

Principles
Integrity

Integrity Commissioner's
Recommendation Report
Regarding Multiple Complaints Against Councillor Robinson
August 5, 2025

Executive Summary:

- [1] This report results from a series of 4 separate complaints filed against Councillor Robinson in relation to numerous videos posted to YouTube and other public statements made in which she disrespected and maligned municipal staff, falsely and maliciously harassing staff, accusing senior staff of corruption, and undermining public confidence in the City.
- [2] The complaints allege that the Councillor's conduct breached her obligations under the Code to treat staff in a respectful manner, with dignity and without abuse or bullying, and to not act in a manner that would undermine public confidence in the City.
- [3] We find that the complaints are substantiated and that the Councillor's conduct over this lengthy period, as demonstrated by the numerous examples, breached the Code of Conduct by disrespecting, harassing and maliciously maligning staff.
- [4] We are recommending a 90-day suspension of pay.
- [5] An Integrity Commissioner and Council cannot remain 'seized' of a matter, however, recognizing that an expedited approach is warranted to deal with breaches which are of the *same type (sui generis)* as fully investigated in this report – that is, disparaging and unsubstantiated remarks made toward staff in meetings of Council or one of its committees, or on Youtube - we are recommending a truncated complaint procedure which maintains procedural fairness while expediting reporting to Council.

Process

- [6] In conducting this investigation, Principles *Integrity* applied the principles of procedural fairness and was guided by the complaint process set out under the Code.
- [7] This fair and balanced process includes the following elements:
- a. Reviewing the complaint to determine whether it is within scope and jurisdiction and in the public interest to pursue, including giving

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- consideration to whether the complaint should be restated or narrowed, where this better reflects the public interest;
- b. Notifying the Respondent, and providing her with the opportunity to respond in full to the allegations;
 - c. Reviewing the Code, all relevant documentation including watching the videos posted, and interviewing relevant witnesses as necessary; and,
 - d. Providing the Respondent with the opportunity to review and provide comments to the Integrity Commissioner's Preliminary Findings Report, prior to finalizing and submitting a Recommendation Report.

Code Provisions

[8] Relevant provisions of the Code are set out below:

Policy Objective:

2. Attaining an elected position within one's community is a privilege which carries significant responsibilities and obligations. Members of Council are held to a high standard as leaders of the community and 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, professional, and respectful manner.

3. All Members of the Council of the City of Pickering are committed to protecting and promoting the well-being and best interests of the citizens of the City with the highest standards of integrity and ethical conduct. This Code is an affirmation of this commitment It recognizes and is based on the following key statements of principle:

- (a) Members are committed to performing their duties of office, and arranging private affairs, in a manner that promotes public confidence in the integrity of Member and respect for Council as a whole.
- (b) Members are committed to acting and being seen to act with integrity and impartiality that will bear the closest scrutiny.
- (c) Members are committed to serving their constituents in a conscientious and diligent manner.
- (d) Members are committed to working with City officials and staff in a conscientious and respectful manner.

[...]

05 Interaction with the Public, Other Members, and Council/Staff Relations

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05.01 Members have a duty to treat members of the public, one another, and staff, with respect and dignity and without abuse, bullying, or intimidation.

05.02 Members have a duty to ensure that the City's work environment is safe, and free from discrimination and harassment.

05.09 Notwithstanding the provisions noted above, Members shall have regard for the following City Policies that outline further parameters pertaining to Council/Staff relations including....., Respect in the Workplace

[...]

26.04 Every Member shall comply with the requirements of this Code of Conduct, and shall act in accordance with its spirit and intent, in all matters pertaining to the performance of his or her duties as a Member.

The Complaints

[9] This report results from a series of complaints over several months filed against Councillor Robinson in relation to numerous public statements made in which she disrespected and maligned municipal staff by repeatedly accusing certain staff of lying, corruption and tampering with recordings of meetings, and falsely and maliciously verbally attacking and harassing staff.

[10] The complaints allege that the Councillor's conduct, as evidenced in numerous YouTube video posts demonstrate that the Councillor has repeatedly violated her obligations under the Code which require her to treat staff in a respectful manner, with dignity and without abuse or bullying, and to not act in a manner that would undermine public confidence in the City of Pickering:

- In the September 24-30, 2024 edition of the Oshawa/Durham Central newspaper, in an article entitled "The Dirty Game", the Councillor made claims about staff's corruption, collusion, and perceived bribery.
- On October 27, 2024 the Councillor posted a video to YouTube entitled "Pickering's democracy under siege see how council's power grab could silence your voice forever", in which the Councillor states asserts, in regard to the streaming and recording of meetings, that staff have manipulated the streaming and that they are tampering with the recordings.
- On November 4, 2024 at the Executive Committee meeting, the Councillor made repeated claims that staff were tampering with and engaging in manipulation of the audio of Council and Committee meetings.

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- On November 6, 2024 the Councillor posted a video to YouTube entitled “Pickering Council Drama: Silenced Voices, Questionable Spending & Power Struggles Exposed!” in which the Councillor states that the CAO is manipulating the truth, and misleading the public.
- On January 8, 2025 the Councillor posted a video to YouTube entitled “Mayor Kevin Ashe’s Power Grab: Silencing a Female Councillor to Consolidate Control”, in which the Councillor states that the CAO is engaging in “...borderline extortion” to silence her, alleging that the CAO, the City Solicitor and other Directors are engaging in corruption.
- On January 22, 2025 the Councillor posted a video to YouTube entitled “Firefighter Survey Sparks Outrage: Is Pickering’s leadership ignoring Public Safety Risks”, in which the Councillor suggests that the City’s Fire Chief dismissed feedback from his own front line firefighters in regard to issues of fire safety.
- On February 1, 2025 the Councillor posted a video to YouTube entitled “Exposing More Lies & Corruption: The Truth About Pickering’s Municipal Accommodation Tax”, in which the Councillor alleges that the City’s Director, Economic Development is lying and providing false and misleading information in regard to the his report on implementing a Municipal Accommodation Tax, and alleges that he is engaged in a pattern of deceit, corruption, and lying to the public to manipulate outcomes.
- On February 4, 2025 the Councillor posted a video to YouTube entitled “Revealing the Truth About Feeling Pressured Votes on Land Expropriate and Fire Master Plan”, in which the Councillor claims to have been pressured with respect to the expropriation of a site for a new Fire Station, and impugned the professional reputation and ethics of the City Solicitor.
- On February 7, 2025 the Councillor posted a video to YouTube entitled “Mayor & Councillor Meltdown Over ‘Conspiracy’ as Another Laughs While I’m Called Names & Yelled At”, in which the Councillor provided misleading information and alleged that the City’s IT consultant had lied.
- On February 28, 2025 the Councillor posted a video to YouTube entitled “Pickering’s Virtual Sham: Exposing Lies, Cover-Ups & Political Intimidation”, in which the Councillor she alleged that the public were being lied to and deceived, and repeatedly alleged corruption by the CAO and Mayor.
- On April 1, 2025 the Councillor posted a video to YouTube entitled “Robinson’s Council Highlights – Millions Wasted, Power Centralized & Public Lied To – U Deserve Better”, in which the Councillor makes many

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sensational and misleading allegations, and again repeats her allegations that the City's Directors lied to Council.

Evidence Analysis:

- [11] We have carefully reviewed each of the YouTube videos posted, considered all supporting documentation, and watched the Council meetings referenced in her YouTube posts.
- [12] We find that the Councillor has repeatedly made false claims that City staff have lied and that staff are corrupt.
- [13] The following selection of the incidents complained of sufficiently set out the basis for our findings, and for our recommendations.

Streaming/Recording Meetings

- [14] The City's processes in regard to streaming and recording its public Council and Committee meetings provides that they are broadcast unedited on the City's livestream. The technology is not new and though there are occasionally challenges with static or interruptions, these are usually caught and corrected in real time.
- [15] The streaming process provides a direct feed, which means what is captured by the cameras and microphones is transmitted live to the audience without any alterations.
- [16] On October 7, 2024 the Councillor posted a video to YouTube entitled "Pickering's democracy under siege see how council's power grab could silence your voice forever" in which she asserts, in regard to the streaming and recording of meetings, that staff have manipulated the streaming and that they are tampering with the recordings.
- [17] On November 4, 2024 at the Executive Committee meeting the Councillor made repeated claims that staff were tampering with and engaging in manipulation of the audio of Council and Committee meetings.
- [18] On November 6, 2024 the Councillor posted a video to YouTube entitled "Pickering Council Drama: Silenced Voices, Questionable Spending & Power Struggles Exposed!" in which she states that the CAO is manipulating the truth, and misleading the public.

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[19] When asked directly to provide any evidence in support of her allegations, that staff have tampered with or manipulated the streaming or recording of meetings, the Councillor has failed to provide any evidence whatsoever.

[20] Having reviewed the evidence provided, we are satisfied that City staff have not, and do not, manipulate the content of streamed or recorded meetings in any way.

Firefighter Survey

[21] The Fire Master Plan was presented to Executive Committee on January 13, 2025 for consideration.

[22] The 242-page Report was the culmination of a comprehensive review conducted in accordance with Provincial regulation by experts experienced in emergency response management and planning.

[23] The review included: fire prevention, fire inspection, public education, training, fire suppression, apparatus, facilities and emergency management, how services are currently provided, areas for improvement, and projected growth and development.

[24] The work was conducted in consultation with senior Fire Dept staff and included an internal online staff survey.

[25] Following a lengthy presentation of the report, Councillor Robinson drilled down on three particular points:

1. The failure to maintain smoke alarms potentially giving rise to Provincial Offence charges;
2. The use of 2021 census data to inform the Master Plan; and
3. Indications from the Fire Fighter survey that current service levels are not adequate.

[26] It was explained to the Councillor by the Fire Chief and others that:

1. Provincial legislation requiring smoke alarms to be maintained already exists, because the consequence of fire deaths is largely preventable, and that no change to the potential for laying charges was recommended;
2. 2021 census represents the most recent reliable data available; and
3. The service level is currently adequate, and the survey of firefighters only generated a 27% response rate.

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[27] On January 22, 2025 the Councillor posted a video YouTube entitled “Firefighter Surey Sparks Outrage: Is Pickering’s leadership Ignoring Public Safety Risks?”

[28] In the video, she suggests that the City’s Fire Chief dismissed feedback from his own front line firefighters in regard to issues of fire safety.

[29] In fact, the Fire Chief simply advised, when questioned by the Councillor at Council, that he couldn’t explain why they responded as they had to the survey questions. The Fire Chief also advised Council that the Master Plan was based on a number of inputs, the survey, such as it was, being only one.

[30] She states:

Almost 40% of anonymous firefighters felt that the community does not receive adequate fire protection and a staggering 84% of firefighters disagreed that the current response model is adequately staffed.

[31] The Councillor’s statement is misleading and alarmist.

[32] It fails to recognize that only 27% of the Fire Services staff actually responded to the survey carried out as part of the Fire Master Plan.

[33] The Councillor, having had it explained to her that only 27% of fire fighters had responded, was blatantly misleading when she claimed that “*a staggering 84% of firefighters disagreed that the current response model is adequately staffed*”.

[34] The Councillor also failed to recognized acknowledge that the Pickering Professional Firefighters Association has expressed support for the Fire Master Plan.

[35] The Councillor’s claims in the YouTube video January 22, 2025 the Councillor posted a video YouTube entitled “Firefighter Surey Sparks Outrage: Is Pickering’s leadership Ignoring Public Safety Risks?” constitutes an intentionally misleading and alarmist misstatement of facts.

[36] Reasonable queries with respect to the views of firefighters could have been undertaken, however by creating the videos, and by engaging in intentionally misleading and alarmist misstatement of facts, we find that Councillor Robinson has intentionally maligned and impugned the reputation of the City in regard to its Fire Services, undermining public confidence in the City and its professional staff.

Municipal Accommodation Tax

[37] In his Report ECD 01-25 *Municipal Accommodation Tax and the Establishment of a Municipal Services Corporation - Implementation and Establishing Municipal*

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Accommodation Tax and Destination Pickering recommending consideration of a Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT), which would impose a 4% room tax on accommodation.

[38] As noted in the Report, the City of Pickering has only 1 motel and 1 hotel (the Great Canadian Gaming Company's Pickering Casino Resort).

[39] The staff report states, in the second paragraph of the Executive Summary, that 50 other Ontario municipalities had implemented a MAT, to boost revenues in support of tourism:

MAT is a local tax applied to the purchase of transient accommodations such as hotels and motels. Its primary purpose is to generate revenue to support local tourism initiatives.

Currently, more than 50 municipalities across Ontario impose the MAT with the most common rate set at 4%

[40] In response to a question from Councillor Robinson challenging why the Director of Economic Develop claimed "many municipalities" had the MAT, he reiterated that 50 municipalities across Ontario have a such a room tax.

[41] The question by the Councillor and staff responses starting at timestamp 1:36:08 in the recording of the January 13, 2025 Executive Committee Meeting make the point:

Councillor Robinson: *"So there's 444 municipalities and I believe in the Report it says only 50 municipalities actually have this 4% tax which means that 394 municipalities don't have the MAT on them. Is that correct?"*

[42] It was explained that the 50 municipalities represent mostly cities and towns of comparable or larger size and represent more than 40% of the Province's population.

[43] Despite this, in her February 1, 2025 YouTube video, the Councillor makes the following strident claim:

*"only 15 out of 444 municipalities have adopted this [MAT] and this represents only about 3.4% of the total...which is far from what most people would consider many...it is not just inaccurate **it's a lie** because it misrepresents the actual number in a way that could influence public opinion or policy decisions based on a false perception of widespread adoption. This is intentional distortion of the facts, **which is corruption.**"*

[emphasis added]

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[44] Her statement is categorically false; in light of the statements in the report, and the further explanation sought and obtained during the Executive Committee meeting, it is clear that her statement is knowingly false.

[45] On the strength of this false statement, she then maliciously attacked the credibility of the Director, baldly asserting that his statement was a lie and constituted corruption.

[46] We find that Councillor Robinson's allegations, statements and claims against staff are baseless, false and disrespectful. [see above re ref to code]

Expropriation for Fire Station

[47] In the YouTube video posted February 4, 2025, the Councillor claims she felt "pressured" into voting for a decision that she can no longer support.

[48] During the YouTube video in which she made her claim, she played an excerpt of the Council meeting during which the City Solicitor was speaking about an expropriation for a new Fire Station.

[49] In the video, she references "lies" surrounding the MAT issue, and proceeds to claim that she has "lost trust", characterizing the expropriation process as "bullying or exploitation". The adoption of a Municipal Accommodation Tax and the expropriation of specific lands are separate issues.

[50] Expropriation is a legal process whereby public agencies are able to acquire lands which are required to serve public needs.

[51] It is highly regulated under legislation, and does not constitute "bullying or exploitation". Rather, it is a necessary means to accomplish municipal objectives when a traditional purchase and sale of land is not available. Importantly, expropriation process involves an assessment of fair compensation for expropriated lands.

[52] While her statements may, taken on their own, be little more than a reflection of hyperbole or ignorance, making such baseless statements in a YouTube video ("*I won't stand by while trust is broken and I certainly won't let my voice be manipulated into supporting something I don't believe in*") while the clip of the City Solicitor making his presentation to Council is running on the screen is an attempt to impugn the credibility and ethical reputation of the City Solicitor.

[53] Her statements in the video give the clear impression that the City Solicitor has colluded in some improper, unethical and potentially illegal activity in which there was some undue pressure or influence brought to bear on her.

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[54] There is no evidence of any kind to support her statements.

[55] We find that she is intentionally maligning and impugning the reputation of the City Solicitor and undermining public confidence in the City and its professional processes.

Councillor Robinson's Response to Complaints

Freedom of Expression

[56] When presented with the complaints, the Councillor did not deny her statements and, in fact, doubled-down on them.

[57] Her position is that she is fulfilling her role as an elected Councillor, "*speaking the truth, holding staff accountable, and standing up for the residents*".

[58] As in the past, she has again claimed the protection of the freedom of expression provisions of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms (the "Charter"):

"Every single one of my videos and statements are protected under Section 2(b) of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. This is political commentary and oversight --- not harassment. I quote public data, Council proceedings, staff reports, and resident concerns. That is my role as an elected Councillor.

Had the Integrity Commissioner simply watched the full, unedited videos cited in the complaint, a lengthy response would not be necessary. The context and facts are already on public record."

[59] Freedom of expression, while a fundamental freedom, is not unrestricted; indeed section 1 of the Charter qualifies its guarantee of rights and freedoms and specifically recognizes that the right to free expression is "*subject to such reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in free and democratic society*."

[60] Laws against defamation in all its forms are an example of such a limitation, as are laws and rules against harassment in all its forms.

[61] City Council adopted a Code of Conduct to guide and demand a level of integrity, respect, ethics, and decorum necessary to allow efficient and effective governance and citizen representation.

[62] The Councillor has voluntarily taken on this role; so long as she is a member of Council, she is subject to the Code and is required to conform to the standards of behaviour required by Council.

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Political Retaliation

[63] In her response to us, the Councillor claims that the complaints are not legitimate, but merely political retaliation. She continues to assert corruption at the City of Pickering, and characterizes her conduct as 'asking hard questions' and 'speaking the truth'.

[64] It should be noted that there is no Code of Conduct impediment to 'speaking the truth'.

[65] Having carefully scrutinized the videos and the underlying Council meetings and/or reports referenced, the Councillor's statements represent a mischaracterization of the truth, blatantly false statements, and an unrelenting attack on the credibility and reputation of senior City staff.

[66] This conduct has a deleterious impact on staff morale. It also constitutes a pattern of disrespect and harassment.

Findings:

[67] Given all the foregoing, we find that the Councillor's conduct as outlined above violated in a most egregious manner the fundamental principles enumerated in the Code to protect and promote the well-being and best interests of the citizens of the City with the highest standards of integrity and ethical conduct, and a breach of the specific duty set out at 5.01 to treat members of staff with respect and dignity and without abuse, bullying, or intimidation.

[68] The Councillor's statements on the numerous YouTube videos are intentionally strident and alarmist, and unsupported by the underlying facts.

[69] We observe that her conduct at Council meetings is also often provocative, argumentative and vexatious.

[70] Although we observe that staff are consistently deferential, accommodating and indulgent of her questions at meetings – which often are immaterial, irrelevant or extraneous – she has a practice of carefully (almost surgically) splicing and editing excerpts of these meetings for her YouTube videos, in a manner which appears designed to impugn staff's credibility and the City's reputation.

[71] We find that her conduct in this regard is contrary to the standards and expectations for members of Council articulated in the Code of Conduct.

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[72] The Code requires members to treat staff in a respectful manner, with dignity and without abuse or bullying, and to not act in a manner that would undermine public confidence in the City.

[73] We find that she has disrespected and maligned municipal staff, falsely and maliciously harassed them, and repeatedly accused senior staff of lying and corruption.

[74] She has demonstrated an egregious disrespect for her role as Councillor.

[75] We find that she has breached the Code of Conduct, in particular, Policy Objective 2 and 3, and Rules 5.01, 5.02, 5.09 and 26.04.

Recommendations and Concluding Remarks:

[76] An Integrity Commissioner's investigation report is not simply the conclusion of a technical exercise to determine whether there has been a breach of codified standards of behaviour. Our role is more than simply the task of bringing adjudication to grievances between individuals. As noted below, we see as our highest objective in concluding an investigation to be the making of recommendations that serve the public interest.

[77] The integrity commissioner's role is as much about education as it is about adjudication, so that municipal government can function better, and that members of the public are able to confidently conclude that members of their municipal council are acting with integrity.

[78] We are of the view that the Respondent's conduct represents a continued pattern of violating the provisions of the Code of Conduct.

[79] In our view, a significant change in behaviour is necessary. As such, we believe that a significant sanction is warranted.

[80] Under the *Municipal Act*, upon receipt of a recommendation report from the integrity commissioner, Council may impose a reprimand or a suspension of pay for a period of up to 90 days. Unfortunately, unlike Ontario school boards in similar circumstances, municipal councils lack the authority to suspend members from attending a meeting, or to impose other remedies that are intended to be curative and preventative but which are not clearly available under the *Municipal Act*.

[81] Council is left with the blunt instrument of pay suspension. While a suspension of pay does not affect the Councillor's ability to post disparaging content, or to make

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hurtful statements at meetings, pay suspension is a relevant penalty for violation of the Code.

[82] We note that this is the sixth time that we have had to report publicly in regard to conduct of Councillor Robinson that has been found to breach the Code of Conduct and on each occasion, a further suspension of pay has been imposed.

[83] This particular report is in relation to four (4) separate complaints regarding statements made in an article published in print, at an Executive Committee meeting, and in statements made in nine (9) YouTube videos posted by the Councillor.

[84] Although any one of the complaints might have been the subject of a stand-alone Recommendation Report, we have determined that, given the similarity of the conduct in question, it is appropriate to incorporate all of the allegations from the four (4) complaints into a single investigation, and this Report.

[85] We are recommending a suspension of pay of 22.5 days for each of the four (4) complaints, for a total of 90 days.

[86] We are limited by the permitted sanctions under the Act and the absence of clear authority for Council to impose other remedies that would be better suited to preventing further harmful misbehaviour of the type cited in this Report.

[87] Recognizing that unlike a court, an integrity commissioner and Council cannot remain 'seized' of a matter, an expedited approach to dealing with the unsubstantiated and harmful remarks of the Councillor, whether in person or on social media, is still required. On the basis that any future application of Council's power to remedy breaches of the Code must be procedurally fair, we also recommend that Council adopt the following process in respect of future allegations of breach of the Code of Conduct in respect of **disparaging remarks made toward staff in meetings of Council or one of its committees, or on Youtube:**

- An allegation of breach is brought to the attention of the Integrity Commissioner by the CAO that Councillor Robinson, in either a meeting of Council or one of its committees, or in a posting on YouTube, has made comments about staff that fall into one or more of the following categories:
 - a. is overtly harassing;
 - b. is unjustifiably critical or disrespectful to identifiable staff members;
 - c. impugns staff's credibility, impartiality, or integrity.

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- If the Integrity Commissioner forms a prima facie ('on its face') opinion that the allegation would, if the facts prove to be true, form a breach of the Code of Conduct, the Integrity Commissioner will compile a Preliminary Findings Report (PFR) and share the PFR with Councillor Robinson, with the requirement that the Councillor respond within 14 days with a submission in respect of the findings made in the PFR, whether they constitute a breach of the Code of Conduct, and any comments she may have on a) a potential remedy to the breach, and/or b) the imposition of a monetary sanction
- The Integrity Commissioner will consider the submissions, if any, of the Councillor and submit a Recommendation Report (containing the text of the PFR and any revisions, along with the Integrity Commissioner's recommendations and concluding remarks) to the next available meeting of Council if the conclusion remains that the Code of Conduct has been breached and a sanction is warranted.

[88] The above-described process omits the initial notification and response in respect of a Code allegation. In our view the procedural fairness to be accorded a respondent in a Code complaint is not diminished, however, since the three categories of allegations have been fully examined previously, and it is only the factual circumstances set out in the allegation that are to be verified or justified.

[89] The benefit of the above-described process is the saving of time, so that Council may more rapidly deal with serious allegations affecting its staff.

[90] We therefore recommend:

- A. That the remuneration paid to Councillor Robinson be suspended for a total of 90 days; and
- B. That the following process be followed in the event the CAO forms the opinion that disparaging remarks have been made by Councillor Lisa Robinson toward staff in meetings of Council or one of its committees, or on Youtube, which warrant intervention by the Integrity Commissioner:
 1. An allegation of breach is brought to the attention of the Integrity Commissioner by the CAO that Councillor Robinson, in either a meeting of Council or one of its committees, or in a posting on YouTube, has made comments about staff that fall into one or more of the following categories:
 - a. is overtly harassing;

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- b. is unjustifiably critical or disrespectful to identifiable staff members;
 - c. impugns staff's credibility, impartiality, or integrity.
2. If the Integrity Commissioner forms a *prima facie* ('on its face') opinion that the allegation would, if the facts prove to be true, form a breach of the Code of Conduct, the Integrity Commissioner will compile a Preliminary Findings Report (PFR) and share the PFR with Councillor Robinson, with the requirement that the Councillor respond within 14 days with a submission in respect of the findings made in the PFR, whether they constitute a breach of the Code of Conduct, and any comments she may have on a) a potential remedy to the breach, and/or b) the imposition of a monetary sanction
 3. The Integrity Commissioner will consider the submissions, if any, of the Councillor and submit a Recommendation Report (containing the text of the PFR and any revisions, along with the Integrity Commissioner's recommendations and concluding remarks) to the next available meeting of Council if the conclusion remains that the Code of Conduct has been breached and a sanction is warranted.

[91] We will be available to introduce this report and respond to questions regarding its contents during the Council meeting at which this report is considered.

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About Principles Integrity and the Complaint Process

Principles Integrity was appointed the Integrity Commissioner for the City of Pickering on November 15, 2022. We are also privileged to serve as Integrity Commissioner for a number of other Ontario municipalities. The operating philosophy which guides us in our work with all of our client municipalities is this:

The perception that a community's elected representatives are operating with integrity is the glue which sustains local democracy. We live in a time when citizens are skeptical of their elected representatives at all levels. The overarching objective in appointing an integrity commissioner is to ensure the existence of robust and effective policies, procedures, and mechanisms that enhance the citizen's perception that their Council (and local boards) meet established ethical standards and where they do not, there exists a review mechanism that serves the public interest.

The City has as part of its ethical framework a Code of Conduct which is the policy touchstone underlying the assessments conducted in this report. It represents the standard of conduct against which all members of Council are to be measured when there is an allegation of breach of the ethical responsibilities established under the Code of Conduct. The review mechanism contemplated by the Code, one which is required in all Ontario municipalities, is an inquiry/complaints process administered by an integrity commissioner.

Integrity commissioners carry out a range of functions for municipalities (and their local boards). They assist in the development of the ethical framework, for example by suggesting content or commentary for codes of conduct. They conduct education and training for members of council and outreach for members of the community. One of the most important functions is the provision of advice and guidance to members to help sort out ethical grey areas or to confirm activities that support compliance. And finally, but not principally, they investigate allegations that a person has fallen short of compliance with the municipality's ethical framework and where appropriate they submit public reports on their findings, and make recommendations, including recommending sanctions, that council for the municipality may consider imposing in giving consideration to that report.

It is important that this broad range of functions be mentioned in this investigation report. Our goal, as stated in our operating philosophy, is to help members of the Pickering community, indeed the broader municipal sector and the public, to appreciate that elected and appointed representatives generally carry out their functions with integrity. In cases where they do not, there is a proper process in place to fairly assess the facts and, if necessary, recommend appropriate sanctions. In every case, including this one, the highest objective is to make recommendations that serve the public interest, if there are recommendations to be made.

Our role differs from other 'adjudicators' whose responsibilities generally focus, to state it colloquially, on making findings of fact and fault. While that is a necessary component when allegations are made, it is not the only component.

Our operating philosophy dictates the format of this report. The tenets of procedural fairness require us to provide reasons for our conclusions and recommendations, and we have done that. Procedural fairness also requires us to conduct a process where parties can participate in the review and resolution of a complaint.