

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

A municipal council code of conduct is a governance accountability tool that establishes a level of acceptable conduct and standards for elected officials. The Alberta *Municipal Government Act* ([MGA](#)) requires all municipal councils to establish a code of conduct.

The Town of Innisfail Council Code of Conduct [Bylaw No. 1612-2018](#)<sup>1</sup> establishes formal and informal complaint processes and identifies sanctions that may be imposed by the council if a council member is found to have breached the code of conduct bylaw. Part of the bylaw preamble reads as follows:

*AND WHEREAS the public is entitled to expect the highest standards of conduct from the members that it elects to council for the Town of Innisfail;*

The code of conduct complaint process provides a means for any person to hold an elected official to account if they feel that an elected official breached the council code of conduct. Allegations of misconduct by elected officials need to be taken seriously and investigated objectively to hear all sides of an issue, review factual evidence, and to find whether an allegation has merit or not, based on a balance of probabilities. The investigation process involves procedural fairness and allows the respondent's position to be heard and considered.

Innisfail Town Council initiated this external, independent investigation in the absence of a formal complaint. Council members were concerned that the council code of conduct was not being upheld by all members of council. Members of the public had also brought concerns to council's attention. Council was unsuccessful in their efforts to remedy code of conduct concerns through an informal process.

SAGE Analytics Inc. was appointed by Innisfail Council to conduct a code of conduct investigation and to report back to council. Council did not limit the investigation scope to any particular council member.

Various allegations involving more than one council member were received during the investigation. Separate investigation reports were provided based on the specific council member involved.

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<sup>1</sup> Bylaw 1612-2018: <https://innisfail.civicweb.net/filepro/documents/26734?preview=68345>

**SAGE INVESTIGATION REPORT**  
**TOWN OF INNISFAIL, AB**  
**C-02-2021**

This investigation report C-02-2021 involves former town councillor, Glen Carritt. Allegations involved 36 council code of conduct sections regarding Mr. Carritt's actions in the following 14 topic areas:

1. Anti-Racism Rally
2. Health Restrictions
3. Face Coverings
4. Freedom Rallies
5. Sports Field User Engagement
6. Minor Hockey
7. Halloween Event
8. Theatre Group Meeting
9. Election Campaign Advertising
10. Business Industrial Area
11. Dodd's Lake
12. Council Orientation
13. Private Affairs
14. Meeting Participation

Mr. Carritt provided a detailed response to each allegation. He argued that his *"actions do not breach any of the subject rules"* and that he was *"simply doing his job as a public figure which, as an elected official, he is entitled to perform as he sees best fit."* Mr. Carritt stated that his *"attempt to resolve issues by engaging the public is exactly what councillors should strive to do."*

Mr. Carritt stated that the allegations are a colorable attempt to restrict free expression and that finding that he has breached the bylaw would be *"counter to the goals of promoting political engagement and proper discourse."*

Council initiated this investigation as part of their commitment to accountability and upholding high and consistent standards of conduct for local elected officials. This investigation found no evidence to suggest that council initiated this process to stifle independent thinking or to muzzle political discourse.

This investigation is based on an objective review of facts, documents, and interview comments provided. The investigation findings identified that 29 of the 36 allegations had merit where evidence showed that Mr. Carritt breached the Town of Innisfail Council Code of Conduct Bylaw 1612-2018.

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Some examples of Mr. Carritt's actions that were identified as code of conduct breaches include:

- Causing reputational damage to council and the community through his private affairs and protest involvement.
- Supporting a local business to open while defying health restrictions.
- Communicating council decisions inaccurately or in a manner that did not foster respect for the council decision-making process.
- Not upholding council decisions to working together for the common good.
- Not maintaining confidentiality during closed council meetings.
- Having a conflict of interest involving a land purchase.
- Using a town email address in personal election campaign advertising.
- Lacking attentiveness during council meetings due to cell phone use.
- Attempting to interfere with staff duties.
- Treating others with disrespect.
- Not upholding the spirit and intent of the council code of conduct.

Mr. Carritt held some strong personal interests and beliefs. Several of the code of conduct breaches show that his interests became confounded at the juncture between his private life and his public life as an elected official. Mr. Carritt resigned from Innisfail town council on January 11, 2021.

Bylaw 1612-2018, s. 19.4 identifies sanctions that may be imposed by council, if investigation findings show that a council member has breached the bylaw. Since Mr. Carritt is no longer serving on Innisfail town council, no sanctions are recommended.

SAGE would have recommended that council impose strong sanctions on Mr. Carritt as a result of the number and serious nature of the code of conduct violations, if he was still serving on Innisfail town council.

Respectfully submitted,

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