

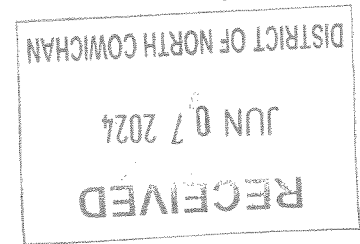
OMBUDSPERSON
BRITISH COLUMBIA

The *Ombudsperson Act* requires that investigations be conducted in private. Ombudsperson investigation documents are not available through the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and may be subject to rules preventing their use in court and tribunal proceedings. **Please contact the Office of the Ombudsperson before disclosing this document, or any responses, to any third parties.**

May 8, 2024

Mayor Rob Douglas

Municipality of North Cowichan
7030 TRANS-CANADA HIGHWAY
DUNCAN BC V9L 6A1



Dear Mayor Rob Douglas:

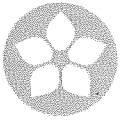
Re: Office of the Ombudsperson Quarterly Report: January 1 - March 31,
2024

This package of documents details the complaint files the Office of the Ombudsperson closed for Municipality of North Cowichan between January 1 and March 31, 2024. Though no action is required on your part, we hope that you will find this information useful and share it within your organization.

These reports provide information about the complaint files we closed regarding your organization within the last quarter, including both files we investigated and files we closed without investigation. Files currently open with the office are not included in these reports.

Enclosed you will find detailed reports containing the following:

- A one-page report listing the number of files closed and the category under which they were closed. The categories we use to close files are based on the sections of the *Ombudsperson Act*, which gives the Ombudsperson the authority to investigate complaints from the public regarding authorities under our jurisdiction. A more detailed description of our closing categories is available on our website at: <https://bcombudsperson.ca/assets/media/QR-Glossary.pdf>.



- If applicable: Copies of closing summaries written about the complaint files we investigated. These summaries provide an overview of the complaint received, our investigation and the outcome. Our office produces closing summaries for investigated files only, and not for enquiries or those complaints we chose not to investigate.
- If applicable: A summary of the topics identified in the complaint files closed during the quarter. We track general complaint topics for all complaints we receive, and when applicable, we include authority-specific and/or sector-specific topics for your organization and/or sector. Our office tracks the topics of complaints we investigate and those we close without investigation, but not for enquiries. Because complaints to our office are confidential, we do not share complaint topic information if we received too few complaints to preserve the complainants' anonymity.

If your organization received too few complaints to produce a summary of complaint topics but you would like further information about the complaints our office received about your organization, our office's Policy, Research and Continuous Improvement team can provide further details upon request. Please contact the PRCI team at PRCI@bcombudsperson.ca or by phone at 250-953-4171.

To learn more about educational opportunities on administrative fairness provided by our office, or if you wish to consult with our office to enhance fairness within your organization's policies or procedures, our Public Authority Consultation and Training (PACT) Team can assist you. Please contact the PACT Team at consult@bcombudsperson.ca or 250-508-2950.

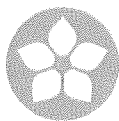
If you wish to update your organization's contact information, or if you notice any inaccuracies in the data provided, please contact us at info@bcombudsperson.ca.

Yours sincerely,

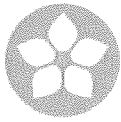
Jay Chalke
Ombudsperson
Province of British Columbia

Our office is located on the traditional lands of the Ləkʷəŋən (Lekwungen) people and ancestors, and our work extends across the traditional territories of the First Nations peoples within what we now call British Columbia. We honour the many territorial keepers of the lands and waters where we work.

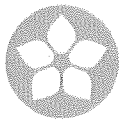
Enclosures



Type of complaint closure for Authority: Municipality of North Cowichan	# closed
Enquiries – Many people who contact us are not calling to make a complaint, but are seeking information or advice. These contacts are classified as <i>Enquiries</i> to distinguish them from <i>Complaints</i> , which are requests that our office conduct an investigation.	1
Complaints with No Investigation – Our office does not investigate every complaint it receives. First, we determine whether we have authority to investigate the complaint under the <i>Ombudsperson Act</i> . We also have discretion to decline to investigate for other reasons specified in the <i>Ombudsperson Act</i> .	1
Early Resolution Investigations – Early Resolution investigations provide an expedited process for dealing with complaints when it appears that an opportunity exists for the authority to take immediate action to resolve the issue. Typical issues that are addressed through Early Resolution include timeliness, communication, and opportunities for internal review.	0
Complaint Investigations – When we investigate a complaint we may conclude with a determination that a complaint is not substantiated, or with a negotiated settlement of the complaint, or with public findings and recommendations. We may also exercise discretion to cease investigation for a number of other reasons specified in the <i>Ombudsperson Act</i> .	0
Reason for closing an Investigation	
Pre-empted by existing statutory right of appeal, objection or review.	0
Investigation ceased with no formal findings under the <i>Ombudsperson Act</i> .	
More than one year between event and complaint	0
Insufficient personal interest	0
Available remedy	0
Frivolous/vexatious/trivial matter	0
Can consider without further investigation	0
No benefit to complainant or person aggrieved	0



Complaint abandoned	0
Complaint withdrawn	0
Complaint settled in consultation with the authority – When an investigation leads us to conclude that action is required to resolve the complaint, we try to achieve that resolution by obtaining the voluntary agreement of the authority to settle the complaint. This allows matters to be resolved fairly for the complainant and authority without requiring a formal finding of maladministration.	0
Complaint substantiated with formal findings under the <i>Ombudsperson Act</i> .	0
Complaint not substantiated under the <i>Ombudsperson Act</i> .	0
Ombudsperson Initiated Investigations – The Ombudsperson has the authority to initiate investigations independently from our process for responding to complaints from the public. These investigations may be ceased at the discretion of the Ombudsperson or concluded with formal findings and recommendations.	0



The tables below summarize the complaint topics we are tracking for your sector and/or authority and the number of times this topic was identified in the files (investigated and non-investigated complaints) that were closed in the most recent quarter.

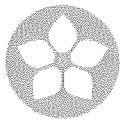
If you would like more information on the types of complaints we receive, please contact our Public Authority Consultation and Training Team: email us at consult@bcombudsperson.ca or call us at 250-508-2950.

Sector-Specific Complaint Topics – All Local Government

Business Licensing	3	2%
Bylaw Enforcement	59	32%
Council Member Conduct (incl. Conflict of Interest)	18	10%
Fees/Charges (incl. Taxes)	22	12%
Official Community Plan/Zoning/Development	24	13%
Open Meetings	9	5%
Other	30	16%
Response to Damages Claim	4	2%
Services (incl. Garbage, Sewer, Water)	14	8%

General Complaint Topics – All Local Government

Accessibility	16	6%
Administrative Error	7	3%
Communication	35	13%
Delay	16	6%
Disagreement with Decision or Outcome	84	30%
Discrimination	6	2%
Employment or Labour Relations	5	2%
Other	8	3%



Process or Procedure	62	22%
Review or Appeal Process	13	5%
Treatment by Staff	24	9%