in confidence from third parties; personal information; information that is subject to solicitor-client privilege; information that concerns any confidential matters pertaining to personnel, labour relations, litigation, property acquisition/disposal, the security of the property of the municipality or a local board; and any other information lawfully determined by the Council to be confidential, or required to remain or be kept confidential by legislation or order.

Under MFIPPA, "personal information" means recorded information about an identifiable individual, including:

- (i) Information relating to the race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation or marital or family status of the individual;
- (ii) Information relating to the education or the medical, psychiatric, psychological, criminal or employment history of the individual or information relating to financial transactions in which the individual has been involved;
- (iii) Any identifying number, symbol or other particular assigned to the individual;
- (iv) The address, telephone number, fingerprints or blood type of the individual;
- (v) The personal opinions or views of the individual except if they relate to another individual;
- (vi) Correspondence sent to an institution by the individual that is implicitly or explicitly of a private or confidential nature, and replies to that correspondence that would reveal the contents of the original correspondence;
- (vii) The views or opinions of another individual about the individual; and
- (viii) The individual's name if it appears with other personal information relating to the individual or where the disclosure of the name would reveal other personal information about the individual.

It also means any information that is of a personal nature to Town employees or clients or information that is not available to the public and that, if disclosed, could result in loss or damage to the Corporation or could give the person to whom it is disclosed an advantage. Confidential information includes, but is not limited to, the following information:

- (i) Disclosed or discussed at a Closed Session meeting of Council;
- (ii) That is circulated to Members of Council and marked "Confidential"; and
- (iii) That is given verbally in confidence in preparation of or following a meeting that is closed to the public and includes, but is not limited to the following types of information:
 - 1. Personal matters about an identifiable individual(s);
 - 2. Information about suppliers provided for evaluation which might be useful to other suppliers;
 - 3. Matters relating to legal affairs of the Town; sources of complaints where the identity of the complainant is given in confidence; items under negotiations; and
 - 4. Matters identified as solicitor-client privilege.

- (g) **"Corporation"** means The Corporation of the Town of Fort Erie;
- (h) **"Council"** means the Municipal Council of the Town of Fort Erie for the purposes of this Code the term "Council" shall also mean and include "local boards";
- (i) **"employee"** means a person employed by the Town or local board, including those employed on a personal services contract, and volunteers, but does not include members;
- (j) **"frivolous"** means something that is not worthy of serious consideration, or that is of little or no importance, due to its lack of seriousness or sense;
- (k) **"gift"** means any real or personal property given, including but not limited to art work, clothing, money, gift certificates or gift cards, unless payment in any form, including the exchange of goods or services, of equal or greater value is received by the individual or entity giving the gift;
- (l) **"good faith"** means in accordance with standards of honesty, trust and sincerity;
- (m) **"hospitality"** means instances where there is entertainment of or by outside parties for the furtherance of municipal business;
- (n) **"Integrity Commissioner"** means the Integrity Commissioner appointed by Council pursuant to the *Municipal Act, 2001*;
- (o) **"information"** includes a record or document;
- (p) **"local board"** as defined in the *Municipal Act, 2001*, as amended, and shall include the following boards and any other local boards established by Council after the effective date of the Code of Conduct:
 - (i) Bridgeburg Station Downtown Business Improvement Area Board of Management;
 - (ii) Crystal Beach Business Improvement Area Board of Management;
 - (iii) Ridgeway Business Improvement Area Board of Management;
 - (iv) Property Standards Committee;
 - (v) Committee of Adjustment;
 - (vi) Compliance Audit Committee.
- (q) **"member"** means a Member of Council or local board;
- (r) **"Official duties"** means the public duties of a member and includes functions performed by members necessary to demonstrate responsible and accountable government with respect to matters within the Town or local board's jurisdiction, and which are done for the purpose of providing good government with respect to those matters;

- (s) **"parent"** means a person who has demonstrated a settled intention to treat a child as a member of his/her family whether or not that person is the natural parent of the child or as defined under the current *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*, as amended from time to time;
- (t) **"personal benefit"** means forms of advantage other than financial such as seeking an appointment, promotion or transfer within the Corporation on behalf of a family member and includes the private interests of a member;
- (u) **"private interest"** means all of the activities of a member not included in the term defined as "Official duties";
- (v) **"spouse"** means a person to whom the person is married or with whom the person is living in a conjugal relationship outside marriage or as defined in the *Conflict of Interest Act*, as amended from time to time;
- (w) **"Town"** means The Corporation of the Town of Fort Erie;
- (x) **"Town property"** means items, services or resources which are the property of the Town including but not limited to: materials, equipment, vehicles, facilities, technology, Town-developed computer programs or technological innovations, databases, intellectual property, Town-owned images, logos, crest and supplies;
- (y) **"vexatious"** means without reasonable or probable cause or excuse.

7. General Principles of Conduct

1. Members are responsible for making honest statements. No member shall make a statement when they know that statement is false. No member shall make a statement with the intent to mislead Council or members of the public.
2. Members shall conduct their dealings with each other in ways that maintain public confidence in the office to which they have been elected, are open and honest, focus on issues rather than personalities, avoid aggressive, offensive or abusive conduct.
3. Members shall perform official duties and arrange their public affairs in a manner that promotes public confidence and respect and will bear close public scrutiny.
4. Members shall not engage in any activity, financial or otherwise, which is incompatible or inconsistent with the ethical discharge of Official duties to the Town or local board.
5. Every member in exercising his/her powers and in discharging his/her Official duties shall:
 - (a) Seek to advance the common good of the Town of Fort Erie;
 - (b) Truly, faithfully and impartially exercise his/her office to the best of his/her knowledge and ability;

- (c) Exercise care, diligence and skill that a reasonably prudent person would exercise in comparable circumstances;
- (d) Exercise his/her powers only for the purpose for which they were intended; and
- (e) Competently exercise his/her office by educating themselves either formally or informally, in matters pertaining to their official duties.

Responsibilities of Council, the Mayor and Councillors

- 6. Council as a whole has the authority to approve budget, policy or processes, including the structures and procedures for committees. Authority to act on behalf of Council, including through a committee, can only be delegated by Council or through law.
- 7. Council is responsible for and dedicated to providing good and effective government for the public in an open, accountable and transparent manner.
- 8. A fiduciary relationship exists between the Council and inhabitants of the municipality.
- 9. Members of Council:
 - (a) May not impugn or malign a debate or decision or otherwise erode the authority of Council;
 - (b) When appointed to committees and other bodies as part of their duties must make every effort to participate diligently in these bodies with good faith and care;
 - (c) Must uphold the law and conduct themselves with the highest degree of ethical behavior and integrity;
 - (d) Must avoid conflict of interest;
 - (e) Must seek to advance the public interest with honesty and treat members of the public with dignity, understanding and respect.

8. Respect for Decision-making Process

- 1. Members shall accurately and adequately communicate the decisions of Council and local boards such that respect for the decision and decision-making process is fostered.
- 2. Members shall not attempt to influence the decision-making process as it relates to the award of contracts or settlement claims through personal contact or interaction with the parties administering or directly involved in such processes.
- 3. Employees are responsible for providing professional advice, are bound by the decisions of the Council or local board respectively, and shall not be requested to take any action contrary to such decisions.

9. Release of Information to Public and Media

Members acknowledge that decisions and resolutions made by Council or the local board will normally be formally announced to the community and the media on behalf of Council or the local board as a whole, by the Mayor or local board Chair, or by his/her designate, or through media releases issued by the Town or the local board.

10. Adherence to Council Policies and Procedures

Every member shall observe and comply with every provision of this Code of Conduct, as well as all other policies and procedures adopted or established by Council affecting the member acting in his/her capacity as a member of Council.

11. Conduct at Meetings

Every member shall conduct himself/herself properly and in a civil manner at Council, committee and other meetings, and in accordance with the provisions of the Procedural By-law, this Code of Conduct, and other applicable law.

12. Conduct Respecting Others

1. Every member shall treat every person with dignity, respect and understanding.
2. Every member has the duty and responsibility to treat members of the public, one another and staff appropriately and without abuse, bullying or intimidation, and to ensure that the municipal work environment is free from discrimination and harassment.

In accordance with Ontario's *Human Rights Code*, as amended, harassment means engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome.

Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, members shall not:

- (a) make inappropriate comments or gestures to or about an individual where such conduct is known or ought reasonably to be known to be offensive to the person(s) to whom they are directed or are about;
- (b) display materials or transmit communications that are inappropriate, offensive, insulting or derogatory;
- (c) make threats or engage in any abusive activity or course of conduct towards others;
- (d) vandalize the personal property of others;
- (e) commit assault of any kind, including making unwanted physical contact, including touching, patting, or pinching; or

- (f) refuse to converse or interact with anyone based on any ground listed in the Human Rights Code, as amended.

Harassment which occurs in the course of, or is related to, the performance of Official duties by members is subject to this Code. If an employee or a member of the public brings forward a harassment complaint against a member, the complaint procedure under the Town's (or local board, where applicable) Harassment Policy shall apply. In all other cases involving a member, complaints shall be addressed in accordance with Sections 22 and 23 herein.

- 3. A member shall not use indecent, abusive or insulting words or expressions toward any other member, any member of staff or any member of the public.
- 4. A member shall not speak in a manner that is discriminatory to any individual or discriminate against any person based on that person's race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family status or disability.

13. Council-Staff Relations

- 1. Employees have a duty and obligation to act impartially, and in accordance with prescribed regulations or standards of conduct. Similarly, employees with professional qualifications have an additional duty and obligation to act in accordance with standards of conduct prescribed for their profession. Members shall refrain from any conduct which may deter, interfere or unduly influence employees in the performance of such duties and obligations.
- 2. Mutual respect and cooperation are required to achieve the Council's corporate goals and implement the Council's strategic priorities through the work of its employees.
- 3. Employees have an obligation to recognize that members have been duly elected to serve the residents of Fort Erie and respect the role of Council in directing the actions of the Town.
- 4. Employees serve Council and work for the Corporation under the direction of the Chief Administrative Officer. Council directs staff through its decisions as recorded in the minutes and resolutions of Council. Members have no individual capacity to direct members of staff to carry out particular functions.
- 5. Inquiries of staff from members should be directed to the Chief Administrative Officer or the appropriate senior staff.
- 6. Only Council as a whole and no single member including the Mayor has the authority to direct staff, approve budget, policy, committee process and other such matters, unless specifically authorized by Council.

7. Members shall be respectful of the role of staff to advise based on political neutrality and objectivity and without undue influence from any individual member or faction of the Council. Accordingly, no member shall maliciously or falsely injure the professional or ethical reputation, or the prospects or practice of staff, and all members shall show respect for the professional capacities of the staff of the Town.
8. Certain employees are employed within the administration of justice. Members shall refrain from making requests or statements or taking actions which may be construed as an attempt to influence the independent administration of justice.
9. No member shall compel staff to engage in partisan political activities or be subjected to threats or discrimination for refusing to engage in such activities. Nor shall any member use, or attempt to use, their authority or influence for the purpose of intimidating, threatening, coercing, commanding, or influencing any staff member with the intent of interfering with that person's duties, including the duty to disclose improper activity.

14. Gifts and Benefits

1. For the purposes of this Code, a gift or benefit provided, with the member's knowledge, to a member's spouse, child or parent that is connected directly or indirectly to the performance of the member's duties, is deemed to be a gift or benefit to that member.
2. No member shall accept a fee, advance, gift or personal benefit that is connected directly or indirectly with the performance of his/her duties of office, unless permitted under one or more of the exceptions listed below.
3. Each of the following is recognized as an exception:
 - (a) Compensation authorized by by-law;
 - (b) A gift or benefit of the kind that normally accompanies the responsibilities of office and is received as an incident of protocol or social obligation;
 - (c) A political contribution otherwise authorized and reported as required by law, in the case of a member running for office;
 - (d) Services provided without compensation by a person volunteering his/her time;
 - (e) A suitable memento of a function honouring the member;
 - (f) Food, lodging, transportation or entertainment lawfully provided by any Provincial, Regional or local government or board or political subdivisions of any of them, by the Federal government, a foreign government, or by those organizing a conference, seminar or event where the member is speaking or attending in an official capacity;

- (g) Food and beverages consumed at a banquet, reception or similar event, if:
 - (i) Attendance by the member is for a legitimate municipal purpose;
 - (ii) The person extending the invitation, or a representative of the organization holding the event, is in attendance; and
 - (iii) The value is reasonable;
 - (h) Communications to the office of a member, including subscriptions to newspapers and periodicals;
 - (i) A sponsorship or donation for a community event organized or run by a member, or a third party on behalf of a member, subject to the limitations set out in any applicable municipal policy;
- 4. Except for political contributions allowable by law, these exceptions do not apply where a gift or benefit is provided by a lobbyist or a lobbyist's client or employer. In this provision, a lobbyist is an individual, organization or business who or that:
 - (a) Lobbies, or causes the lobbying of, any public office holder of the municipality, the Municipal Council or Corporation, or a local board;
 - (b) The member knows is attempting or intending to lobby the member or any of the public persons or bodies listed in paragraph (a); or
 - (c) Is maintaining an active lobbyist registration with the municipality, whether or not with respect to any specific or current subject matter.
- 5. In the case of any of the recognized exceptions under Section 3(a)-(i) herein, if the value of the gift or benefit exceeds \$300.00, or if the total value of gifts or benefits received from any one source during the course of a calendar year exceeds \$300.00, the member shall file, within 30 days of receipt of the gift or benefit, or of reaching the annual limit, a disclosure statement in the prescribed form with the Clerk.
- 6. The disclosure statement must set out:
 - (a) The nature of every gift or benefit received;
 - (b) Its source and date of receipt;
 - (c) The circumstances under which it was given and received;
 - (d) Its estimated value;
 - (e) What the recipient intends to do with any gift; and
 - (f) Whether any gift will at some point be provided to the municipality.
- 7. Every disclosure statement filed under this Code shall be a public record and available in the Office of the Clerk.

8. Upon receiving a formal written complaint, not deemed to be frivolous or vexatious, that a gift or benefit was received contrary to the conditions set out herein, the Integrity Commissioner shall examine it to ascertain whether the receipt of the gift or benefit might, in his/her opinion, constitute a contravention of this Code or create a conflict between a private interest and the public duty or responsibilities of the member. In the event that the Integrity Commissioner makes such a determination, he/she shall call upon the member to justify receipt of the gift or benefit.
9. Should the Integrity Commissioner determine that receipt of any gift or benefit was inappropriate, he/she may direct the member to return the gift, reimburse the donor for the value of any gift or benefit already consumed, forfeit the gift or remit the value of any gift or benefit already consumed, to the municipality.

15. Confidential Information

1. No member shall disclose, release or publish by any means to any person or to the public any confidential information acquired by virtue of his/her office, in any form, except when required or authorized by Council or otherwise by law to do so.
2. No member shall 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.
3. Members of Council have an obligation to hold in the strictest confidence any and all information concerning matters dealt with at closed meetings. Members of Council shall not, either directly or indirectly, release, make public, or in any way divulge any such information in respect of a closed meeting deliberation to anyone, unless expressly authorized by Council or as required by law to do so.
4. A member may disclose the content of any matter referred to in the preceding paragraph or the subject matter of deliberations at a closed meeting, only after the Council or committee lawfully and knowingly discusses the information at a meeting that is open to the public or releases the information to the public.
5. For the purposes of interpreting the above, examples of confidential information include, but are not limited, to the following:
 - (a) Information concerning litigation, negotiations or personnel matters;
 - (b) Information the publication of which may infringe on the rights of any person (e.g. source of a complaint where the identity of a complainant is given in confidence);
 - (c) Price schedules in any contract, tender or proposal document while such remains a confidential document;

- (d) Information deemed to be "personal information" under the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*;
 - (e) Any other information or statistical data required by law not to be released.
- 6. No member of Council shall obtain access, or attempt to gain access, to confidential information in the custody of the municipality except to the extent that such access is necessary for the performance of his/her duties and such access is not prohibited by Council policy.
 - 7. Members shall not release information in contravention of the provisions of the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.
 - 8. Members shall not release information subject to solicitor-client privilege, unless expressly authorized by Council resolution, or required by law to do so.

16. Use of Town Property, Services and Resources

- 1. No Member of Council shall use, or permit the use of Town property, including land, facilities, equipment, supplies, services, employees or other resources (for example, Town-owned materials, computers, networks, websites, corporate transportation) for activities other than the business of the Corporation. Nor should any member obtain personal benefit or financial gain from the use or sale of Town property, including Town-developed intellectual property (for example, inventions, creative writings, computer programs and drawings), technical innovations, Town-owned images, logos, crest, or other items capable of being patented, since all such property remains exclusively that of the Town.
- 2. Members shall conduct themselves in accordance with the provisions of information technology policies of the Town. The Town licences the use of computer software from a variety of vendors. The Town does not own the software or its documentation. Software is normally copyrighted, and no individual may copy or distribute the software unless expressly permitted to do so under the applicable licence. This policy applies to the use of blackberries, personal computers, fax machines, printers, etc.
- 3. Members shall conduct themselves in accordance with the Town of Fort Erie's Use of Corporate Resources for Election Purposes Policy.

17. Election Campaign

- 1. Members are required to follow the provisions of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* and Council's Policy with respect to the Use of Corporate Resources for Election Purposes.
- 2. No member shall use the facilities, equipment, supplies, services or other resources of the Town (including Councillor newsletters and Councillor

websites linked through the Town's website) for any election campaign or campaign-related activities.

3. No member shall undertake campaign-related activities on Town property.
4. No member shall use the services of persons during hours in which those persons receive any compensation from the Town.

18. Municipal Conflict of Interest

Members shall conduct themselves in accordance with the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*, as amended. The *Act* outlines the procedures to be followed if a party wishes to pursue an alleged contravention of the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*.

19. Improper Use and Influence

1. No member shall use the influence of his/her office for any purpose other than for the lawful exercise of his/her official duties and for municipal purposes.
2. No member shall use his/her office or position to influence or attempt to influence the decision of any other person, for the member's private advantage or that of the member's parent, child, spouse, staff member, friend or associate, business or otherwise. No member shall attempt to secure preferential treatment beyond activities in which members normally engage on behalf of their constituents as part of their official duties. No member shall hold out the prospect or promise of future advantage through the member's supposed influence within Council, in return for any action or inaction.
3. For the purposes of this provision, "private advantage" does not include a matter:
 - (a) That is of general application;
 - (b) That affects a member, his/her parents/children or spouse, staff members, friends or associates, business or otherwise, as one of a broad class of persons; or
 - (c) That concerns the remuneration or benefits of a member.
4. This provision does not prevent a member from requesting that Council grant a lawful exemption from a policy.

20. Business Relations

1. No member shall act as a paid agent before Council, its committees, or an agency, board or commission of the Town except in compliance with the terms of the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*, as amended.

2. A member shall not refer a third party to a person, partnership, or corporation in exchange for payment or other personal benefit.

21. Integrity Commissioner

The Council shall appoint an Integrity Commissioner to investigate alleged breaches of this Code.

22. Complaint - General

1. Any individual, including members of the public, Town employees, and Members of Council, who has reasonable grounds to believe that a member has breached a provision of the Code, may proceed with a complaint.
2. An organization, employee, member or member of the public having reasonable grounds to believe that a member has breached this Code, may proceed with a complaint. Complaints must be submitted within six (6) weeks of the matter becoming known to the individual and no more than one (1) year after the alleged violation occurring. No action shall be taken on a complaint received beyond these deadlines.
3. A complainant does not have to pursue the informal complaint process set out in Section 23 (1) prior to proceeding with the formal complaint process set out in Section 23 (3) herein.
4. The complaint protocol set out hereunder shall not retroactively apply to any alleged contraventions occurring prior to the date on which the Code of Conduct was formally adopted by Council.

23. Complaint Protocol

Informal Complaint Procedure

1. Any individual who has identified or witnessed behavior or activity by a member that appears to be in contravention of the Code may address their concerns in the following manner:
 - (a) Advise the member that their behaviour or activity contravenes the Code;
 - (b) Encourage the member to stop the prohibited behavior or activity;
 - (c) If applicable, confirm to the member your satisfaction or dissatisfaction with his/her response to the concern identified;
 - (d) Keep a written record of the incidents including dates, times, locations, other persons present, and any other relevant information, including steps taken to resolve the matter.

2. If not satisfied with the response received through the informal process, an individual may proceed with a formal complaint through the Integrity Commissioner as outlined in Section 23 (3).

Formal Complaint Procedure

3. Any individual who has identified or witnessed behavior or activity by a member that appears to be in contravention of the Code may address their concerns through the formal complaint process set out below.
 - (a) All formal complaints must be made using the Town's Complaint Form/Affidavit prepared by the Clerk (substantially in the form of Appendix "B") and shall be dated, signed and sworn by the complainant;
 - (b) The complaint must include an explanation as to why the issue raised may be a contravention of the Code and any evidence in support of the allegation must be included with the complaint;
 - (c) Any witnesses in support of the allegation must be identified on the complaint;
 - (d) The complaint must include the name of the member alleged to have breached the Code, the section of the Code allegedly contravened, the date, time and location of the alleged contravention and any other information as required on the Complaint Form;
 - (e) The complaint shall be filed with the Clerk in a sealed envelope marked "Confidential" who shall confirm the information is complete as to (a), (b), (c) and (d) of this section. The Clerk shall forward the complaint to the Integrity Commissioner who shall determine whether the matter is, on its face, a complaint with respect to non-compliance with the Code and not covered by other legislation or policies;
 - (f) The complainant shall maintain the confidentiality of the complaint until such time as the investigation report of the Integrity Commissioner has been made public or as otherwise determined by the Integrity Commissioner.
 - (g) The Integrity Commissioner may request additional information from the complainant.

Refundable Complaint Application Fee

4. A refundable application fee shall apply for formal complaints, as follows:
 - (a) A complainant shall pay to the Clerk a refundable fee in the amount of \$100.00 upon the filing of a complaint under Section 23.3;

- (b) The fee payable under subsection (1) shall be refunded to the complainant when the Integrity Commissioner files their report under Section 28, except as may otherwise be required herein;
- (c) Where a complaint is found to be frivolous, vexatious, or not made in good faith under Section 25, the fee shall not be refunded;
- (d) Where a complaint has been stayed under Section 28.2, a complainant may withdraw their complaint and receive a refund of the fee.

24. Non-Compliance

- 1. If the complaint received by the Integrity Commissioner is deemed not to be a complaint with respect to non-compliance with the Code, the Integrity Commissioner shall instruct the Clerk to advise the complainant in writing as follows:
 - (a) **Criminal Matter** – if the complaint is 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;
 - (b) **Municipal Conflict of Interest** – if the complaint is an allegation with respect to matters under the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*, the complainant shall be advised to review the matter with their own legal counsel;
 - (c) **Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy** – if the complaint is more appropriately addressed under the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, the complainant shall be referred to the Clerk to have the matter reviewed under that *Act*;
 - (d) **Discrimination or Harassment** – if the complaint is an allegation of discrimination or harassment, the complainant shall be advised to file a complaint directly with the Human Resources Manager under Town of Fort Erie Health and Safety Policy, as amended from time to time. The complainant will also be advised of his/her right to advance an application to the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal;
 - (e) **Municipal Elections** – if the complaint is more appropriately addressed under the *Municipal Elections Act*, the complainant shall be referred to the Clerk to have the matter reviewed under that *Act*;
 - (f) If the matter is covered by other policies with a complaint procedure or legislation, the complainant will be advised and directed to proceed in a manner as considered appropriate by the Integrity Commissioner;

- (g) In all other cases, the complainant shall be advised that the matter, or part of the matter, is not within the jurisdiction of the Integrity Commissioner to process, with any additional reasons and referrals as the Integrity Commissioner considers appropriate.

25. Refusal to Conduct an Investigation

1. If the Integrity Commissioner is of the opinion that the referral of a matter to him or her 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 it becomes apparent in the course of an investigation, shall terminate the investigation.
2. Complaints referred to the Integrity Commissioner that are repetitious in nature, not germane to the Code of Conduct, deemed frivolous, vexatious or without substance in the opinion of the Integrity Commissioner, shall not be advanced to an investigation stage.
3. Other than in exceptional circumstances, the Integrity Commissioner shall not report to Council on any complaint described in Subsections 25 (1) and (2) herein except as part of an annual or other periodic report.
4. The Integrity Commissioner shall inform the Clerk when an investigation is terminated or not advanced for reasons cited above. The Clerk in turn will notify the complainant of this decision.

26. Opportunity for Resolution

1. If at any time, following the receipt of a formal complaint or during the investigation process, the Integrity Commissioner believes that an opportunity to resolve the matter may be successfully pursued without a formal investigation, and both the complainant and the member agree, efforts may be made to achieve an informal resolution.

27. Investigation

1. If the Integrity Commissioner determines that a formal investigation is required he/she shall proceed in the following manner, subject to the Integrity Commissioner's ability to elect to exercise the powers of a commissioner under Sections 33 and 34 of the *Public Inquiries Act*.
2. The Integrity Commissioner shall provide a copy of the complaint and any supporting materials to the member whose conduct is in question with a request that a written response to the allegation be provided to the Integrity Commissioner within ten (10) days.
3. The Integrity Commissioner shall give a copy of the response provided by the member to the complainant with a request for a written reply within ten (10) days.

4. If necessary, after reviewing the submitted materials, the Integrity Commissioner may speak to anyone, access and examine any other documents or electronic materials, and may enter any Town work location relevant to the complaint for the purpose of investigation and potential resolution.
5. The Integrity Commissioner may make interim reports to Council where necessary and as required to address any issues of interference, obstruction, delay or retaliation encountered during the investigation.
6. At any time the complainant may abandon the request for an investigation and the Integrity Commissioner shall cease his/her investigation.

28. Final Report and Recommendations

1. Upon completion of an investigation, the Integrity Commissioner shall report to the complainant and the member on the results of his/her review within ninety (90) days of the date of the incident. If the investigation process is going to take more than ninety (90) days, the Integrity Commissioner shall provide an interim report to the complainant and member indicating when the complete report will be available.
2. If during the investigation process, the complaint is withdrawn, sustained or resolved, the Integrity Commissioner shall report to Council outlining the findings, the terms of any resolution and any recommended action within thirty (30) days.
3. If upon completion of the investigation the Integrity Commissioner finds that a breach of the Code has occurred, the Commissioner shall report his/her findings to Council including a determination as to the imposition of a penalty or sanction as set out Section 30 herein.
4. If upon completion of the investigation, the Integrity Commissioner finds that there has been no contravention of the Code, or that a contravention occurred, however, the member took all reasonable measures to prevent it, or the contravention committed was trivial or committed through inadvertence or an error of judgment made in good faith, the Integrity Commissioner shall set this out in its report to Council.

29. Duty of Council

1. The Council shall receive the report of the Integrity Commissioner within thirty (30) days of it being received by the Clerk and it shall be included on the next Regular Council Meeting Agenda.
2. In circumstances where the alleged breach of trust or other misconduct is serious in nature, Council may pass a resolution, pursuant to the *Municipal Act, 2001*, requesting a judicial investigation into the member's conduct.

30. Penalties and Sanctions

1. Where the Integrity Commissioner determines that a member has contravened any provision of this Code, he/she is authorized to impose upon the offending member:
 - (a) A reprimand;
 - (b) 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 ninety (90) days.
2. The Integrity Commissioner may also take one or more of the following actions against a Member of Council or member of local board:
 - (a) Removal from membership on a committee or local board;
 - (b) Removal as chair of a committee or local board;
 - (c) Repayment or reimbursement of monies received;
 - (d) Return of property or reimbursement of its value.

31. Office of Integrity Commissioner Vacant

1. Should the office of Integrity Commissioner become vacant, the Code of Conduct remains in effect and all members shall abide by the provisions set out herein. When a vacancy occurs, all formal complaints shall be held in abeyance until such time as a new Integrity Commissioner has been appointed; or an interim measure enacted to enable the complaint to be addressed within a reasonable amount of time. For example the Town could engage the services of an Integrity Commissioner from another local municipality as a potential interim measure.

32. No Complaints or Reports Prior to Election

1. No complaint may be referred to the Integrity Commissioner or forwarded by the Clerk for review and/or investigation after May 31 in any year in which a regular municipal election will be held. The Clerk shall forward any complaint received after May 31 to the Integrity Commissioner on or about December 1 in a regular election year and advise the complainant of this process.
2. Notwithstanding Section 28 of the Code, the Integrity Commissioner shall not make any report to Council or any other person after the last Council meeting in May in any year in which a regular municipal election is to be held. Any reports would proceed to the first Council meeting held after the inaugural meeting of the new Council.

33. Confidentiality of Complaint Documents

1. The Integrity Commissioner and every person acting under his/her instructions shall preserve the confidentiality of all documents, material or other information, whether belonging to the Town or not, that come into their possession or to their knowledge during the course of their duties as required by Section 223.5 of the *Municipal Act*.
2. Pursuant to Section 223.5(3) of the *Municipal Act*, this section prevails over the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.
3. If the Integrity Commissioner reports to the Council on an investigation into an alleged breach of the Code, the report shall only disclose such information that in the Integrity Commissioner's opinion is required for the purposes of the report, including the name of the complainant and the member.
4. If the Integrity Commissioner issues an annual or other periodic report to Council on his/her activities, the Integrity Commissioner shall summarize the advice he/she has given but shall not disclose confidential information that could identify a person concerned.

34. Other Duties of Integrity Commissioner

1. In addition, to conducting investigations regarding alleged breaches of the Code, the Integrity Commissioner shall generally have the following responsibilities:
 - (a) Provide information to Council as to their obligations under the Code;
 - (b) Provide advice to individual members regarding specific situations as they relate to the application of the Code;
 - (c) Provide advice to Council on other policies and procedures that relate to the ethical behavior of members;
 - (d) Provide general advice on conflict of interest issues under the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act* which shall not explicitly constitute a legal opinion and noting that this advice may not be used in defense of allegations related to conflict of interest;
 - (e) Provide an annual report to Council on the activities of the Integrity Commissioner.

35. Request for Advice

1. Where a member is seeking to obtain advice from the Integrity Commissioner, the member shall submit to the Clerk a Request for Advice from Integrity Commissioner Form (substantially in the form of Appendix "C" annexed hereto), who shall review it for completeness and submit it to the Integrity Commissioner for response.

2. The Integrity Commissioner shall provide his/her advice in writing to the member.
3. Any written advice given by the Integrity Commissioner to a member, as it relates to the Code, binds the Integrity Commissioner in any subsequent consideration of the member's conduct in the same matter provided the relevant facts known to the member were disclosed to the Integrity Commissioner. Members who receive advice are entitled to rely on it and will not be subject to sanctions should they have relied on the advice and are still found to be in breach of the Code.
4. Any written requests for advice and responses to such requests are covered under the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

36. Annual Report to Council

1. In completing its annual report to Council, the Integrity Commissioner shall include information on the nature and volume of activity for the past year and anonymized in respect of advice provided and the nature of complaints received and responded to.
2. The Clerk shall receive the annual report of the Integrity Commissioner and include it on the next Regular Council agenda.
3. The Integrity Commissioner shall file his/her annual report no later than January 31st of the following year following appointment and annually thereafter to the Clerk for the Council. It shall then become a public document.

37. Reprisal or Obstruction

1. Every member of Council must respect the integrity of the Code of Conduct and inquiries and investigations conducted under it, and shall co-operate in every way possible in securing compliance with its application and enforcement. Any reprisal or threat of reprisal against a complainant or any other person for providing relevant information to the Integrity Commissioner or any other person is prohibited. It is also a violation of the Code of Conduct to 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.
2. Examples of the types of obstruction prohibited under Section 36 (1) herein include but are not limited to:
 - (a) destroying documents including erasing electronic documents;
 - (b) withholding or concealing documents including electronic documents;

- (c) failing to respond to the Integrity Commissioner within 10 days after a written request is given or within such longer period as the Integrity Commissioner may allow.

38. Inconsistency and Clarification

1. In the case of any inconsistency between this Code and a Federal or Provincial statute or regulation, the statute or regulation shall prevail.
2. Members seeking clarification on any part of this Code of Conduct may consult with the Clerk or Integrity Commissioner.

Appendix "A" to Council Code of Conduct**Advisory Committee
Standards of Conduct**

The purpose of an advisory committee is to provide informed advice and guidance to Council on programs and policies.

Advisory Committees are expected to provide impartial and objective advice to Council. In so doing, these individuals shall assess, consider various options, and make recommendations to Council in a conscientious and ethical manner.

In recognition of the advisory role and lack of decision-making powers, the Council Code of Conduct shall not apply to Advisory Committees but shall serve as a guide in matters of accountability and transparency. However, it is deemed desirable to establish the following general accountability, transparency and ethical standards of conduct for members of Advisory Committees of the Town of Fort Erie to ensure they are acting in a manner that is appropriate.

1. Advisory Committee members shall, when conducting committee business, preparing written correspondence, interacting with the media, Members of Council, staff or members of the public, act in a manner that accomplishes the following:
 - (a) Fulfills the mandate and mission statement of his/her advisory committee;
 - (b) Respects due process and the authority of the Chair, Vice-Chair or presiding Officer;
 - (c) Demonstrates respect for all fellow committee members, Council, staff and the public;
 - (d) Demonstrates respect for the decisions of Council;
 - (e) Respects and gives fair consideration to diverse and opposing viewpoints;
 - (f) Demonstrates due diligence in preparing for meetings, special occasions, or other committee-related events;
 - (g) Demonstrates professionalism, transparency, accountability and timeliness in completing any tasks or projects undertaken by the committee;
 - (h) Conforms with all relevant legislation, by-laws, policies and guidelines, including the ABC Handbook; and
 - (i) Contributes in a meaningful manner, offering constructive comments to Council, staff and fellow committee members.

Appendix "A" to Council Code of Conduct**Page Two**

2. A member of an Advisory Committee shall not:
 - (a) Place themselves in a position where the member is under obligation to any person who might benefit from special consideration or favour on their part or who might seek in any way preferential treatment;
 - (b) Accord, in the performance of his/her official duties, preferential treatment to relatives or to organizations in which the member, his/her relatives have an interest, financial or otherwise;
 - (c) Deal with an application to the Town for a grant, award, contract, permit or other benefit involving the member or his/her immediate relative;
 - (d) Place themselves in a position where the member could derive any direct benefit or interest from any matter about which they can influence decisions; and
 - (e) Benefit from the use of information acquired during the course of his/her official duties which is not generally available to the public.
3. A member of an Advisory Committee shall disclose to the committee at the outset of a meeting, that the member could be involved in either a real or apparent conflict of interest (pecuniary interest) as prohibited by the Code; and where appropriate, shall abide by any decision made by the committee, with respect to such conflict of interest without recourse.
4. Where an Advisory Committee member believes or has been advised by the committee that they have a conflict of interest in a particular matter, he/she shall:
 - (a) Prior to any consideration of the matter, disclose his/her interest and the general nature thereof;
 - (b) Leave the room for the duration of time that the matter is being considered;
 - (c) Not take part in the discussion of, or vote on any question or recommendation in respect of the matter; and
 - (d) Not attempt in any way whether before, during or after the meeting to influence the voting on any such question or recommendation.
5. Where the number of members who, by reason of conflict, are incapable of participating in a meeting such that the remaining members no longer constitute a quorum, as set out in Section 7.12 of the *ABC Handbook* for boards and committees, then the remaining members shall be deemed to constitute a quorum provided there are not less than two (2) members present.
6. Notwithstanding Section 2(c), members of the Museum and Cultural Heritage Advisory Committee who own property designated under Part IV or Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act* and are seeking consideration of a Heritage Permit

Appendix "A" to Council Code of Conduct
Page Three

Application (HPA) for said property are permitted to address the committee regarding their HPA but, are prohibited from taking part in the committee's deliberation and/or voting regarding the matter.

7. Should a member of an advisory committee, save and except a member of Council, breach any of the clauses set out herein, the Clerk may refer the matter to Council who will consider whether to take any of the possible corrective actions, as outlined under Part 30 Subsection 3 of the Council Code of Conduct for Members of Council, local boards and advisory committees

Council Code of Conduct - Complaint and Affidavit

Appendix “B” to Council Code of Conduct

Full Name of Complainant			
Street Address			
City/Town			Postal Code
Primary Phone Number			
Email address			
<div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; width: 100%;"></div> Date of Complaint		<div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; width: 100%;"></div> Signature	
For Internal Use			
Date Complaint Received			
Received by		Checked by	
Date forwarded to Integrity Commissioner			
Date report received			
Date report submitted to Council			
<p><i>Personal information is collected under the authority of the Municipal Act, S.O. 2001. The disclosure of this information is governed by the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.M.56 . A copy of this form and affidavit will be provided to the subject member of Council or local board member. Personal information and the particulars of the complaint will be held in confidence and it will subsequently form part of the Integrity Commissioner’s Report. The Integrity Commissioner’s Report is a matter of public record. Enquiries may be directed to the Town Clerk at 905-871-1600</i></p>			

Confidential

Council Code of Conduct - Complaint and Affidavit

Affidavit

Affidavit of _____

I, _____

of the Town/City of _____ in the Province of Ontario

make Oath and Say;

1. I have personal knowledge of the facts as set out in the Affidavit because (explain)
2. I have reasonable and probably grounds to believe that _____, a Member of Council of the Town of Fort Erie has contravened section(s) _____ of the Council Code of Conduct. The details are set out below.
(Set out the statements of fact in consecutively numbered paragraphs. Attach additional pages if necessary and check the box below. If you have other documents to support this affidavit, mark them as "Exhibit A", "Exhibit B", etc.)

☐ Additional Comments Attached

This affidavit is made for the purpose of requesting that this matter be reviewed by the Town of Fort Erie appointed Integrity Commissioner and for no other purpose.

Sworn before me at _____
in the _____
this _____ day of
_____, 20____

A Commissioner, etc.

)
)
)
)
)
)
)

Signature of Complainant

Note: This is a sworn (affirmed) Affidavit of the deponent only. No investigation has been conducted by this authority to confirm or verify the above sworn information. **THE CRIMINAL CODE OF CANADA**, R.S.C. 1985, c.C-46, provides that: everyone commits perjury who, with intent to mislead, makes before a person who is authorized by law to permit it to be made before him a false statement under oath or solemn affirmation by Affidavit, solemn declaration or deposition or orally, knowing that the statement is false, is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to a term of imprisonment not exceeding fourteen (14) years (Sections 131, 132) or by summary conviction (Section 134). Signing a false Affidavit may expose you to prosecution under Sections 131 and 132 or 134 of the Criminal Code, R.S.C. 1985, c.C-46 and also to civil liability for defamation.

Confidential

Council Code of Conduct – Request for Advice

Appendix “C” to Council Code of Conduct

Request for Advice of Integrity Commissioner

Name of Member of Council	
Primary Phone Number	
Email address	
Advice requested (attached additional pages if necessary)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Additional Comments Attached	
<hr/> Date	<hr/> Signature
For Internal Use	
Date Request Received	
Received by	Checked by
Date forwarded to Integrity Commissioner	
Date of Commissioner's Reply	

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