

From: [Harold Ristau](#)
To: [Bradley, Jim](#); [Butters, Barbara](#); [Bylsma, Dave](#); [Campion, Frank](#); [Chiocchio, Pat](#); [Darte, George](#); [Diodati, Jim](#); [Disero, Betty](#); [Easton, Sandra](#); [Edgar, Kelly](#); [Fertich, Wayne](#); [Foster, Robert](#); [Gale, Bob](#); [Gibson, Kevin](#); [Greenwood, Barbara](#); [Heit, Brian](#); [Huson, Diana](#); [Insinna, Tom](#); [Ip, Laura](#); [Jordan, Jeff](#); [Junkin, Marvin](#); [Nicholson, Peter](#); [Redekop, Wayne](#); [Rigby, Tim](#); [Sendzik, Walter](#); [Steele, Bill](#); [Ugulini, Terry](#); [Vilella, Leanna](#); [Whalen, Tim](#); [Witteveen, Albert](#); [Zalepa, Gary](#); [Norio, Ann-Marie](#)
Cc: ["CitizensFirst@stcatharines.ca"](#); ["culture@stcatharines.ca"](#); ["clerks@stcatharines.ca"](#); ["parking@stcatharines.ca"](#); ["pbs@stcatharines.ca"](#)
Subject: Letter from Concerned Professor regarding Conflict of Interest involving Mat Siscoe
Date: Wednesday, January 05, 2022 4:53:31 PM

CAUTION EXTERNAL EMAIL: This email originated from outside of the Niagara Region email system. Use caution when clicking links or opening attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Regional Councillors and to Whom it may concern,

My name is Rev. Dr. Maj (ret) Harold Ristau. I am bilingual seminary professor and veteran of the CAF, having served the Church and Queen throughout our country and overseas on numerous occasions in both Iraq and Afghanistan as a chaplain, and was awarded a CDS Commendation. I have an earned PhD from McGill University, an MDiv from CLTS/Brock University, an MA and BA in Political Science, Economics and Administrative Studies from U of W. I am a published author and one of my specialized fields of teaching is ethics. In short, I am an intelligent and educated Canadian citizen with a lot of experience in government, politics, leadership and administration. I can also detect a clear Conflict of Interest when I see one.

In light of that, I am absolutely appalled by the lack of ethical and moral integrity demonstrated around the issue that will be discussed tomorrow. I would expect you all to remember your election promises of “integrity, accountability, and transparency”, considering many of you were elected on the very promise of ending corruption and cronyism, and, thus, changing the region’s reputation for being particularly corrupt.

In the 2018 election Mike Britton was the ‘next place finisher’ for the position in question, and as Councillor Joe Kushner said during the City Council discussion “To deny (Britton) the opportunity to serve is to deny the democratic process and what residents voted for.” The Regional Code of Conduct says “All members of Council have a duty to act honestly, in good faith and in best interests of the Regional Municipality of Niagara.” – any Regional Council who votes directly against the voters wishes (as clearly shown in the 2018 election) is in violation of their Code of Conduct which will most likely result in a complaint to the Integrity Commissioner. Further, Mat Siscoe appears to be ineligible to be appointed for the position based on the Municipal Act Section 261(1) which states ‘no person may hold more than one office governed by the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, at the same time anywhere in Ontario’, unless Mat Siscoe has resigned his seat as a City Councillor. Mike Britton’s lawyer, Asher Honickman, has rightly indicated that Councillor Siscoe was in a conflict of interest when he voted for himself (!).

I ask that all of you who are listed in this email, even if you are not directly involved, do something to correct this nepotism, according to your own circles of influence. For some of you it may mean

taking a public stand and clearly drawing attention to the abuse of power. For others (such as those copied) it may simply mean sharing your own personal concerns with your respective “chain of commands” or praying for confession, humility and repentance of those who are at personal fault. Each one of you is accountable to both the people who you represent, and God Almighty, for your actions. Your individual moral conscience not only enables you to detect corruption, but compels you to take the necessary actions to correct it, in spite of any personal risks and costs that you may suffer. Doing the right thing, and standing up against corruption has rarely been the popular route, historically. It is not too late for you to take actions to ensure that St. Catharines corrects this administrative duplicity and make decisions that make your constituents proud, rather than ashamed, of you.

You get to decide how this (and any other matter that involves conflict of interest and matters of administrative injustice) unfolds. Yet you will be held accountable for your actions by your many witnesses. If not by voters, definitely by God.

Sincerely and with all due respect,

Dr. Harold Ristau
Associate Professor
Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary

“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind” (2 Tim 1:7)