CIVILIAN OVERSIGHT OF POLICE
THE CANADIAN EXPERIENCE

Roxanne HELME*  

ABSTRACT: The presentation will be a general overview of the framework of civilian oversight of municipal police forces in Canada. After a brief discussion of the history of the modern day police force, the three branches of civilian oversight will be described and discussed: Police Boards (governance), Office of Police Complaints Commissioner (complaints against police) and Independent Investigation Office (criminal investigation of police). Each branch of oversight will be discussed in the context of a specific case study. The consistent theme will be Sir Robert Peel’s vision that “we are the police; the police are us” and demonstrating why this theme is essential to the success of modern society as well as policing itself.

KEYWORDS: civilian oversight, police, police boards, overview, complaints, investigation, Canada, Peel

JEL CODE: K1

* Lawyer Member of Victoria County Bar Association, CANADA.