

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (WORKING SESSION) APRIL 27, 2004

2003 MUNICIPAL ELECTION

Recommendation

That the report of the City Clerk and Returning Officer be received.

Purpose

To respond to a request by the Mayor for a report addressing issues raised during the 2003 Municipal Election.

Background - Analysis and Options

The Mayor has requested a report addressing concerns raised during the 2003 Municipal Election (Attachment #1). Subsequently, Council at its meeting held on February 23, 2004 requested a report on various matters including certain election processes (Attachment #2). It is recognized that there may be some overlap between the matters addressed in this report and those to be addressed in the reports to follow regarding the February 23rd Council directive. Nevertheless it would seem appropriate to address the Mayor's memo separately.

The Mayor's memo raises eight questions which are reprinted below for ease of reference each is addressed individually:

1. I have received several phone calls questioning the use of "Sample" ballots, at various poll locations, that indicated a choice of "two" for the regional councillor position. Not only was the "sample" incorrect, but also some voters who asked the question "how many can we elect for the position of regional councillor?" were told "two".

Poll workers are supplied with a quantity of "demo" ballots that have fictitious names on them. These ballots are not given to voters and are used only to demonstrate how one votes, that is, how to complete the arrow pointing to the candidate(s) for which one wishes to vote. A large quantity of these demonstration ballots were printed many years ago and have been used for a number of elections. For the office of Local and Regional Councillor the heading indicated vote for up to two candidates. For the 2003 Election for the first time voters could vote for up to three for this office and the ballots that were given out to the voters stated this. Further I personally advised all poll workers in every instruction session of this change. In addition, ads were run on the 'City Page' to inform Vaughan electors of the offices and numbers of candidates they would be voting for. Again demo ballots were not given to voters but only used by poll personnel to show people how to mark a ballot if so requested.

New demo ballots were printed for the 2003 Election and these ballots contained instructions to vote for up to three candidates for the office of Local and Regional Councillor. The vast majority of poll workers were given the new demo ballots but through inadvertence a few of the old demo ballots were supplied.

To recap, all poll workers were instructed regarding the addition of a third Local and Regional Councillor for the 2003 Election. The change was advertised and only actual ballots containing correct voting instructions were used by the voters.

2. How many spoiled ballots were there this year and how did you deal with them?

There were approximately 135 "spoiled ballots". These are ballots that the vote tabulating equipment rejected due to a paper jam or because a voter marked the

ballot in an area used to code the equipment so it can read the ballots and the votes. These ballots are re-made in full view of everyone present in the tabulating centre and then these ballots are fed through the equipment and the individual office/poll results are updated prior to final election results being printed.

3. At a super mailbox, one person witnessed an entire pile of voter's cards just left lying on the ground. It was probably an accumulation of cards that homeowners not wanting to vote, simply discarded. Since Vaughan doesn't require identification at the time of voting, it could happen that these discarded cards were used by other than the registered voter. Can you look into possibly introducing a system similar to Toronto's (sample attached) where voters are required to show identification along with the voter's card.

The issue is whether voters should be required to show identification (I.D.) at the polls. The Municipal Elections Act, (the Act), provides that a Clerk may require ID at the polls. However, the Act also states that any elector who takes an oath as to their eligibility to vote must be allowed to vote even if they do not have ID. Most Clerks do not require an ID to be shown at the polls. There are a number of reasons for this. Most voters bring their voters notification card with them and historically that has been sufficient, requiring ID would slow up the process particularly during heavy voting, longtime residents sometimes resent having to show ID and, as stated above, ID is not mandatory under the Act. That said, some municipalities such as the City of Toronto are asking for ID to be taken to the polls. To date most York Region municipalities are not requesting ID's at the polls.

4. Two individuals (at least) who were returning ballot boxes to the Civic Centre came in the main entrance of the Civic Centre, came up the central staircase right into the crown with the media and scrutineers and asked where they were to go. They did not know that they were supposed to enter through the Council parking lot and drop the ballot boxes off at that entrance.

All poll workers were specifically instructed what to do with their ballot boxes after the close of the polls. For 2003, all ballot boxes were picked up by the City of Vaughan staff at the polling locations and transferred to City hall. Unfortunately an isolated few decided for whatever reason to bring their boxes to City Hall directly.

5. The first newspaper ad that was issued for advance polls referred to the Father Bulfon Community Centre location as West Woodbridge Community Centre. We received many calls from residents wanting to know where that "new" community centre was located. New residents are not aware of the previous name.

This was not the case as no newspaper ads contained this information. All ads for advance voting referred to Father Bulfon Community Centre. However, a few candidate guides incorrectly referred to the West Woodbridge Community Centre. A correction was issued to all candidates well before the ads appeared in the papers and all ads had correct and accurate information.

6. Why did it take just short of 3 hours to have ballots read comments as to how embarrassing this was for "the City above Toronto" were heard all night.

In actual fact, the reporting of election results in Vaughan compares favourable with Toronto and other municipalities. For example, the City of Toronto had 80% of election results by 8:30 p.m. but not all results until 10:30 p.m. Richmond Hill had a majority of polls reported by 10:30 p.m. but not full results until midnight. Markham had results by 9:30 p.m.

The City of Vaughan had results at approximately 10:30 p.m. (results for some polls were updated later with votes that had been recorded on re-made ballots as indicated above because the machines rejected the original ballots; these represented 0.09% of ballots read and did not affect the outcome of any of the contests.

The City has been well served by the Optech IV C vote tabulating system first introduced in 1991. It has produced fast, accurate election results in a cost effective manner. However, there are systems now available at considerable expense that can provide faster results. This will be addressed in a further report to provide Council with options and costs for a new system that could be in place for the 2006 Municipal Election.

7. There were many complaints about the TV that was set up in the foyer for scrutineers to watch results on. The screen was difficult to read, the screens changed much too quickly and the TV was too low -most people at the back couldn't see over the heads of those standing in front. The TV should be proper up higher and maybe chairs should be set up for people to sit down and not block those in front of them.

The large screen in the foyer was on a raised platform but it should have been higher than it was which would have facilitated viewing. There was a larger crowd than was anticipated and larger than in previous elections which compounded the viewing problem. Certainly better arrangements will be made for the next election. All TV's and screens were on a 15 second "flip". We have experimented with this and this seems to be the minimum time necessary to view the results for offices displayed. Offices with numerous candidates take longer to view than those with only a few candidates. Unfortunately, the program software does not permit different viewing times for different offices. Consequently, the 15 second "flip" seems to be the best.

8. Finally, having the scrutineers watching the results on the TV as well as all the media set up with their lights/cameras/microphones all in all the foyer was much too crowded for all that was going on in one area.

The arrangements for this election were similar to those in the past. That said, this time the crowd was larger and more media interviews were conducted. This cannot be properly accommodated in the space that was used. Better arrangements will be made in the future and again, hopefully, in anew facility.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2007

Not applicable.

Conclusion

This report addresses concerns raised by the Mayor and could be received for information and/or any direction deemed appropriate.

Attachments

Attachment #1- Memo from Mayor Di Biase, dated November 18, 2003
Attachment #2 -Extract from Council Meeting of February 23, 2004

Report prepared by:

John D. Leach, City Clerk and Returning Officer

Respectfully submitted,

John D. Leach, City Clerk and Returning Officer



The City Above Toronto

November 18, 2003

John Leach
City Clerk

City of Vaughan Elections 2003

Several concerns have been brought to my attention. Please address them in a report and as soon as the report is ready, arrange a meeting with all members of Council to discuss possible changes/improvements for Elections 2006.

1. I have received several phone calls questioning the use of "Sample" ballots, at various poll locations, that indicated a choice of "two" for the regional councillor position. Not only was the "sample" incorrect, but also some voters who asked the question "how many can we elect for the position of regional councillor?" were told "two".
2. How many spoiled ballots were there this year and how did you deal with them?
3. At a super mailbox, one person witnessed an entire pile of voter's cards just left lying on the ground. It was probably an accumulation of cards that homeowners not wanting to vote, simply discarded. Since Vaughan doesn't require identification at the time of voting, it could happen that these discarded cards were used by other than the registered voter. Can you look into possibly introducing a system similar to Toronto's (sample attached) where voters are required to show identification along with the voter's card.
4. Two individuals (at least) who were returning ballot boxes to the Civic Centre came in the main entrance of the Civic Centre, came up the central staircase right into the crowd with the media and

memorandum

scrutineers and asked where they were to go. They did not know that they were supposed to enter through the Council parking lot and drop the ballot boxes off at that entrance.

5. The first newspaper ad that was issued for advance polls referred to the Father Bulfon Community Centre location as West Woodbridge Community Centre. We received many calls from residents wanting to know where that "new" community centre was located. New residents are not aware of the previous name.
6. Why did it take just short of 3 hours to have ballots read – comments as to how embarrassing this was for "the City above Toronto" were heard all night.
7. There were many complaints about the TV that was set up in the foyer for scrutineers to watch results on. The screen was difficult to read, the screens changed much too quickly and the TV was too low – most people at the back couldn't see over the heads of those standing in front. The TV should be propped up higher and maybe chairs should be set up for people to sit down and not block those in front of them.
8. Finally, having the scrutineers watching the results on the TV as well as all the media set up with their lights/cameras/microphones – all in all the foyer was much too crowded for all that was going on in one area.



Michael Di Biase
Mayor

Attachment

C: Members of Council
Michael DeAngelis, City Manager



Ulli S. Watkins, City Clerk
3 Dohme Ave.
Toronto ON M4B 1Y7

City of Toronto
Municipal Election
Monday November 10, 2003

Ward No.

Sub. No.

4-c-0020905

ELECTION DAY:

Monday, November 10, 2003
10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

ELIGIBLE ELECTOR:

YOU VOTE AT:

If you require level access please call **416-338-1111**.

ADVANCE VOTING ON: Saturday, November 1, 2003
and Sunday, November 2, 2003
10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

YOU VOTE AT:



All advance vote locations have level access.

PLEASE BRING IDENTIFICATION

This card is for information only and does not qualify as identification. Bring this card and at least one piece of identification with you showing your name and qualifying address in the City. Identification such as an Ontario Driver's Licence or tax/utility/credit card bill are acceptable.

For more information call the
ELECTION INFORMATION LINE at
416-338-1111
or visit our website at
www.toronto.ca/elections

VOTER QUALIFICATIONS

You can vote in this election if:

- You are a Canadian citizen
- You are at least 18 years of age
- You live in the City of Toronto
- You do not live in the City of Toronto but you or your spouse or same-sex partner own or rent property in the City
- If you own or rent more than one property in the City you must vote where you live

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 23, 2004

Item 4, Report No. 19, of the Committee of the Whole (Working Session), which was adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on February 23, 2004.

4 REVIEW OF CITY OF VAUGHAN'S ELECTION PROCESS & PROCEDURES

The Committee of the Whole (Working Session) recommends:

- 1) That the recommendation contained in the following report of Regional Councillor Ferri, dated February 10, 2004, be approved;
- 2) That staff review and report on the issues raised by Members of Council as well as the following:
 - (1) Re-aligning of ward boundaries.
 - (2) Consideration of city-wide or geographic specific constituencies for Regional Councillors.
 - (3) A comprehensive review of the Election Sign By-law encompassing size, locations and timing, fines, etc.
 - (4) Election budget needs.
 - (5) Election day transmission of results.
 - (6) Use of other electronic vote counting equipment.
 - (7) Other means of voting, i.e. mail-in ballots, e-voting, etc.
 - (8) Revision of the voter's list.
 - (9) Use of voter information cards.
 - (10) Voting at long-term care facilities and seniors homes.
 - (11) Review of the number of electors per poll and the number of polls created.
 - (12) Election day staff and appropriate training.
 - (13) Voter identification at polls.
 - (14) Use of the name "Office of Local and Regional Councillor".
 - (15) Advertisements relating to the election including number of candidates/offices that an elector is entitled to vote for;
- 3) That the City Clerk be directed to report on timelines for the implementation of a new ward boundary structure to be in place for the 2006 municipal elections; and
- 4) That the memorandum from the City Clerk, dated February 6, 2004, be received.

Recommendation

Regional Councillor Ferri recommends that staff undertake a review of the City of Vaughan's current process and procedures for conducting a municipal election to improve service to electors through new initiatives and new technology, and

That staff report back to Committee of the Whole before the last meeting in June 2004.

Purpose

To review the current ward boundaries and election procedures in order to encourage higher voter turnout and more equitable constituency representation amongst local councillors.

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 23, 2004

Item 4, CW(WS) Report No. 19 – Page 2

Background - Analysis and Options

Since the last ward boundary re-distribution, the population of Vaughan has increased dramatically. In some cases the ward population has increased and created numerous inequities. There is a need to re-distribute these ward boundaries to ensure fair and equitable treatment of all constituents.

During the last municipal election, a number of issues arose that needed to be addressed. A comprehensive review of the process and procedures of conducting an election for the City of Vaughan needs to be conducted as well as corresponding By-Laws that govern the election process. The following issues need to be reviewed as part of the staff undertaking:

1. Re-aligning of ward boundaries
2. Consideration of city-wide or geographic specific constituencies for Regional Councillors
3. A comprehensive review of the Election Sign By-Law encompassing size, locations and timing, fines, etc.
4. Election budget needs
5. Election day transmission of results
6. Use of other electronic voting counting equipment
7. Other means of vote i.e. mail-in ballots, e-voting, etc.
8. Revision of the voter's list
9. Use of voter information cards
10. Voting at long-term care facilities and seniors homes
11. Review of the number of electors per poll and the number of polls created
12. Election day staff and appropriate training

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2007

Voting in the City of Vaughan must focus on how best to meet and service the needs of the electors of the municipality. Changes need to be made to ensure that "People first through service excellence" is reflected in our process and procedures.

Conclusion

A full and comprehensive review of Vaughan's electoral process and procedures including the re-aligning of ward boundaries is needed now in order to be able to ensure higher voter turnout and a high level of satisfaction among constituents and candidates.

Attachments

N/A

Report prepared by:

Mario F. Ferri