

Statement

VAUGHAN, ON (June 27, 2017) – Suzanne Craig, Integrity Commissioner for the City of Vaughan, has issued the following statement.

“Today I submitted the findings of my investigation into the Code of Ethical Conduct complaint against former deputy mayor and regional councillor Michael Di Biase to Vaughan Council.

The investigation covered two allegations:

1. That Mr. Di Biase used improper influence of his office to affect the position of the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) and the decision of Vaughan Council with respect to a development proposed at 230 Grand Trunk Avenue.
2. That Mr. Di Biase extended preferential treatment to expedite the development for the landowner of 230 Grand Trunk Avenue.

Concerning the issue of Mr. Di Biase using improper influence with both decision making bodies regarding the proposed development on 230 Grand Truck Avenue, I find that on a balance of probabilities, Mr. Di Biase did engage in conduct that constituted improper use of influence and a breach of Rule 7 of the Code.

When evaluating the integrity and ethical conduct of a member of Council, my role is to apply the rules of the Code to the facts gathered throughout the investigation and to make a determination, based on a balance of probabilities, as to whether there has been a breach of the Code. Basing a decision on the balance of probabilities means that a breach more likely occurred than to have not occurred.

With respect to the issue of Mr. Di Biase extending preferential treatment to expedite the development for the landowner of 230 Grand Trunk Avenue, I found that there was insufficient evidence to conclude that this occurred.

Given that a sanction can only be imposed on a sitting Member of Council, my findings have been submitted without any recommended sanction.

As the Integrity Commissioner, I take the responsibilities of my office very seriously and conduct investigations in a thorough manner. Based on the cumulative evidence of this investigation, Mr. Di Biase demonstrated conduct that undermined the trust placed on him as an elected official. His conduct compromised the integrity of municipal government and interfered with safeguards put in place to allow for discussions around the protection of environmentally sensitive lands.

Statement

An essential part of the function of my office is to make public any findings that a Member has breached the Code of Conduct. This responsibility is key to my role in order to ensure the transparency of municipal government and to denounce and deter misconduct by public officials.

For my full report that was submitted to the City of Vaughan Council, please visit www.vaughan.ca.”

-Suzanne Craig, Integrity Commissioner

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ABOUT SUZANNE CRAIG: Suzanne Craig was first appointed the City of Vaughan's Integrity Commissioner on February 24, 2009. The Integrity Commissioner is primarily responsible for ensuring the codes of behaviour and ethics governing elected public officials are objectively communicated and applied. This is a critical role in maintaining public confidence in municipal government. Suzanne Craig is also the Integrity Commissioner for City of Barrie, Township of Georgian Bay, Township of Whitchurch-Stouffville, Town of Blue Mountains (co- Integrity Commissioner- with Janet Leiper) and the Toronto District School Board.

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