



Councillor Angie Quaale (left) and Michelle Sparrow (right).
Submitted photos

Township councillors speak out about bullying

Angie Quaale and Michelle Sparrow both claim to have been harassed while serving on council

MIRANDA GATHERCOLE / Nov. 6, 2017 2:30 p.m. / [LOCAL NEWS](#) / NEWS

Two Township of Langley councillors are speaking out, claiming to have been bullied while serving on council.

At the Oct. 23 council meeting, Both Angie Quaale and Michelle Sparrow stated that they feel they have been poorly treated and want to do something

about it.

Quaale initiated the conversation with a notice of motion to create a new policy to deal with harassment complaints among elected officials. She said she has been “part of a harassment on a completely different and unnecessary level,” and was disappointed to discover that the Township’s human resources department has no means to deal with it.

“If what happened to me in the last couple of weeks happened to any of our staff members there would be considerable repercussions to that staff member,” she said.

“And just because somebody is elected, the only recourse for that person is the next election. So I am working closely with other counterparts in other municipalities who are currently being bullied and harassed by members of the public and members of council. And I’ll be working with them to bring forward some suggested policy changes that will affect the way council behaves.”

Michelle Sparrow also spoke up, saying she, too, has been harassed while on council. One such incident happened in September, when a

threatening message on Facebook prompted her to contact the RCMP.

“I have four daughters, and if any one of my four daughters was treated the way I have been treated, members of this council have been treated (and) staff have been treated over the last six years, it would be very clear that they were being bullied and there would be repercussions,” she said.

“And someone would stand up and say it isn’t right. And unfortunately, it’s been allowed to grow and fester. And this type of treatment to ourselves has been considered normal in some way, and considered par for the job, and something we should all just accept as reality and I think that that is wrong.”

READ MORE: RCMP investigating online threat against Langley Township Councillor

Sparrow said she doesn’t believe there’s an easy solution to the problem, as “there is the symptom of some bigger issues going on here.”

“If we don’t talk about them, and if we don’t ... stand up and be brave enough to say what’s happening isn’t right, then it will just continue to be

normal. And it will continue to be allowed as how we should treat each other.”

The Township does have a respectful workplace policy, which applies to “Township of Langley elected officials, employees, contractors, and volunteers, as well as interaction between such persons and with members of the public, clients, and customers.”

The policy states that the Township is committed to maintaining a workplace free from discrimination and personal harassment.

“Such an environment requires the co-operation and commitment of all parties. It also requires a common understanding of what does and does not constitute discrimination or personal harassment, knowledge of how to recognize and prevent occurrence, an appropriate complaint process so that concerns can be addressed in a timely and fair way, and an appreciation for the rights of all parties during a complaint resolution process,” the policy states.