

Report on Councillor Josh Matlow's Tweet criticizing a committee decision

Date: December 8, 2021

To: City Council

From: Jonathan Batty, Integrity Commissioner

Wards: All

SUMMARY

In May 2021, the Office of the Integrity Commissioner received a complaint about a Tweet Councillor Josh Matlow posted on April 27, 2021.

Councillor Matlow had proposed an item for the Economic and Community Development Committee (the "Committee") to consider at its meeting on April 27, 2021. After the Committee considered the item, it decided to refer the matter to City staff. Councillor Matlow was displeased and Tweeted that the Committee's decision was "cowardly, dangerous, inequitable & wrong."

The complaint, which was made by the Chair of the Committee, alleged the Tweet was a contravention of Article XIV (Discreditable Conduct) of the Code of Conduct for Members of Council ("The Code of Conduct").

The Integrity Commissioner investigated and found that the Tweet was not discreditable conduct under the Code of Conduct.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Integrity Commissioner recommends that:

1. City Council receive this report for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

This report has no financial impact.

DECISION HISTORY

City Council has not previously considered this matter.

COMMENTS

THE COMPLAINT AND FINDINGS

The Committee met on April 27, 2021 and considered the following motion: Agenda Item EC21.15 - Enjoying a Drink Outdoors: Providing Safe, Responsible and Equitable Options for All Torontonians.

This item was proposed by Councillor Matlow, who is not a member of the Committee, but was considered in accordance with the Committee's procedures. After debate and receiving public input both in favour and opposed to the proposal, the Committee decided to refer the matter to City staff.

Councillor Matlow was displeased by the decision and posted this Tweet, among others, right after the Committee's vote. He advised in the investigation that he deleted the Tweet within minutes of posting it because he understood it caused offence to some, but he has not apologized for it and stands by his comment.

The Chair of the Committee, Deputy Mayor Thompson, made this complaint to the Integrity Commissioner on May 5, 2021, after having stated in Committee on that day that he would be pursuing appropriate action regarding the Tweet.

Article XIV (Discreditable Conduct)

The Integrity Commissioner found that Councillor Matlow's remarks were not prohibited under the Code of Conduct. They were aimed at a collective entity and should be considered political rhetoric critical of a legislative outcome at Committee rather than an unfair attack on any one person's character. As a result, the Tweet did not violate Article XIV.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Jonathan Batty
Integrity Commissioner

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Report on Councillor Josh Matlow's Tweet criticizing a committee decision