

Town of Collingwood

CODE OF ETHICS for Members of Council

PREAMBLE

Attaining an elected position within one's community is a privilege which carries significant responsibilities and obligations. Members of Council (comprising the Mayor, Deputy-Mayor and Councillors) are held to a high standard as leaders of the community and they are expected to become well informed on all aspects of municipal governance, administration, planning and operations. They are also expected to carry out their duties in a fair, impartial, transparent and professional manner.

The key stakeholders, although obvious at first, represent a broad base of interests and concerns which require fair and open attention, adjudication and disposition. These key stakeholders include but are not limited to;

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| - Residents | - Province of Ontario |
| -Taxpayers | - Simcoe County |
| - Staff | - School Boards and Other Public Agencies |
| - Development Industry | - Suppliers |
| - Ratepayers Associations | - Other Members of Council |
| - Chambers of Commerce | - Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) |

To assist Town of Collingwood Members of Council in interacting effectively with all stakeholders, the following obligations are expected of each of them;

- a. **That they solemnly promise, declare and carry out their responsibilities as prescribed in the Oath of Office,**
- b. **That they learn and follow the Procedural By-law for Council and Its Committees,**
- c. **That they read, understand and follow the provisions of the Municipal Act and Municipal Conflict of Interest Act which apply directly and indirectly to the role of Member of Council and**

A "Code of Ethics" for Members of Council has been prepared for their personal review and reference so as to;

- i. **augment communication to the public in the role and integrity of municipal politicians in the Town of Collingwood,**
- ii. **to provide present and future Councils with additional assistance and guidelines as they perform their elected duties and responsibilities and**
- iii. **to assist Members of Council in providing leadership by example to staff.**

It is hoped that this will be viewed by each Member of Council as a valuable added resource and guideline to assist them in fulfilling their mandate in an effective, open and efficient manner.

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Members of Council

The Town of Collingwood's Members of Council fundamentally understand that;

- a. **the proper operation of democratic and representative municipal government requires that they be independent, impartial and responsible to the people,**
- b. **there are open and proper channels for decision making and approval of policy,**
- c. **conflicts between the private interests of elected representatives and their public responsibilities represent an ethical challenge to maintaining an open, accountable and transparent process;**
- d. **as leaders of the community, they are held to a higher standard of behaviour and conduct.**

Although areas of ethical exposure are generally consistent and understood in municipal governance, the following areas and guidelines have been specifically identified in our community, as being paramount to the municipal political process;

- 1. Roles and Obligations**
- 2. Use of Information**
- 3. Communications and Media Relations**
- 4. Relationships with Staff**
- 5. Gifts and Benefits**
- 6. Expenses**
- 7. Conflicts of Interest**
- 8. Use of Property**
- 9. Transparency**
- 10. Public Input**
- 11. Professional Development**

Accordingly this document will provide a guideline for elected officials in exercising their *policy making* role having regard to the statements and ideals as enunciated hereunder.

1. **Roles and Obligations**

Council Members recognize their mandate incorporates tasks to include;

- Fairly representing the diversity of community views in developing an overall strategy for the future of our Town,
- Setting objectives and determining strategies to achieve Council's Corporate objectives in the Strategic Plan,
- Achieving sound financial management, planning and accountability and
- Being aware of and conversant with the statutory obligations imposed on Council as a whole, as well as each individual Member of Council.

2. **Use of Information**

In their decision making process, Members of Council are sometimes privy to information which may be confidential or controversial such as, but not limited to "In Camera" meetings. It is imperative that they;

- Not use confidential information for their personal advantage,
- Not use confidential information to cause detriment or benefit to others,
- Respect the status of confidential (personnel, legal, property acquisition) information until the matter ceases to be confidential as determined by **Council**,
- Understand that they enjoy the same access rights to municipal information as any other member of the community, unless it is specifically relevant to a matter before the Council and
- Only release confidential information according to the provisions of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Individual Privacy Act.

3. **Communications and Media Relations**

Members of Council will attempt to accurately and adequately communicate the attitudes and decisions of Collingwood's Council, even if they disagree with a majority decision of Council so that;

- There is respect for the decision making processes of Council,
- Official information related to decisions and resolutions made by Council will normally be communicated in the first instance to the community and the media in an official capacity by the Mayor or designate,
- Information concerning adopted policies, procedures and decisions of the Council is conveyed openly and accurately and
- Confidential information will be communicated only when and after determined by Council.

4. **Relationships with Staff and Other Members of Council**

Members of Council will;

- Acknowledge that only **Council as a whole** has the capacity to direct staff members to carry out specific tasks or functions,
- Refrain from using their position to improperly influence members of staff in their duties or functions or to gain an advantage for themselves or others and
- Refrain from publicly criticizing individual members of staff in a way that casts aspersions on their professional competence and credibility.

5. **Gifts and Benefits**

Members of Council will only;

- Accept gifts, hospitality or entertainment that could not be reasonably construed as being given in anticipation or recognition of special consideration by the Corporation.
- *Accept gifts, hospitality or entertainment with a nominal value of \$500 or more with the prior approval of Council.*
- Accept gifts, hospitality or entertainment that can be used/consumed within a 24 hour period and if the offer is infrequent (less than 2 or 3 times a year). Offers of accommodation or transportation values over \$200 are not to be accepted.
- Members of Council acknowledge that the Mayor will in his/her role, periodically receive and distribute ceremonial or other similar items on behalf of Council and the Town. Gifts and/or awards given on behalf of the Town shall be acknowledged as such and not as gifts of any individual member of Council.

“Gift” shall mean something acquired without compensation.

6. **Expenses**

Members of Council will, from time to time, incur expenses directly related to activities connected with the discharge of official duties or associated community activities having the sanction of Council. Such expenses are typically;

- *Per diems* for members of Council who incur a loss in income for time lost from regular employment in the undertaking of such duties or activities,
- Local travel expenses,
- Out of town meals.

Other expenses must be sanctioned by Council prior to them being incurred including:

- Expenses by immediate family members,
- Alcoholic beverages and
- Individual participation in charity or non-profit events including Golf Days, Ski Days, Raffles or Lotteries.

Certain expenses are not eligible for reimbursement including;

- Participation in any Political fund-raising event.

7. **Conflicts of Interest**

Members of Council will recognize their obligations to;

- Follow and respect both the letter and spirit of the provisions of the Municipal Act and the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act, as amended from time to time.

8. Use of Property

Members of Council will;

- only use Town property, equipment, supplies or services of consequence, for activities connected with the discharge of official duties or associated community activities having the sanction of Council or its Committees.

9. Transparency & Openness in Decision Making

Members of Council will endeavour to;

- conduct and convey Council business in an open and public manner so that the process, logic and rationale which was used to reach conclusions or decisions are available to the stakeholders.

10. Public Input

Council will periodically use formal and informal opportunities to seek public input as a component of the decision making process which have broad impacts on the community. The purpose of the exercise will be to provide stakeholders with a mechanism to provide opinions and advice so that the widest range of views and information is available before final decisions are made.

Council may, from time to time, establish committees to advise Council on specific issues. Such committees shall not be established without the sanction of Council.

11. Professional Development

Members of Council have an obligation to promote, support, pursue and partake in opportunities for professional development, including but not limited to;

- FCM Conferences
- AMO Conferences
- Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing seminars
- Provincial Professional Association Training Institutes (OGRA, AMCTO, PRO, etc.)
- Provincial Municipal Council orientation sessions

Council Members are encouraged to stay updated on issues and trends so that they can be as efficient and effective as possible in the carriage of their duties and responsibilities.

IMPLEMENTATION

- At the beginning of each term, Members of Council will be expected to sign two copies of the Code of Ethics Document (one for themselves and one for the Clerk's Office) to convey to each other and all stakeholders that they have read, understand and accept it.
- A Code of Ethics component will be included as part of the orientation workshop for each new Council.

Council Members are expected to formally and informally review their adherence to the provisions of the Code on a regular basis or when so requested by Council.

Council of the Corporation of the Town of Collingwood have read the information attached hereto in its entirety and hereby acknowledge and accept the Code of Ethics for Members of Council.

Sandra Cooper
Mayor Cooper

December 6, 2010
Date

Richard Lloyd
Deputy Mayor Lloyd

December 6, 2010
Date

Al Edwards
Councillor Edwards

December 6, 2010
Date

Richard Lloyd
Councillor Lloyd

December 6, 2010
Date

Chadwick
Councillor Chadwick

Dec 6, 2010
Date

Hull
Councillor Hull

December 6, 2010
Date

West
Councillor West

December 6, 2010
Date

Cunningham
Councillor Cunningham

Dec 6, 2010
Date

Gardhouse
Councillor Gardhouse

Dec 6/10
Date