



February 28, 2021

Equitable,  
empowered,  
engaged.

**TO:** Michael Prowse, CAO  
Anne Marie Langlois, Director of Human Resources  
Mayor and Council  
City Clerk / Circulation List

**re: corrective actions undertaken on workplace harassment investigation**

We are writing to follow up on the General Committee minutes from December 21, 2020, specifically Section “C”, regarding the workplace harassment investigation:

*That the following corrective actions be undertaken in response to the workplace investigation identified in Staff Report HRS002-20:*

- a) The Respondent undertake training relative to workplace violence and harassment, to be funded by the City, and that training be approved by the City’s Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and/or the Director of Human Resources;*
- b) Going forward, the Respondent be required to strictly comply with the City’s Staff Council Relations Policy, and only make contact with staff through the appropriate management; and*
- c) The Respondent be requested to issue a written apology to the Complainant, if requested, and Council for the Respondent’s conduct.*

**Engage Barrie**

% Take Note! Promotion  
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We would like to give the City an opportunity to reassure the women of Barrie that it takes the issue of workplace harassment seriously, and that it has ensured the corrective measures listed above have all been completed.

There are many women (and others) in this city who were upset not just with the substantiated harassment of a City Councillor towards a staff member, but also in watching how the handling of this case unfolded. It has caused many to lose faith in the process, and this is a trust that the City needs to show it is working hard to rebuild.

As the lead Corporation in this city, the City of Barrie sets the standard for other businesses in this City. It is important to set an example by dealing with problems in a timely manner, and ensuring that significant changes are taking place, not just in policy but in behaviour and workplace culture.

While the Respondent’s harassment was certainly of concern on its own, the actions undertaken (or failed to have been taken) by the City were also deeply concerning and indicative of a more systemic problem — including the “procedural irregularities in the handling of the complaint” referenced in the City’s press release, Council’s voting pattern throughout the case (especially the vote against allowing the Integrity Commissioner to investigate, which substantially reduced the corrective options and accountability for the Respondent), the wording of the City’s final press release on the issue, and its continued protection of the identity of the Respondent.

Therefore, we would also like to invite you to share with us what concrete actions are being taken by the City to correct these deeper systemic issues, to demonstrate Barrie's commitment to workplace health and safety, as well as to the safety and well-being of women on staff and in the city at large. How has the City addressed where the process failed the Complainant, and what is it doing to ensure this situation does not have the opportunity to repeat itself? Are there new policies and procedures being created to more fully support the safety and well-being of the female-identifying members of Council, Staff and Public?

This is a follow-up that Engage Barrie had already been planning on asking for. However, our concerns over both the Respondent's and the City Administration's understanding of harassment, and the full scope of what it encompasses, were further heightened this week — after witnessing and learning of the public and private, overt and covert harassment of our City's own Poet Laureate, when her name appeared on the deputation list for this Monday's City Council. This behaviour, unfortunately, leads us to believe that at least two members of Council are still unclear about the concepts and laws around harassment, Human Rights law, and the City's own Code of Conduct.

We hope you will prove these concerns to be unfounded, by sharing with us the corrective actions undertaken to date, updates on any improvements to City policies and procedures forthcoming, and plans to re-educate all Council and Management on their responsibilities towards the safety and well-being of all Staff and Residents.

Sincerely,  
The Womxn of Engage Barrie