

Response to Integrity Complaint CE051425(2)

To: Suzanne Craig, Integrity Commissioner

From: Councillor Morgaine Griffin, Municipality of Central Elgin

Dear Ms. Craig,

Thank you for your correspondence regarding Complaint CE051425(2). I contest the allegation that I “exploded” on the CAO or engaged in yelling or misconduct during the closed session referenced.

Background

Prior to our swearing in, [REDACTED] invited a group of councillors-elect to a dinner where [REDACTED] — a form of strategic alignment that would have violated quorum rules once we were officially sworn in. I stated that such discussions were inappropriate even before the oaths. From that moment, I have faced consistent resistance to my participation: motions I bring forward are routinely blocked regardless of merit, and my objections to procedural deviations are often reframed as emotional or combative.

This complaint is not an isolated incident but part of a recurring pattern of penalizing dissent. Since the start of this term, I have experienced continuous efforts to discredit my conduct when I uphold procedure or challenge decisions—exacerbated when I do so confidently and with conviction. In both this case and a prior integrity complaint, the allegations hinge on supposed outbursts that occur in contexts where no video record exists. The pattern is consistent: my behaviour is described as composed while cameras are rolling, only to become suddenly aggressive once recording ceases. I believe this selective timing is not accidental.

A previous complaint followed a council session where I asserted a point of order after being interrupted while speaking. Though I remained calm and procedural, I was accused of shouting and aggression—again, during a period not captured on video. That complaint was dismissed by your predecessor, who advised that disagreement does not constitute harassment. This new complaint seems to revive the same narrative under new circumstances.

Specific Incident

In the meeting referenced here, the CAO exceeded [REDACTED]. My objection was not [REDACTED], but about the serious procedural concern of disregarding a council directive. We had held a detailed closed session prior to [REDACTED], including discussion of [REDACTED] —that the CAO later cited as justification for her decision.

When I raised this in closed session, the CAO responded dismissively. I clarified that our previous discussion had [REDACTED], and that the integrity of council decisions matters. My comments were assertive and focused, but never disrespectful or emotional. In fact,

I was already well aware that when procedures are not followed, the appropriate next step is to bring that to the Ombudsman. Yelling would not have accomplished anything, whereas a complaint might. There was no reason for such behaviour.

Meanwhile, comments from male councillors—including one noting “only the girls are mad”—were not addressed or censured. This reinforces a recurring dynamic in which women councillors’ contributions are trivialized or reframed as emotional outbursts.

Broader Pattern and Witnesses

This complaint is part of a broader pattern of retaliatory and politically motivated use of the complaint process. In a previous case, the former Integrity Commissioner found no wrongdoing on my part after investigation. Rather than accept that ruling, a bloc of councillors— a group of members so frequently aligned that our local newspaper refers to the “familiar Central Elgin voting pattern” as shorthand in outcomes —moved to send the matter for judicial review. This extraordinary step to override a ruling they disliked was only abandoned when [REDACTED].

The parallels to this current complaint are striking: again, I am accused of conduct that conveniently occurs off camera, again in a context where I raised a principled objection to a deviation from the rules, and again with no acknowledgement of my calm and professional conduct in all the recorded space leading up to the moment.

I do not believe it was an accident that I was denied the opportunity to serve on our governance committee, nor that the committee decided not to renew the contract with Aird and Berlis this winter. I believe the same voting bloc is leveraging the change in Integrity Commissioner to revisit a previously dismissed complaint.

This complaint also reflects a persistent culture of misogyny in how I and others have been treated. From the outset of this term, I have been referred to in council and public remarks as “young lady,” “Miss Griffin,” “the girls,” or “the ladies” — treatment not comparable to that applied to male colleagues. On the day of our swearing in, the Mayor shook my tablemate’s hand and addressed him formally as “Councillor Watson,” before turning to me and saying, “young lady.” In the meeting referenced by this complaint, Councillor Watson commented dismissively that “only the girls are mad,” a remark that received no censure from the Mayor. These comments reinforce the idea that assertive participation from women councillors is viewed as less legitimate or overly emotional, even when procedural and grounded.

I believe several individuals could corroborate these dynamics. [REDACTED] has consistently treated me with fairness and professionalism and would be able to confirm my conduct in closed session. Cr Graham, who has also experienced gendered treatment, may be willing to speak to the presence of a voting bloc. I believe she was originally a part of it and has shifted farther away from it over time as she has begun to realize that cooperating will not actually grant her any protection from the same sorts of treatment I have experienced. Now that she does not appear to participate in it, I think it’s possible that she would admit to the existence

of it and the tactics that have been employed. I am also willing to provide references from past boards and citizens who were in attendance the evening of this meeting, all of whom have seen my approach in emotionally complex or procedurally tense situations and can attest to my composure.

I suspect the other councillor named in the complaint is Cr Graham. While I personally believe descriptions of her behaviour are exaggerated, I attest that our responses were not coordinated. She and I acted independently, and any assumptions that we share responsibility for one another's actions are mistaken. My conduct was composed throughout. If you wish to compare her conduct and mine in the recorded portion of the meeting pertaining to the motion, that may offer a basis for understanding the likely tone and conduct of the closed session than what I feel the complainant did. [The video is available here.](#)

Conclusion

- I did not yell or behave inappropriately at the CAO or any colleague during this meeting.
- This complaint mirrors a previous one dismissed as unfounded and appears to continue a pattern of retaliatory use of the complaint system.
- The specific accusations are made conveniently during off-camera moments.
- My concerns in the meeting were procedural and principled.
- Gendered language and differential expectations continue to influence how my conduct is interpreted.

I remain committed to respectful, fair governance, and I welcome a review that considers both the substance and the broader context of this complaint.

Sincerely,

Councillor Morgaine Griffin

Ward 2, Municipality of Central Elgin