

Memorandum

To: City Council **Date:** October 24, 2024
From: Mayor Patrick Johnstone **File:**
Re: Code of Conduct Investigation Report.

I want to open by clearly stating that I agree with the bulk of the findings of the Ethics Commissioner, and appreciate the comprehensiveness of her work. I think the Summary Report provides a clear outline of the concern raised and fairly describes my actions. I fully support the recommendation made by the Ethics Commissioner.

In her report, the Commissioner was clear that my participation in the 2023 Local Climate Action Summit and COP 28 was consistent with the social obligations and duties that accompany the office Mayor, and consistent with the City's commitment to taking action on climate change. The report finds that I took appropriate steps while considering the invitation from C40 Cities to determine whether the City of New Westminster's participation provided tangible benefit to the City and was aligned with our strategic goals. It further states I was transparent with Council, staff, and the public about the nature of my participation.

The Commissioner notes that I sought and followed the advice of staff and external legal counsel in relation to *Section 105*, and at all times acted in accordance with that advice. The summary that I acted in good faith with the motivation to further the City's goals relating to climate action is a finding with which I agree.

I appreciate and accept the Commissioners recommendation that coaching be offered on the relevant provisions of the *Community Charter*. I would suggest this coaching be provided to all of Council in accordance with a motion unanimously supported by Council on January 22, 2024 which read:

“THAT the City's new Ethics Commissioner be requested to conduct a workshop with Council on the Code of Conduct including *Section 105* of the *Community Charter*”

I wish to commend the work the City of New Westminster's new Ethics Commissioner has done to develop and oversee this resolution process, and the diligence shown in outlining the complexity of legal interpretations around *Section 105*. I am proud of the work the City of New Westminster has done to update our Code of Conduct and empower an arms-length Ethics Commissioner to provide accountability and transparency to the public.

Patrick Johnstone, Mayor.