



OFFICE OF THE
INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER
FOR THE VANCOUVER PARK BOARD



2023

ANNUAL REPORT

Submitted December 22, 2023 – Reporting for the period July 4, 2023 to November 30, 2023

Submitted to Steve Jackson, General Manager, Vancouver Park Board

Submitted by Lisa Southern, Park Board Integrity Commissioner



Introduction

Background

On July 18, 2022, the Vancouver Park Board passed a *Code of Conduct Policy* (the “Policy”) to align its ethics regime with that of the City of Vancouver. On July 4, 2023, Lisa Southern, Barrister & Solicitor was appointed as the inaugural Park Board Integrity Commissioner. In its first six-month reporting period, the Office of the Integrity Commissioner (the “Office”) focused on both establishing the Office and fulfilling its duties and responsibilities as set out in [section 4.7 of the Park Board Code of Conduct Policy](#).

Year One

The duties of the Office are summarized as follows:

1. **Advice and Education:** Provide education, advice, and recommendations to Park Board Members regarding questions of compliance and their ethical obligations and responsibilities under the Policy
2. **Community Outreach:** Aid the public in their understanding of the Policy
3. **Complaints:** Assess and potentially mediate and/or investigate Policy complaints made against Park Board Members
4. **Recommendations:** Produce an annual report, including recommendations for improvements to the Policy

Report Structure

The 2023 Annual Report is the first Annual Report submitted to the Park Board. It provides the following:

- a) A summary of the activities undertaken by the Park Board Integrity Commissioner during the past six months, organized by duty

- b) A summary of trends and themes drawn from the complaints received and investigations conducted in the past six months
- c) Recommendations for improvements to the Policy

Advice and Education

We consider the education and advisory functions critical. Throughout the first six months, we have been available to help Park Board Members proactively understand how the Policy applies in practice through education and advice. Our focus has been on building capacity and common understandings with a view that this would minimize contraventions to the Policy.

Presentations were as follows:

- September 6, 2023: Code of Conduct Introduction and Conduct with Staff
- September 12, 2023: Conflicts of Interest
- October 16, 2023: Conflicts of Interest (make-up session for those who could not attend the September 12 session)
- October 30, 2023: Code of Conduct Introduction and Conduct with Staff (make-up session for those who could not attend the September 6 session)
- November 14, 2023: Conflicts of Interest (make-up session for those who could not attend the September 12 and October 16 sessions)

We were also available to Park Board Members to provide guidance on various matters, including conflicts of interest and communications. These discussions assisted us in establishing our educational curriculum.



Community Outreach

Our focus for community outreach was on continuing to update and populate the [Office's web page](#), a key tool to provide information and act as a portal for members of the public to learn about the Policy, the Office, and the complaint process.

Since its launch on July 4, 2023 up to November 30, 2023, there have been approximately 300 visits to the web page.

In addition to informing the public through the web page, we also provided information to the media in response to requests for information. The Office was referenced in or by the media one time since July 2023:

- *Public* article titled "[Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation Announces Lisa Southern As Integrity Commissioner](#)"



Complaints

The process and procedures for receiving and addressing complaints was established in July 2023. We will continually evaluate the process and procedures to ensure both their accessibility and that investigations, when required, are done fairly and respectfully, and are completed in a timely manner. **Figure 1** provides a flow chart of the complaint process.

Complaint Process

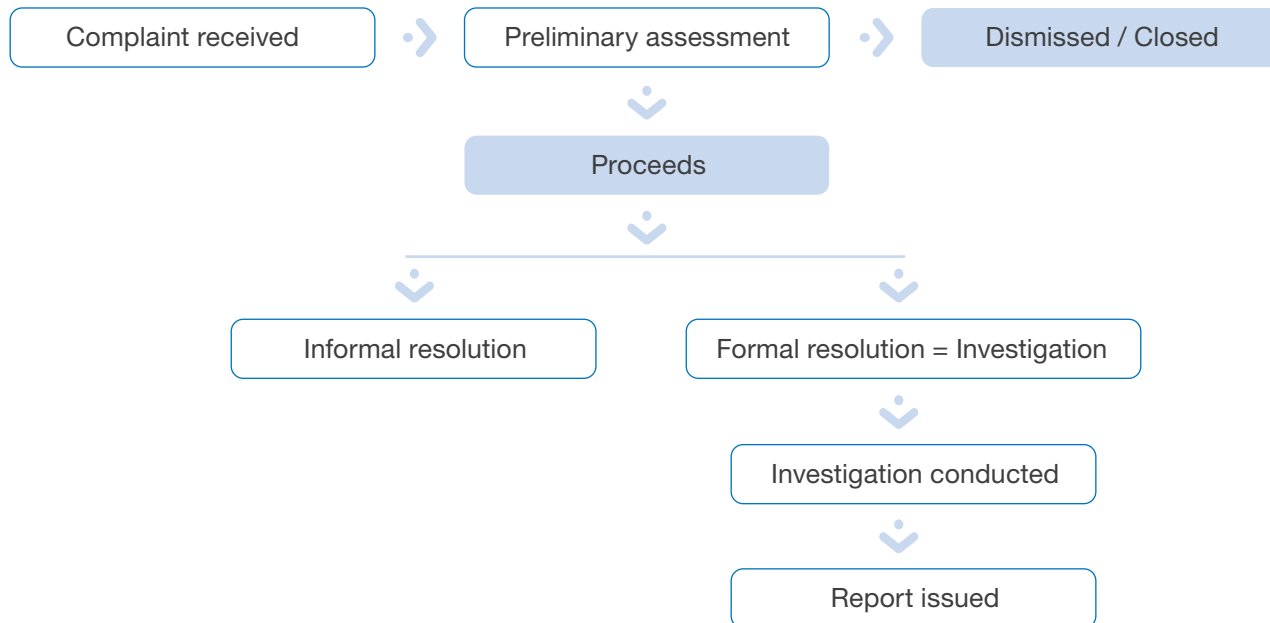


Figure 1: Complaint Process



Summary of Complaint Statistics

The Office received 6 complaints from July 4, 2023 to November 30, 2023. As illustrated in [Figure 2](#), the majority of the complaints (5) were dismissed (83%). These complaints were dismissed, as illustrated in [Figure 3](#), because they did not fall under the purview of the Policy.

There is one complaint currently open with the Office that is being investigated.

The Integrity Commissioner is directed by the Policy to complete the complaint process in a timely manner. As of the date of this report, in 2023, the duration in days ranged from six days to 29 days, with an average length of 13 days.

Complaint Process Duration | Days

Shortest Duration	6
Longest Duration	29
Average Duration	13

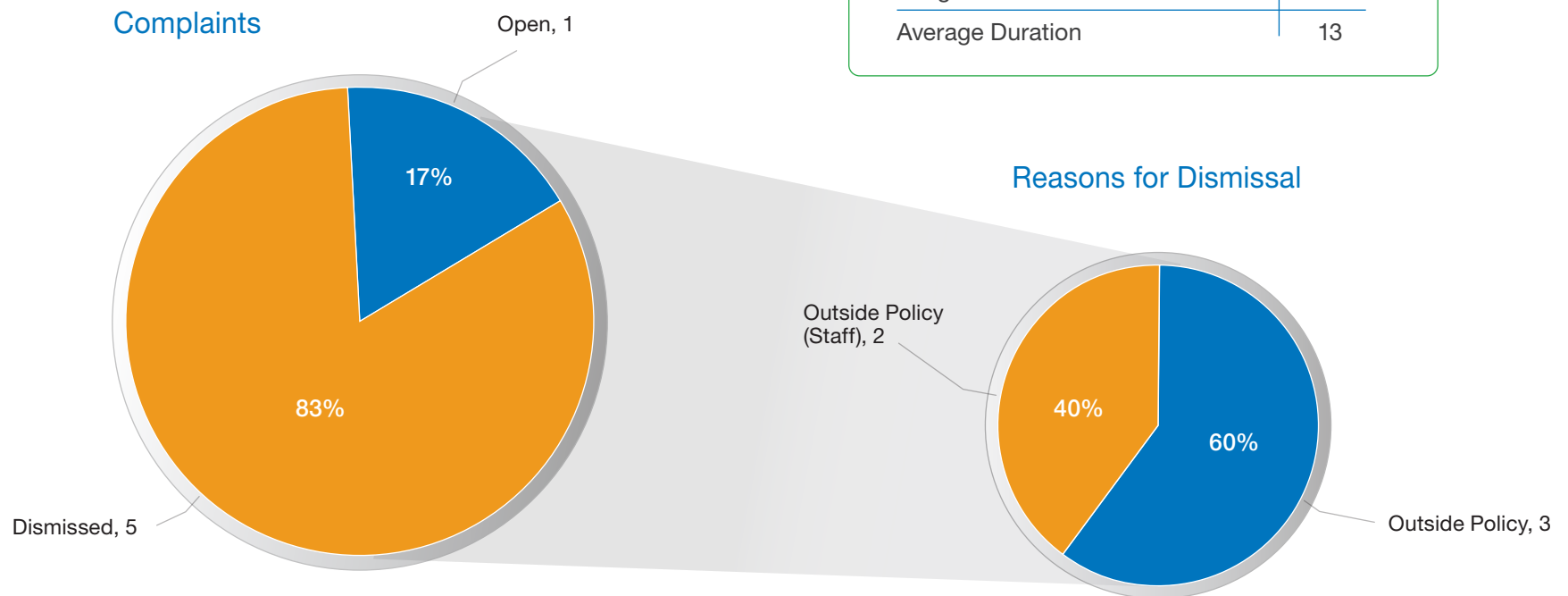


Figure 2: Complaints

Figure 3: Reasons for Dismissal

"Note: these statistics do not include general inquiries, Confidential Requests under section 5.1 or informally resolved matters."



Budget Summary

The Office had a budget of \$50,000 for the 2023 term.

As of November 30, 2023, costs for services were \$22,053 (excluding taxes). This total includes certain necessary start-up costs associated with establishing the Office, which began in June 2023, prior to the commencement of the term. These costs include creating the Integrity Commissioner web page content, developing branding and templates, reviewing existing policies and training materials for Park Board Members, developing the initial educational presentations, and conducting legal research.

The breakdown of services delivered, and their relative costs, is illustrated in [Figure 4](#).

2023 Budget Recommendations

We recommend a budget of \$60,000 to operate the Office for 2024.

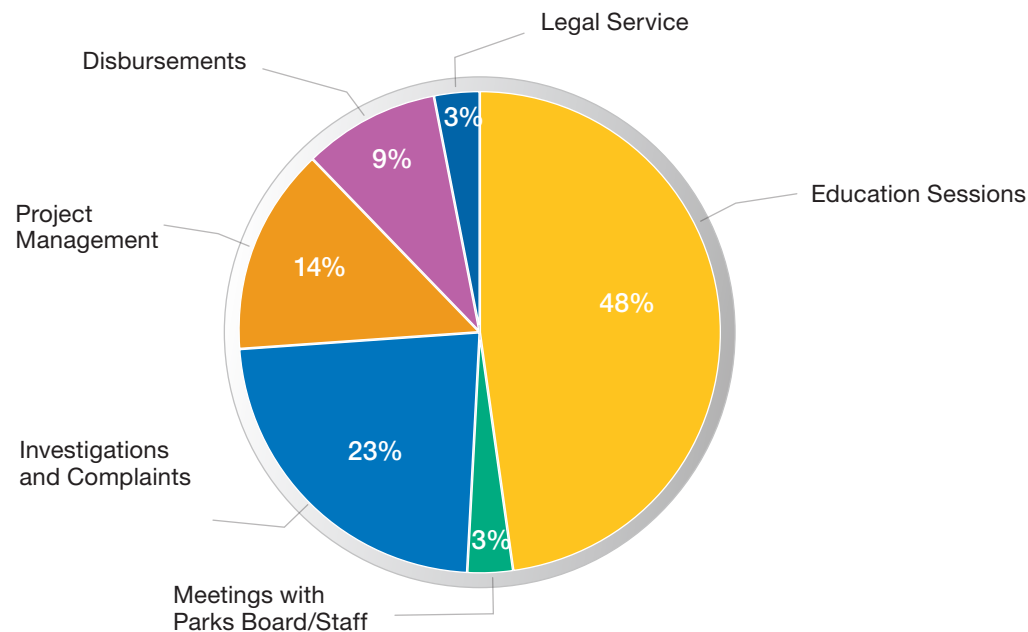


Figure 4: Cost Breakdown



Recommendations

The Policy requires that we provide advice and recommendations to improve the text and operation of the Policy.

At the end of our first year as the Office of the Integrity Commissioner for the City of Vancouver, we made a series of recommendations to enhance the Code of Conduct By-law that applies to Council. These were adopted by Council and the Code of Conduct By-law has been amended accordingly. At present, the Policy that applies to the Park Board Members has not been updated to align its terms fully with the Code of Conduct By-law. We recommend that the Park Board consider the recommendations we made for the Code of Conduct By-law at the end of 2022 and 2023, and consider continued alignment of its Policy with Council's.

Closing Comments

The Office is grateful for the opportunities we have been given to support the Park Board Members in building awareness of their roles and responsibilities as elected officials.

With our thanks and appreciation, we look forward to continuing our service in 2024.



Lisa Southern, Integrity Commissioner

Learn and Connect – Park Board Integrity Commissioner



[Vancouver.ca/your-government/integrity-commissioner](https://vancouver.ca/your-government/integrity-commissioner)



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