

July 24, 2019

Common Council
City of Saint John
8th Floor City Hall
15 Market Square
Saint John, NB
E2L 1E8

Re: Grow SJ

The Saint John Citizens Coalition respectfully requests, the questions of accountability contained within this letter, be included in the Council's Agenda Packet for July 29, 2019.

We are requesting Common Council review the Mayor's personal initiative or brand, known as GrowSJ, to ensure that all activities related to the entity are legitimate and acceptable under the Code of Conduct for Elected Representatives.

We have been informed by Mr. Patrick Beamish and others, that the GrowSJ Facebook group and webpage, as well as events such as City Budgets and Beers are "the personal property of Mayor Don Darling and (are) not affiliated with the City of Saint John".

With this in mind, we believe the citizens of Saint John has the right to know the following:

1. We understand GrowSJ is physically located in the Mayor's City Hall office. If so, why is Mr. Darling permitted to use premises that are designated for official business and supported by tax dollars for a private initiative?
2. Is the Mayor using any city-owned/leased cellphone, computer etc. to write and/or record tweets, posts, selfies, videos etc. concerning GrowSJ?
3. Is any city-owned/leased equipment i.e. computers, cellphones, furnishings etc. being used by anyone working on Mr. Darling's personal behalf?
4. Do any city employees currently work on any aspect of GrowSJ? Have any done so in the past?
5. Who administers the GrowSJ Facebook page?
6. Who prepares and sends the GrowSJ newsletter to subscribers?
7. Who designs slides and other graphics used in GrowSJ sponsored presentations?
8. Who assists Mr. Darling in organizing City Budgets and Beers and other events that may fall under the purview of his private brand?
9. What authority does Mr. Darling have to use the City of Saint John's corporate image on his Facebook page, website, invitations to Budgets and Beers and any other promotional material? Who gave him this authority and why?
10. Is the moniker 'GrowSJ' not itself a trademark violation that confuses the public, given that the City of Saint John owns the rights to similar monikers such as PlanSJ, ZoneSJ and MoveSJ?

11. Why is all information on ownership of www.growsj.life redacted? Who registered the website? Who owns the website?
12. Why is there no privacy policy on the website, given that it requests personal information in order to subscribe to a GrowSJ newsletter?
13. What, if any, free space has been donated to the Mayor for Budgets and Beers or any other GrowSJ sponsored event? Has the Mayor accepted any other donations related to the activities of GrowSJ?

We understand that these questions are up to the Mayor himself to answer and could have been sent directly to him. However, given that the Code of Conduct expressly states that Members of Council (including the Mayor) are expected to perform their duties in a manner that will bear close public scrutiny, we would hope that Council will, on behalf of the citizens of Saint John, put this to the test by seeking the answers to these and any other questions it may have about the purpose of GrowSJ and the Mayor's involvement with it.

Yours sincerely;

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