



THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF TAY COUNCIL POLICIES MANUAL

SUBJECT: Administration Council Code of Conduct	EFFECTIVE DATE: August 24, 2016
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1. POLICY STATEMENT

Members of Council of the Township of Tay are committed to the discharge of their duties as elected officials in a respectful and ethical manner. The Code of Conduct for Members of Council is the instrument through which Council will establish and maintain standards for appropriate conduct. Members of Council understand their responsibility to protect and maintain public trust through adherence to established standards.

The quality of municipal administration and governance is best achieved through the establishment of high standards of conduct. The parameters established in this Code of Conduct will ensure that the integrity of the Township of Tay is upheld.

Key principles which underline the intent of this Code of Conduct are:

- a) Members of Council must serve and be seen to serve their constituents in a conscientious and diligent manner;
- b) Members of Council must be committed to performing their duties with integrity, without improper use of the influence of their office and conflicts of interest, both perceived and real;
- c) Members of Council are expected to perform their duties in office and manage their private affairs in a manner that promotes public confidence and will bear close public scrutiny;
- d) 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; and
- e) 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 laws and policies adopted by Council.



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2. SCOPE

The Code of Conduct for Members of Council applies to each member of Council, in fulfilling their obligation in service to the citizens of the Township of Tay.

3. PURPOSE OF CODE OF CONDUCT

Encouraging and preserving the highest standards of conduct by members of Council promotes an environment of integrity appropriate for their fiduciary role. Honesty and integrity are paramount in the fulfillment of the role of elected officials, and as such, this Code of Conduct sets expectations for members and requires them to conduct themselves in a way that generates community trust and confidence, and also enhances the image of the Township of Tay.

The Code of Conduct for Members of Council identifies the Township's expectations of Council members and provides direction with respect to the underlying principles of the Code by reinforcing that:

- a) decisions are made in an open, accessible, and equitable forum;
- b) decisions are made through appropriate channels;
- c) elected office is not used for personal gain;
- d) interactions between members is respectful and fair, and exemplifies a spirit of goodwill and cooperation;
- e) there is a high regard for the integrity of the office.

4. DEFINITIONS

In this Code of Conduct:

"Benefit, Gift or Hospitality" means any cash or monetary equivalent, fee, object of value, service, travel and accommodation, or entertainment and includes any personal benefit, defined as any form of advantage other than financial such as seeking an appointment, promotion or transfer with the Corporation on behalf of a family member and includes the private interests of a Member, subject to the exceptions set out in this Code".



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“Child” means a child born within or outside marriage and includes an adopted child and a person whom a member has demonstrated a settled intention to treat as a child of his or her family;

“Council” means the Council of the Township of Tay, inclusive of Mayor and Deputy Mayor;

“Fiduciary” means a person who is required to act for the benefit of another person on all matters within the scope of their relationship; one who owes to another the duties of good faith, trust, confidence and candor;¹

“Information” includes a record or document;

“Member” means a member of the Council, unless the context otherwise requires;

“Parent” means a person who has demonstrated a settled intention to treat a child as a part of his or her family whether or not that person is the natural parent of the child;

“Person” includes a corporation, partnership, association and any other entity, as the context allows; and

“Spouse” means a person to whom a person is married or with whom the person is living in a conjugal relationship outside marriage.

5. COMPLIANCE WITH DECLARATION OF OFFICE

Every member of Council shall act in accordance with his or her Declaration of Office (see Appendix “A”).

6. ADHERENCE TO COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Every member of Council 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 and affecting the Councillor while acting in his or her capacity as a member of Council.

¹ *Black’s Law Dictionary*, 8th edition



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7. APPOINTMENT OF INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

The Council shall appoint an Integrity Commissioner to investigate alleged breaches of this Code pursuant to Subsection 223.3 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*.

8. GENERAL CONDUCT OF COUNCIL

Every member of Council has the duty and responsibility to conduct their dealings with each other, the public, and staff in an appropriately respectful manner that maintains public confidence in the office to which they have been elected, and shall avoid aggressive, offensive, abusive conduct, bullying or intimidation. Every member shall take measures to ensure that the municipal work environment is free from discrimination and harassment.

A member of Council shall not use indecent, offensive, abusive or insulting words or expressions toward any other member, any member of staff, or any member of the public.

A member of Council shall not speak in a manner that is discriminatory to any individual, based on that person's race, ancestry, place of origin, creed, gender, sexual orientation, age, colour, marital status, or disability.

Members will ensure that their business is conducted in an open and transparent manner and will refrain from communications and correspondence, regardless of format, outside of Council or Committee meetings that would advance the business of the municipality.

9. CONDUCT AT MEETINGS

Every member of Council shall conduct himself or herself in an appropriate and civil manner at Council, committee and other meetings, pursuant to the Procedural By-law, this Code of Conduct, and other applicable law.



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Members are to demonstrate courtesy and respect for delegations, fellow members and staff and shall not distract from the business of the meeting during the presentations and or when Members or staff have the floor.

10. CONDUCT AT PUBLIC EVENTS

Members of Council are occasionally requested to make public presentations outside of Council meetings or attend public events as representatives of the Township of Tay. As such, every member shall conduct himself or herself with dignity and decorum, in a manner befitting public expectation.

11. CONDUCT WHEN INTERACTING WITH STAFF

Every member of Council shall be respectful of the working relationships and reporting responsibilities between staff members. Municipal staff works under the direction of the Chief Administrative Officer, and are required to carry out the decisions of Council in service of the municipal corporation as a whole. Municipal staff is also required to advise Council on legislative and administrative policy with political neutrality and objectivity and without undue influence from any individual member or any faction of the Council.

Accordingly, no member shall maliciously or falsely injure or impugn the professional or ethical reputation of any member of staff. Every member shall show respect for staff, and for their professional capacities and responsibilities.

Members are encouraged to contact the applicable Department Head or the Chief Administrative Officer in their absence, when they have questions, concerns or are seeking clarification about a report, service or program. Any request for service must align with services and information that would normally be available to any Township resident (i.e. missing garbage can/sign, blocked culverts, etc.).



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Only Council as a whole and no single member has the authority to direct any employee, approve a budget, policy, and other such matters, unless specifically authorized by Council.

No member of Council shall use indecent, abusive or insulting words or expressions toward any other member, any member of staff or any member of the public, either directly or by innuendo.

No member shall compel any member of staff to engage in partisan political activities, or subject any member of staff to threat or discrimination for refusing to engage in any such activity.

No member shall use or attempt to further his or her authority or influence by intimidating, threatening, coercing, commanding or influencing improperly any staff member or interfering with the person's duties, including the duty to disclose improper activity.

Further, all members should be aware of other Township policies and legislation that are also binding on Council, such as but not limited to the Occupational Health & Safety Act, Human Rights Code and Harassment & Violence Policy.

12. CONDUCT DURING ELECTION CAMPAIGN

Every member shall comply with all applicable Provincial legislative requirements as well as the provisions of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996, as amended*.

No member shall use confidential information, facilities, equipment, supplies, services or other resources of the municipality, including any Councillor newsletter or website linked through the municipality's website, for any election campaign or campaign-related activity.

No member shall undertake campaign-related activities on Township property unless authorized by the municipality.

No member of Council shall use the services of any person for election-related purposes during hours in which that person receives any compensation from the municipality.



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13. NO IMPROPER USE OF INFLUENCE

No member of Council shall use the influence of his or her office for any purpose other than for the lawful exercise of his or her official duties and for municipal purposes.

No member of Council shall use his or 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.

For the purposes of this provision, "private advantage" does not include a matter:

- a) That is of general application;
- b) That affects a member of Council, his or 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 of Council.

This provision does not prevent a member of Council from requesting that council grant a lawful exemption from a policy.

14. CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

In this Code, "confidential information" includes any information in the possession of, or received in confidence by, the municipality that the municipality is prohibited from disclosing, or has decided to refuse to disclose, under the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, 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, labor



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relations, litigation, property acquisition or disposition, the security of the property of the municipality or 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.

No member shall disclose, release or publish by any means, **including social media**, to any person or to the public 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.

Any matter and information pertaining to that matter which has been discussed or debated at a meeting which has been closed to the public (in-camera), shall remain confidential unless, and until such time as Council, a judicial order, or other legislation authorizes its release.

A member may disclose the content of any matter which has been discussed or debated at a closed meeting (in-camera) only after Council has discussed or otherwise released the information to the public.

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. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, no member shall, without lawful authority, disclose, or make personal use of, any of the following types of confidential information:

- a) Information concerning litigation, negotiation or personnel matters;
- b) Information which infringes on the rights of any person, such as publication of the identity of a complainant when such information was given in confidence;
- c) Information such as price schedules on a contract, tender or other proposal while the document remains confidential;
- d) Information deemed to be "personal information" under the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*; and
- e) Any other information or statistical data required by law to remain confidential.



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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 or her duties and such access is not prohibited by Council or otherwise by law.

15. USE OF TOWNSHIP PROPERTY, SERVICES AND RESOURCES

No member of Council shall use, or permit the use of, municipal land, facilities, equipment, supplies, services, or other resource(s), including any municipally-owned information, website, or funds allocated for member of Council expenses, for any purpose or activity other than the lawful business of the municipal corporation, unless expressly permitted by the Department Head responsible for the facilities or equipment.

No member shall seek or acquire any personal benefit or financial gain from the use or sale of confidential information, or of any municipally-owned intellectual property including any invention, creative writing or drawing, computer program, technical innovation, or any other information or item capable of being patented or copyrighted, or which property remains exclusively that of the municipality.

16. INCOMPATIBLE ACTIVITY

A member of Council may not engage in any outside work or business activity which is incompatible or inconsistent with the ethical discharge of official duties in the public interest.

Members of Council shall not engage in outside activity which uses their knowledge of confidential information about the holdings of the corporation.

Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, Members of Council shall not:

- a) Use any influence of office for any purpose other than official duties;
- b) Act as an agent on behalf of another party, before Council or any committee, board or commission of Council;



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- c) Solicit, demand or accept the services of any corporation, employee, or individual providing services to the municipality at a time in which said person or corporation is being paid by the municipality;
- d) Use any information gained in the execution of office that is not available to the general public for any purpose other than for official duties;
- e) Place themselves in a position of obligation to any person or organization which might benefit from special consideration or may seek preferential treatment;
- f) Give preferential treatment to any person or organization in which a member or members of Council have a financial interest;
- g) Influence any administrative or Council decision or decision-making process involving or affecting any person or organization in which a Member or Members of Council have a financial interest; and
- h) Use corporate materials, equipment, facilities or employees for personal gain or for any private purpose.

17. GIFTS, BENEFITS, AND HOSPITALITY

For the purposes of this Code, a gift, benefit or extension of hospitality with the member's knowledge, to a member's spouse, child or parent, or to his or her staff, that is connected directly or indirectly to the performance of the member's duties is deemed to be a gift or extension of hospitality to that member.

No member shall accept a fee, advance, gift, benefit or offer of hospitality that is connected directly or indirectly with the performance of his or her duties of office, unless permitted under one or more of the exceptions listed below.

For greater clarity, the municipality's provision of a benefit, provided as part of council's remuneration, such as an Employee Assistance Plan (EAP), group life insurance, group accident or sickness insurance and/or medical, health-related and dental insurance for medical, dental or health-related benefits for members of Council, his or her spouse or children that are in accordance with the *Municipal Act, 2001* shall not be deemed a prohibited benefit for the purposes of the Code of Conduct.



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Each of the following is recognized as an exception:

- a) Compensation authorized by law, policy or by-law;
- b) A gift, benefit or hospitality 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 or 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, conference, seminar, training, 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.

18. SPONSORSHIPS OR DONATIONS FOR COMMUNITY EVENTS

Selling tickets for a community event is not considered solicitation for the purposes of this Policy.



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19. COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA RELATIONS

Official information relating to decisions and resolutions of Council shall normally be communicated to the media and the community through the Chief Administrative Officer.

In some instances, members of Council are requested to comment on policy, procedure and decisions of Council. In those instances, Council members shall convey the information openly and accurately, unless confidentiality regulations apply.

When making statements to the media or the public, members shall remain focused on issues, avoiding statements which provoke or challenge another Councillor, or which might damage the reputation of another Council member.

Council members shall not make accusatory statements or lay blame. In the event that a Council decision has not unfolded the way Council intended, the information shall be communicated to the public in a forthright manner which identifies the problem and the corrective action.

Members of Council shall accurately and adequately communicate the attitudes and decisions of the Township of Tay Council, even if they don't agree with a decision reached on a particular matter showing respect for the democratic process, and showing sense of teamwork within the membership.

Nothing in this section is intended to prevent a member of Council from outlining their rationale for voting in a particular manner, which may have been contrary to the final Council decision.

20. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Members of Council have an obligation to promote, support, pursue and participate in opportunities for professional development. Council members are required to remain informed on issues and trends in order to serve the public efficiently and effectively in the fulfillment of their duties.



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21. ATTIRE AND APPEARANCE

As representatives of the Township of Tay, it is expected that every member of Council will take appropriate care in dress and appearance, which at meetings is business dress.

Dress for committee meetings is generally more relaxed, and will follow a business casual dress standard; however, blue jeans are not appropriate.

Special events and special occasions will require that members of Council gauge what attire is appropriate for the event.

22. STATUTES REGULATING THE CONDUCT OF COUNCILLORS

In addition to this Code of Conduct, the following Ontario legislation also governs the conduct of member of Council:

The Municipal Act, 2001, as amended;
The Municipal Conflict of Interest Act;
The Municipal Elections Act, 1996; and
The Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

The *Criminal Code* of Canada also governs the conduct of members of Council.

A member may become disqualified and lose his or her seat by operation of law, including being convicted of an offence under the *Criminal Code* of Canada or being found to have failed to comply with the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*, whether or not the conduct in question involves contravention of this Code of Conduct.

In the case of any inconsistency between this Code and a Federal or Provincial statute or regulation, the statute or regulation shall prevail.



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23. CODE OF CONDUCT BREACHES

Where Council receives a report by its Integrity Commissioner that, in his or her opinion, there has been a violation of the Code of Conduct, Council may, per the Municipal Act, impose upon the offending member of Council either of the following:

1. A reprimand;
2. Suspension of the remuneration paid to the member in respect of his or her services as a member of Council for a period of up to 90 days.

24. COMPLAINT PROTOCOL

Any individual, organization, employee, Member of Council, Council as a whole or member of the public who has reasonable grounds to believe that a member has breached this Code, may proceed with a complaint and request an inquiry.

Complaints must be submitted within 6 months after the alleged violation occurred or submission of the relevant disclosure documentation. No action will be taken on a complaint received beyond this deadline.

25. COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

Informal Complaint

Any organization or individual who has identified or witnessed behaviours 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 behaviour or activity;
- c) If applicable, confirm to the member your satisfaction or dissatisfaction with his or her response to the concern identified;



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- 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;
- e) If not satisfied with the response received through the informal process, a complainant may proceed through a formal investigation through the Integrity Commissioner as outlined below.

Investigation

A request for an investigation into an alleged breach may be made in writing to the Integrity Commissioner for the Township of Tay, setting out the name of the Council Member who breached the Code of Conduct, the date of the alleged breach, and a description of how the Code was violated.

The appointed Integrity Commissioner for the Township of Tay will commence an independent investigation and provide a written report to Council. The Integrity Commissioner and every person acting under the Commissioner's jurisdiction shall preserve confidentiality with respect to all matters that become known in the course of the investigation.

The summary report provided to Council by the Integrity Commissioner will contain recommendations and advice without disclosing confidential information. The report will also contain a decision about the alleged contravention, and provide remedial action to be taken.

26. NO REPRISAL OR OBSTRUCTION IN THE ENFORCEMENT OF THIS CODE

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.



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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.

27. NO APPEAL OF INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER'S DECISION

There is no appeal from the decision of the Integrity Commissioner.

28. IMPLEMENTATION

At the outset of each term of Council, members shall receive and acknowledge two copies of the Code of Conduct for Members of Council. One copy shall be retained by the member, and one copy shall be provided to the Clerk.

Code of Conduct training shall comprise a portion of the new Council orientation program.

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

Clerk Services will provide candidates running for a position on Council with a copy of this Policy when they submit their nomination package.

29. COMMITMENT AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Two Copies of the Code of Conduct are to be acknowledged; one copy to be retained by the Clerk, and one copy to be provided to the member of Council.



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I _____, agree to abide by the requirement of this Code of Conduct in the discharge of my duties as an elected official.

I acknowledge that I have read and accept the expectations and responsibilities outlined in this Code of Conduct. I will act with honesty and integrity and conduct myself in a manner which generates public trust and confidence and enhances the image of the Township of Tay.

Signature of Member of Council

Date of Signature



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Appendix 'A' – Declaration of Office

I, _____, having been elected to the Office of _____ in the municipality of the Corporation of the Township of Tay, do solemnly promise and declare that:

1. I will truly, faithfully and impartially exercise this office to the best of my knowledge and ability.
2. I have not received and will not receive any payment or reward, or promise thereof, for the exercise of this office in a biased, corrupt or in any other improper manner.
3. I will disclose any pecuniary interest, direct or indirect, in accordance with the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act.
4. I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second.

And I make this solemn promise and declaration conscientiously believing it to be true and knowing that it is of the same force and effect as if made under oath.