Re: Report #1 – Establishment of the City of Winnipeg Code of Conduct Committee and Disclosure Process.

Dear Chair and Members:

After the initiation of this matter at council on March 20, 2013, and the subsequent delegation of the Winnipeg Public Service to review and report back on this matter to EPC, there have been repeated and protracted delays in the provision of this report.

Let it be known that the citizens and taxpayers of the City of Winnipeg are watching with interest and expectation to see how this issue will be dealt with. We desire accountability and transparency from our elected officials and public servants.

We are outraged at recurring stories in the news media of actual or perceived conflicts of interest from our officials and public servants. Recently, another case has been reported of a Winnipeg Paramedic Service manager having a clear and ongoing conflict of interest. When this is added to news reports in recent years of building inspectors and other city officials in perceived conflicts of interest, the picture is grim; the confidence of taxpayers in our officials and servants continues to wane.

In the case of the media coverage of the paramedic manager, this story highlights the importance of effective policies pertaining to disclosure; the manager claims, according to the media reports, that he had made several declarations over the years. To whom was this disclosed, and why was this conflict tolerated? This underscores the fact that the disclosure process of conflicts of interest must be improved upon. Currently, it appears the policy allows for “monitoring” of these situations, but this is not acceptable. If a decision maker has a role in a private company in a industry associated with their area of service with the city, this must be defined as a conflict of interest and must not be tolerated.

The Code of Conduct policy must be strengthened, the procedures related to this policy must be clear and a Committee must be empowered to investigate cases and enforce the policy.

Garvin Taylor