

Item:



Committee of the Whole Report

DATE: Tuesday, June 05, 2018

WARD(S): ALL

TITLE: 2018 Municipal Election – Meet and Greet Sessions

FROM:

Todd Coles, City Clerk

ACTION: DECISION

Purpose

To receive Council endorsement for staff to work with impartial arm's-length organizations in the community to arrange meet and greet sessions between candidates and electors for the 2018 Municipal Election in the City of Vaughan.

Recommendations

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 2018 municipal election at community centres or at City Hall during the period of September 4 to October 8, 2018;
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 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 representatives to remove literature, etc.;
5. That the City Clerk in consultation with the Director of Recreation Services 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) Office of the City Clerk: Posting information about the meet and greet sessions on the city's election web page;
 - b) Corporate Communications: Posting dates, times and locations on the City website, community centres and digital signs;
 - c) Recreation Services: Providing date and time options that present the least amount of impact to program participants, processing rental contracts accordingly, and site preparation (tables and chairs) and clean up; and,
 - d) Facility Maintenance Services: Site preparation (tables and chairs) and clean up at City Hall, if required.

Report Highlights

- Meet and greet sessions provide electors the opportunity to engage with nominated candidates and learn more about them and their campaign
- The City reached out to organizations in 2010 and 2014 to act as event coordinators for meet and greet sessions at community centres
- One meet and greet session will be organized by event coordinators in each of the City's five wards, and the City will provide certain logistic support to assist the coordinators in preparing each event
- Information will be made available to candidates and electors prior to each event

Background

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 2014 municipal election, the City of Vaughan facilitated five evening meet and greet sessions at community centres during the post-Labour Day period of the election campaign:

Ward 1: September 23 at Maple Community Centre, hosted by the Canadian Automobile Association (CAA)

Ward 2: September 17 at Al Palladini Community Centre, hosted by the Vaughan Chamber of Commerce

Ward 3: September 16 at Chancellor Community Centre, hosted by the Vaughan Citizen

Ward 4: October 2 at North Thornhill Community Centre, hosted by the CAA

Ward 5: September 15 at Garnet A. Williams Community Centre, hosted by the Thornhill Liberal

Previous Reports/Authority

[2014 Municipal Election – Meet and Greet Sessions](#)

Analysis and Options

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. With Council's endorsement of the recommendations in this report, staff will solicit potential event coordinators, and allocate venues and dates.

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

- a) Office of the City Clerk: Posting information about the meet and greet sessions on the city's election web page;
- b) Corporate Communications: Posting dates, times and locations on the City website, community centres and digital signs;
- c) Recreation Services: Providing date and time options that present the least amount of impact to program participants, processing rental contracts accordingly, and site preparation (tables and chairs) and clean up; and,
- d) Facility Maintenance Services: Site preparation (tables and chairs) and clean up at City Hall, if required.

Financial Impact

There may be a small amount of staff resources required to support the event coordinator and possible loss of rental revenue from the use of community centre

space.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

Candidates for Local and Regional Councillor and York Regional Chair 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.

For more information, please contact: Evan Read, Manager, Elections and Special Projects, ext. 8241.

Attachments

None

Prepared by

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