



REPORT

TO: Mayor Lawlor and Members of Council

FROM: Valerie Petryniak, Town Clerk & Director of Legislative Services

DATE: August 16, 2024

REPORT NO.: ADMIN-2024-020

SUBJECT: Report – Office of the Ontario Ombudsman

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Report No. ADMIN-2024-020 dated August 16, 2024 regarding the Report – Office of the Ontario Ombudsman be received;

AND FURTHER THAT Council accept the findings and recommendations of the Report from the Office of the Ontario Ombudsman (Appendix A) and address these through Council resolution in accordance with Section 239.2(12) of the Municipal Act, 2001.

KEY POINTS:

The following are key points for consideration with respect to this report:

- The Office of the Ombudsman received a complaint regarding a meeting of Council for the Town of Halton Hills on August 28, 2023 of which discussion in closed session took place that did not fall within any of the prescribed open meeting exceptions in the *Municipal Act, 2001*.
- The Municipal Act designates the Ombudsman as the default investigator for municipalities that have not appointed their own.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION:

Local municipalities must comply with the open meeting rules in the Municipal Act, 2001 and Council and staff must understand these legal requirements. The Ombudsman is an independent, non-partisan Office of the Ontario Legislature, appointed by all parties whose role is to ensure that municipalities serve people in a way that is fair,

accountable, transparent and respectful of their rights. Their role is to review and investigate complaints and if necessary conduct a formal investigation.

In 2023, the Office of the Ontario Ombudsman received a complaint regarding improper procedures with respect to a topic discussed in closed session.

The attached Report (Appendix A) outlines the Ombudsman's Investigative Process, details of the complaint, the investigation, opinion and recommendations to Council. As per Section 239.2(12) of the Municipal Act, Council must pass a resolution stating how it intends to address this report. The required resolution is contained within this agenda.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This report is administrative in nature and does not have an impact on the Town's Strategic Plan.

RELATIONSHIP TO CLIMATE CHANGE:

This report is administrative in nature and does not directly impact or address climate change and the Town's Net Zero target.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

Public Engagement was not needed as this report is administrative in nature.

INTERNAL CONSULTATION:

There was not further internal consultation with the writing of this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

This report is administrative in nature and does not have any financial implications.

Reviewed and approved by,

Chris Mills, Chief Administrative Officer