



Office of the Integrity Commissioner

March 11, 2022

**TO: Mayor and Members of Council**

**FROM: Suzanne Craig, Integrity Commissioner**

**RE: Information Bulletin: Mayor and Council Member Support of Community Events**

This Information Bulletin is written to provide Members of Council and Local Boards (“Members”) with guidance on how the Code of Conduct for Members of Council (the “Code”) rules govern their role as elected officials of the Town of Gravenhurst in respect of Community Support activities.

An underlying principle of the Code is that Members will conduct themselves in a manner that promotes public confidence and will bear close public scrutiny. Members are advised to transparently and clearly establish a separation between activities in their official capacity and their activities in their personal capacity.

The Code does not prohibit any Member, in response to an emergency, including the global Covid-19 pandemic and its effects, from participating in fundraising for humanitarian and economic assistance to those in need, in the community and beyond. Members should be mindful to avoid placing themselves in a breach or perceived breach of any requirements under the Code or the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*.

The Code recognizes that as community leaders, Members may lend their support to and encourage community donations to registered charitable and not-for-profit groups. The Code recognizes the important work that Members do in their community to support charitable causes, emergency situations and local business. That being said, Members should avoid the appearance of giving preferential treatment to any one group, person, cause or business over others. There is nothing in the Code that impedes Members from:

- i. **using her or his title of office to support community events subject to the terms of Town Policy governing Economic and Business Development and use of Town Resources relating to support of Community Events by Council and Local Board Members;**

- ii. **urging constituents, businesses and other groups to support community events and advance the needs of a charitable organization put on by others in the Town, including global concerns or emergencies;**
- iii. **playing an advisory role in any organization that holds community events; and**
- iv. **collaborating with the Town and its agencies to hold community events.**

There should be no doubt that the Code is not intended to be an impediment to elected officials being ambassadors for the Town, supporting community initiatives, events and not for profit activities or helping local business and families. In addition, especially during a pandemic and emergencies, Members are not prohibited under the Code from participating in work to bring awareness to serious issues (for example, support mental health day, anti-bullying, homelessness). This Information Bulletin is a simple reminder that the weight of a Town or Event logo brings legitimacy and endorsement to an event or business. The *Municipal Act* gives individual Members legal status when they come together at Council or Committee as a body to deliberate and make decisions for the Town or when acting in accordance with a Town or other level of government policy that sets out the role of Council when promoting businesses.

As we all navigate these challenging times and in support of the important work Members do as caring leaders in the community, please be reminded that this Office is in place to assist in understanding the legislative rules under Part V.1 of the *Municipal Act* and sections 5, 5.1 and 5.2 of the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*.

If there are any questions regarding the above, please contact:

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