



Town of Whitby Guidelines

Title:	Role of Council Members in the Public Planning Process
Reference:	Report LS 22-18 and Council Resolution #234-18
Date Approved:	June 25, 2018
Date Revised:	N/A
Point of Contact:	Commissioner of Legal and By-law Services & Town Solicitor

1. Council Members shall not conduct themselves in a manner that would undermine Council's role as the legislated decision-making body for planning applications.
2. Council Members shall not make promises or take firm, absolute stances regarding a planning application that is currently being considered by the Town and where Council has not yet received staff's professional planning opinion.
3. Council Members shall avoid becoming an advocate for either the developer or the public at any developer community meetings – no matter how strongly they may feel for or against a planning application – as it will undermine Council's decision-making ability when they formally consider the planning application.
4. Wait until all input and feedback is received before providing a public position on a planning application. A Council Member's position can be provided after the recommendation report from Town Planning staff is presented to Committee/Council.
5. During developer community meetings, Council Members are encouraged to listen and take notes, and Council Members must keep an open mind about the planning application.
6. Council Members may engage the developer and the public by asking questions about the development proposal or resident concerns, but it should be made clear (if questioned) that a Council Member has not made a decision on the matter.
7. Care should be exercised when engaging with various parties through social media regarding a development proposal. A quick response or comment that was intended to be private can easily be shared with a wide audience. It is very easy for comments to be taken out of context, to be used later against the Council Member or the Town. When communicating with the public on social media, Council Members should think carefully before typing and posting comments, and keep in mind their role as legislative decision makers of planning applications.

Similar consideration should be given when commenting to the media.

8. Given the evolving position of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario regarding the disclosure of Council Member communications while conducting municipal business, Council Members should be aware that their communications with the developer and residents through a Town-controlled email server may be the subject of public disclosure if there is a freedom of information request.

These guidelines are hereby approved by Council Resolution #234-18 on this 25th day of June, 2018.