

**Ministry of
Municipal Affairs
and Housing**

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Kingston, ON K7M 9A8

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**Ministère des
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et du Logement**

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October 4, 2024

Shellee Fournier
Chief Administrative Officer
Township of Rideau Lakes
sfournier@rideaulakes.ca

Dear Shellee Fournier:

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) has been made aware that the Township of Rideau Lakes passed a motion in the September 3, 2024, Council meeting to defer the public release of an integrity commissioner's report. The ministry also understands that at the upcoming October 7, 2024, Council meeting a motion has been tabled for Council to consider bringing the deferred integrity commissioner's report to an October 15, 2024, meeting of the Township's Municipal Services Committee for consideration.

The Province of Ontario recognizes municipalities as responsible and accountable governments, with the powers and duties to ensure practices and procedures are transparent and accountable to the public. A key responsibility of council is to ensure access to an integrity commissioner and in doing so have the flexibility to choose a model that meets local needs. The integrity commissioner is responsible for oversight of the municipal code of conduct for members of council and other local policies assigned by council.

As you are aware, under Subsection 223.6(3) of the *Municipal Act, 2001*, a municipality must ensure that all reports by the local integrity commissioner are made available to the public. While the *Municipal Act* does not specify a timeline with respect to release, ensuring accountability and transparency is one of council's roles and is a priority in maintaining public trust.

The ministry expects that the Township of Rideau Lakes will fulfill their obligations under Subsection 223.6(3) of the *Municipal Act, 2001*, and release the integrity commissioner's report. After receiving an integrity commissioner's report, council makes the decision on how to proceed, including how to make the report available to the public, for example, by

posting it on the municipal website, including it in council agenda package or making copies available at municipal office.

At this time, I would encourage the Township's Council to work with the municipal clerk and the municipality's legal counsel to determine how best to comply with the legislation.

Additionally, the Township of Rideau Lakes could consider contacting the Ontario Ombudsman to ask them for information about best practices with respect to Integrity Commissioners and complaint protocols, recognizing that the Ombudsman does not have the power to reverse municipal decisions. The Office of the Ontario Ombudsman can be contacted by emailing info@ombudsman.on.ca, or by calling 1-800-263-1830.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me by phone at 613-539-2981, or by email at jen.liptrot@ontario.ca.

Sincerely,



Jen Liptrot
Regional Director

Cc Alison Fath-York
Manager, Local Government and Housing, Municipal Services Office - East

Sofia Sheikh
Municipal Advisor, Municipal Services Office - East