



Cobourg Taxpayers Association

Making Local Government Accountable

Good evening Mayor Brocanier, Councillors, members of the media, and the public.

My name is Dennis Nabieszko and I am a director of the Cobourg Taxpayers Association.

I am here for two reasons: to thank council and to set the record straight and clarify the fee situation and the amendment required to the bylaw.

We thank council for trying to do the right thing and agreeing there should be no fee charged for submitting a complaint to the Town Ombudsman.

In our previous delegation on October 23, 2017, we made a simple request to rescind any fee for submitting a complaint to the Town's Ombudsman. We made no mention of Closed Meeting Investigations and yet, this became the focus of the staff report and the comments from Council in the Committee of the Whole meeting on November 13.

At the Committee of the Whole Meeting on November 13, 2017, Council received a staff report that stated:

“...that no fees are charged for Municipal Ombudsman or Integrity Commissioner Investigations.”

A fee does exist and is shown in the Fees and Charges Bylaw 063-2016.

This is the Bylaw 063-2016.

It clearly shows fees for a Closed Meeting Investigator, Integrity Commissioner, or Ombudsman Request. The staff report to Council made no mention of this bylaw or the associated fees. There is also confusion as to whether the fee is \$25 or is it \$50 plus costs.

I want to set the record straight because last Thursday's front page of the *Northumberland Today* incorrectly read **“Ombudsman fee to remain in place”**. It also mistakenly reported that:

“A recent call from the Cobourg Taxpayers Association for the abolition of the \$25 fee to access the services of the Ombudsman turned out to be incorrect, council learned this week.”

“...no fees are charged for the services of the Municipal Ombudsman or Integrity Commissioner investigations — the fee applies only to investigations having to do with closed meetings.

I want to make it clear that the Cobourg Taxpayers Association **did not incorrectly request** to rescind a fee for the Ombudsman that does not exist. The fee clearly does exist as shown in Bylaw 063-2016 approved on August 8, 2016.

Much of this confusion exists when we cannot clearly distinguish the individual roles of a Closed Meeting Investigator, Integrity Commissioner, and an Ombudsman. Their responsibilities are independent of each other and should be treated that way.

Our simple request is for Council to amend Bylaw 063-2016 to remove all fees for the services of the Ombudsman and Integrity Commissioner.

I know Council is sincere in agreeing that no fee should be charged for the services and the Ombudsman and Integrity Commissioner and I thank you for that.

Thank you.

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