

COUNCIL REPORT

M&C No.	2019-207
Report Date	August 09, 2019
Meeting Date	August 19, 2019
Service Area	Corporate Services

His Worship Mayor Don Darling and Members of Common Council

SUBJECT: Follow-up to Saint John Citizen's Coalition Letter re: GrowSJ

OPEN OR CLOSED SESSION

This matter is to be discussed in open session of Common Council.

AUTHORIZATION

Primary Author	Commissioner/Dept. Head	City Manager
<i>Jonathan Taylor</i>		<i>John Collin</i>

RECOMMENDATION

That this report be received for information

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At its last meeting, Council referred a letter from the Saint John Citizen's Coalition Re: GrowSJ to the City Manager for a report. Staff examined the Mayor's GrowSJ website and reviewed the public engagement budget sessions organized by the Mayor's office. The explorer brand and logo is no longer appearing on the GrowSJ.life website and staff is of the opinion that public funds have not been misused.

PREVIOUS RESOLUTION

Council resolution of July 29, 2019:

"RESOLVED that the Letter Saint John Citizen's Coalition – GrowSJ Brand be referred to the City Manager and to report back to Council."

REPORT

At its July 29, 2019 meeting, Council referred a letter dated July 24, 2019 from Randall Goodwin of the Saint John Citizen's Coalition to the City Manager for a report.

In his letter Mr. Goodwin requests that 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.”

It is important to note that Common Council is responsible for administering the Code of Conduct for Elected Members of The City of Saint John bylaw. Therefore, staff’s examination of Mr. Goodwin’s letter focused on two key questions:

- 1) Was there a copyright violation?
- 2) Was there a misuse of public funds?

The Explorer brand and logo was developed in 2003 during the “*True Growth*” initiative led by Enterprise Saint John (“*ESJ*”), now called Economic Development Greater Saint John (“*EDGSJ*”) and was trademarked by ESJ. The brand and logo is used in varying degrees by the five municipalities of Greater Saint John.

Staff confirmed that the Mayor’s personal webpage (growsj.life) had been displaying the Explorer brand logo. The Mayor has since removed the logo from the website and replaced it. It is staff’s view that no further action on this matter is required.

The question of whether public funds have been misused for the Mayor’s GrowSJ initiative or the public engagement budget sessions has also been examined.

Firstly, the Mayor’s personal GrowSJ webpage is not administered by the City and the Mayor has advised that he owns and paid for the website and domain name on his own.

Secondly, the Mayor’s public engagement budget sessions were organized and managed by the Mayor’s office and did not receive support from City administration. The Mayor has advised that spaces for these meetings were donated and that public funds were not used to organize these events.

In conclusion, it is staff’s opinion that there has not been a misuse of public funds and that no further action is recommended.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

SERVICE AND FINANCIAL OUTCOMES

N/A

INPUT FROM OTHER SERVICE AREAS AND STAKEHOLDERS

The Mayor’s Office was consulted.

ATTACHMENTS

N/A