

## **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (WORKING SESSION) – APRIL 26, 2005**

### **SIGN ENFORCEMENT**

#### **Recommendation**

The Commissioner of Legal and Administrative Services, in conjunction with the Senior Manager of Enforcement Services, recommends:

1. That the posting of anti-postering signs on poles at intersections be approved.
2. That By-law 203-92 be amended to include a deposit of \$500. per election candidate wishing to erect campaign signs and a \$20. deduction from that deposit for each sign seized.
3. That Enforcement staff be directed to produce a pamphlet prior to the next election for circulation to all candidates.
4. That the information relating to the November 2004 sign enforcement campaign be received.

#### **Economic Impact**

Economic impact to be provided at the meeting.

#### **Purpose**

This report is to provide information on sign enforcement and potential amendments to the Sign By-law.

#### **Background - Analysis and Options**

Council, at its meeting of June 28, 2004 (Item 5, Report 54) requested Enforcement Services staff research the feasibility of implementing a sign enforcement initiative where an annual deposit is collected from all persons and businesses requesting the installation of signs in the City of Vaughan.

Inquiries with a number of municipalities in the area were made over the summer of 2004. With the exception of Toronto and Markham, the area by-laws are very similar to those of Vaughan. Both Markham and Toronto impose a \$200. deposit for posting signs on public property and hold back funds for each sign seized. This is predominately for election signs as the posting of signs on City property is illegal except by permit.

During the Ward 5 by-election in November 2004, Enforcement Services confiscated 532 election signs that were placed contrary to the By-law. If the candidates were charged \$20. per sign, that would have resulted in \$10,000. being collected from the offenders.

Mobile signs are currently covered by the existing By-law. The sign owner is required to obtain a permit to erect a sign. Any signs that are in violation can be seized and are subject to a \$300. confiscation fee in addition to any fines that may be levied. Mobile signs do not represent as much of a problem as they did prior to the setting of the retrieval fee and fine.

There may be a deterrent value in amending the By-law to include a deposit or permit fee of \$500. with \$20. per sign confiscated being held back. Any amount over the \$500. could be invoiced to the candidate. This sort of process is in place in a number of places in Ontario and other provinces.

The City of Toronto also circulates a brochure to all electoral candidates advising where when, what and how signs are to be posted. The cost to the candidates is also stipulated in the

pamphlet. A copy of the 2003 pamphlet is attached. This too may reduce the number of illegal election signs.

### Sign Enforcement

Enforcement Services, with support from Parks and Public Works conducted a comprehensive sign blitz in November 2004. All enforcement field staff were reassigned for four days. All illegal placard and ground signs were confiscated. Approximately 2000 signs were confiscated. Since the initiative concluded six charges have been laid relating to A-frame signs. Despite the large number of signs seized, we did not receive a single call from businesses requesting placard signs be returned. Enforcement Services investigated approximately thirty of the worst offenders of which 20 have been charged under the Sign By-law. The cost of this initiative is estimated at \$36,000.

As most of the illegal placard signs were attached to utility poles or signs at intersections, a way is required to deter potential offenders from posting their signs. One potential solution is for the City to post its own signs at intersections advising that posting commercial signs is prohibited. A sample of the sign, which would be black or red lettering on a clear background, is attached to this report. These signs would be applied to the back of street signs so that anyone intent on putting their sign in the same location would see the warning. The cost for these signs is approximately \$1. per sign and can be absorbed in the existing operating budget.

Sign enforcement will continue as staff and resources permit. It is anticipated that approximately 24 hours per week will be dedicated to sign enforcement.

### Vaughan Vision

This report is consistent with the Vaughan Vision through promoting service excellence, community safety, and developing collaborative solutions. Staff resources have been approved and allocated.

### Conclusion

The timing is right to explore new initiatives for sign enforcement to reduce the financial impact to the City. Sign enforcement will continue throughout the City of Vaughan.

### Attachments

A: Toronto Election Sign Pamphlet  
B: Draft Intersection Sign

### Report prepared by:

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Respectfully submitted,

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Commissioner, Legal & Administrative Services

Tony Thompson  
Senior Manager, Enforcement Services



**PUBLIC HIGHWAYS**

Election signs are permitted on public highways (except those highways upon which pedestrians are prohibited) with the following conditions.

- Signs cannot be placed between the curb and the sidewalk.
- If there is no sidewalk, signs cannot be placed within 1.5 metres of the curb or edge of the pavement.
- Signs cannot be placed within 15 metres of an intersection or pedestrian crossover or be located on a median or island.
- Signs cannot interfere with the safe operation of vehicular traffic or with the safety of pedestrians.
- Signs cannot be located adjacent to a voting place or any City owned or operated property.
- The consent of the owner or occupant of the abutting property must be obtained.

**PRIVATE PROPERTY**

Election signs may be erected on private property subject to the following conditions:

- Signs do not interfere with the safe operation of vehicular traffic or with the safety of pedestrians.
- Signs are erected with the consent of the owner or occupant of the property.

This summary is provided for convenience only, candidates should review By-law 316-2000 in its entirety.

Article II, Election Signs, of Chapter 693, Signs, of the City of Toronto Municipal Code is under review by Municipal Licencing and Standards. Candidates will be advised of any amendments to the by-law.

There are certain rules under the City of Toronto's Municipal Code regarding Election Signs that candidates must observe for the City of Toronto

**2003 Election.**

These rules are under the jurisdiction of and enforced by Municipal Licencing and Standards unit of Urban Development Services.

For further information about the election sign by-law or to report an infraction, please call:

Bill Blakes  
416-395-7020

### **TIMING**

Election signs may not be erected until **October 16, 2003** and must be removed within three days of voting day. Signs on a campaign office may be put up on September 11, 2003.

### **SIZE**

With the exception of billboards and campaign office signs, election signs may not exceed 1.2 square metres (12.92 square feet) in total sign face area and cannot be higher than 2 metres above ground level.

### **GENERAL**

Signs may not be illuminated or attached to trees and are prohibited on all City property except certain portions of the public highway (see section on public highways).

No notice is required to be given by the City prior to the removal of an unlawful election sign.

No person shall deface or willfully cause damage to a lawfully erected election sign. No person shall display the City's logo, in whole or in part, on an election sign.

### **DEPOSIT**

Any candidate wishing to erect election signs on public property must pay a \$200 sign deposit. No deposit is required to place signs on private property.

### **PENALTIES**

\$20 will be deducted from the deposit for every illegal sign removed by City staff from public property. Once the deposit is depleted, the candidate must pay a further \$200 deposit, plus any outstanding amounts owing (at \$20 per sign), within five days of notice. Failure to do so will result in the immediate removal of all the candidate's signs from public property.

If a candidate has not paid the deposit and places signs on public property, he or she will be invoiced the actual cost of removing the illegal sign.

Amounts owing under the election sign by-law may be recovered by legal action or in a like manner as municipal taxes.

Any person who contravenes the election sign by-law is guilty of an offence and, upon conviction, is liable to a fine or penalty.

**POSTING OF  
COMMERCIAL  
ADVERTISING  
ON PUBLIC  
PROPERTY IS  
STRICTLY  
PROHIBITED.**

(Unless authorized in writing by the City of Vaughan Public Works Department)

**City of Vaughan Sign Bylaw 203-92**