

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF JUNE 24, 2014

Item 36, Report No. 30, of the Committee of the Whole, which was adopted, as amended, by the Council of the City of Vaughan on June 24, 2014, as follows:

By approving that Recommendation 6. e) be added as follows:

That a mobile sign advertising the events be provided at the venue one week prior to the session.

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2014 MUNICIPAL ELECTION – MEET AND GREET SESSIONS

The Committee of the Whole recommends approval of the recommendation contained in the following report of the Commissioner of Legal & Administrative Services/City Solicitor and the Executive Director, City Manager's Office, dated June 17, 2014:

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Legal & Administrative Services/City Solicitor and the Executive Director, City Manager's Office in consultation with the City Clerk recommend:

1. That staff make a formal request for impartial arm's-length organizations to act as event coordinators for up to five (5) meet and greet sessions for the 2014 municipal and school board elections at community centres or at City Hall during the period of September 15 to October 10, 2014, including, but not limited to:

Canadian Automobile Association;
Vaughan Chamber of Commerce;
Omni Television;
York Region Media Group; and,
Rogers Communications Inc.;
2. That the event coordinator's responsibilities include acting as the event lead, inviting registered candidates, establishing, communicating and monitoring a set of protocols for participants, and ensuring that every registered candidate is entitled to attend;
3. That the protocols for each event must include a requirement that only the following will be permitted for each candidate at each meet and greet session:
2 chairs;
1 table;
1 lawn sign;
campaign literature; and
a maximum of 2 campaign representatives;
4. That the protocols for each event must provide that it is the responsibility of the candidate or campaign representative to remove literature, etc.;
5. That the City Clerk in consultation with the Director of Recreation and Culture be authorized to make such arrangements necessary to give effect to these recommendations, including:
a) soliciting and selecting event coordinators; and
b) determining and allocating venues and times;
6. That staff be directed to work with the event coordinator(s) as follows:
a) City Clerk's Office: Posting information about the meet and greet sessions on the Elections web site;

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- b) Corporate Communications: Posting dates, times and locations on the City website and at community centres;
- c) Recreation and Culture: Providing date and time options that present the least amount of impact to program participants and processing rental contracts accordingly; and.
- d. Building and Facilities: Site preparation (tables and chairs) and clean up.

Economic Impact

There may be small amount of staff resources to support the Event Coordinator and possible loss of rental revenue from the use of community centre space.

Communications Plan

Once the event coordinator(s) are in place, the Corporate Communications and City Clerk's Office will establish a communication plan including such media as the election website, city website, Vaughan TV and the City Update (corporate eNewsletter). Event coordinators will also be expected to promote the event through their existing promotional tools. Recreation and Culture staff will communicate with affected registrants should there be a disruption to programs as a result of the meet and greet sessions.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to facilitate the establishment of up to five meet and greet sessions for candidates in the 2014 municipal and school board elections, each to be administered by an arm's-length third party.

Background - Analysis and Options

Meet and greet sessions at local community centres are intended to foster greater participation on the part of the electorate and provide convenient opportunities for voters to learn more about the candidates standing for election. They also provide a convenient method for candidates to present themselves to voters in an informal setting.

Prior to the 2010 municipal and school board elections, the City of Vaughan facilitated five evening meet and greet sessions at Community Centres during the post Labour Day portion of the election campaign:

- Ward 1: Tues. Sept. 21 at Maple Community Centre, hosted by Vaughan Today
- Ward 2: Wed. Sept. 29 at Al Palladini Community Centre, hosted by Thornhill Liberal
- Ward 3: Wed. Sept. 15 at Chancellor Community Centre, hosted by Vaughan Today
- Ward 4: Mon. Sept. 20 at North Thornhill Community Centre, hosted by Thornhill Liberal
- Ward 5: Mon. Sept. 27 at Garnet A. Williams Community Centre, hosted by Thornhill Liberal

Although the 2010 hosts did not keep detailed statistics, generally speaking the two hosts reported low attendance with numbers ranging from approximately 20 to 40 per session.

Though meet and greet sessions are acknowledged to be important parts of the political process, it would be inappropriate for City staff to manage interactions between voters and candidates on political issues. Staff are therefore proposing that meet and greet sessions be facilitated as described in this report, and that independent arm's-length third parties be recruited to serve as event coordinators. On a preliminary basis, the Canadian Automobile Association (CAA) has offered to host up to two meet and greet sessions at City facilities. With Council's endorsement of the recommendations in this report, staff will solicit other potential event coordinators, and allocate venues and dates.

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The event coordinators will establish protocols, rules and regulations to ensure fair and equitable opportunities for all registered candidates to participate in a meet and greet session and staff will support the event coordinators as follows:

- a) City Clerk's Office: Posting information about the meet and greet sessions on the Elections web site;
- b) Corporate Communications: Posting dates, times and locations on the City website and community centres;
- c) Recreation and Culture: Providing date and time options that present the least amount of impact to program participants, and processing rental contracts accordingly; and
- d) Building and Facilities: Site preparation (tables and chairs) and clean up.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan

In consideration of the strategic priorities related to Vaughan Vision 2020, this report achieves the Staff Excellence goal by demonstrating effective leadership.

Regional Implications

Candidates for Regional Council will potentially have up to five meet and greet sessions to attend.

Conclusion

Facilitating meet and greet sessions provided by independent third parties supports civic engagement in the election process without involving City staff in partisan political matters.

Attachments

None

Report prepared by:

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