

OUTREACH TO IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES: MUNICIPAL ELECTION NOTICES

Recommendation

The City Clerk and Returning Officer recommends that Council give direction by selecting one of the following options:

- 1) Receive the report.
- 2) Place an ad in the City Page and on the election website in various languages reminding recent immigrants to Vaughan to vote and explain how (languages should be specified).
- 3) Insert a subtitle in all election ads indicating they are available upon request in various languages (languages should be specified).
- 4) Publish "Is Your Name on the Voters' List?" and "Notice of Election" in the City Page and on the election website in various languages (languages to be specified).

Economic Impact

The economic impact is minimal and could be funded from the election reserve fund.

Purpose

To respond to a Council directive to develop a plan for the provision of municipal election notices in no less than three and no more than five languages other than English and French.

Background - Analysis and Options

Council at its meeting of June 12, 2006 adopted a recommendation to develop a plan to provide election notices in various languages (Attachment #1 – Council Extract). A similar plan recently adopted by the Town of Newmarket Council appears to have given rise to this initiative. The Newmarket initiative is quite limited in that it will consist only of one ad in the local paper and on the Town's website published in five languages that will remind voters when, where and how to vote. No other election notices will be published in languages other than English and French. Other than the City of Toronto, staff are not aware of any other municipalities that provide election notices in languages other than English and French. While an outreach to recent immigrants may be laudable, it should be balanced against the perception some may have that the initiative may not be necessary as immigrants who have recently gained Canadian citizenship will have sufficient linguistic fluency to engage the voting process.

The practice in Vaughan has been to publish all election notices in English with a sub-title in French with a notation that the notice is available in French upon request. The notices appear in all ethno-cultural newspapers in Vaughan as well as on the City's election website. In addition, election notices that are published in Italian language papers are in Italian. For the most part the notices published are: Is Your Name on the Voters' List?, Nominations, Notice of Election, Proxy Voting and Notice of Advance Voting. Publishing all these notices may be confusing and unnecessary for new citizens. The Newmarket approach is to keep the message straight forward and simple as noted above the message is to remind new immigrants to vote, the method of voting and where they go to vote. The where in Newmarket's case can be published relatively inexpensively as they only have 13 locations whereas Vaughan will have approximately 100.

In order to do some sort of outreach should Council wish to proceed in that manner, there are a number of options. One would be to place ads in the City Page in various languages that would remind new immigrants to vote and explain how to vote. The cost would be minimal. Another approach would be to include in all election notices that they are available in various languages upon request as is done with the French language. An expanded approach could be to place the Is Your Name on the Voters' List? and Notice of Election in the City Page (Attachment #2). Placing these also in the ethno-cultural newspapers would likely not be effective in reaching new immigrants.

Also to be determined is what languages the ads should be published in. The Council directive stipulates 3 to 5. As noted in the attached report, the ethnic origin of most recent immigrants to Vaughan is: Russian 23%, Chinese 19% and East Indian 17%. Publication in these languages may reach most recent immigrants (Russia, Chinese and Punjabi). The attached report which references Statistics Canada data also indicates that 10% of recent Vaughan immigrants are Filipino and as Vaughan has a friendship agreement with Baguio, publication in Filipino may also be desirable. The cost for each translation would be approximately \$500.00. The cost of publication in the City Page may be covered in the existing contract depending on space availability. Should space not be available, the cost would be minimal.

By way of summary should Council wish to proceed with an outreach initiative, an ad could be placed in the City Page and on the election website in numerous languages reminding recent immigrants to vote and explaining how to vote. The above-noted election ads could be published in various languages and made available upon request. Election ads as indicated above could be published in numerous languages in the City Page.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2007

This report is consistent with the priorities set forth in Vaughan Vision 2007, particularly 'A-1, "Pursue Excellence in the Delivery of Core Services" and the necessary resources have been allocated and approved.

Conclusion

An outreach program to assist recent immigrants to Vaughan may be desirable. It is recommended that Council select one of the following options:

- 1) Receive the report.
- 2) Place an ad in the City Page and on the election website in various languages reminding recent immigrants to Vaughan to vote and explain how (languages should be specified).
- 3) Insert a subtitle in all election ads indicating they are available upon request in various languages (languages should be specified).
- 4) Publish "Is Your Name on the Voters' List? and "Notice of Election" in the City Page and on the election website in various languages (languages to be specified).

Attachments

Attachment #1 – Council Extract – CW Item #3, Report No 33

Attachment #2 – Election Ads

Report prepared by:

John D. Leach, City Clerk

Respectfully submitted,

John D. Leach,
City Clerk

Janice Atwood-Petkovski,
Commissioner of Legal and Administrative Services

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF JUNE 12, 2006

Item 3, Report No. 33, of the Committee of the Whole, which was adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on June 12, 2006.

3 OUTREACH TO IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES: MUNICIPAL ELECTION NOTICES

The Committee of the Whole recommends approval of the recommendation contained in the following report of Councillor Carella, dated May 29, 2006:

Recommendation

Councillor Tony Carella recommends that the Clerk be directed to develop a plan for the issuing of municipal election notices in no less than three and no more than five languages other than English and French.

Economic Impact

Nil. Any expenses relating to this initiative would be detailed in the requested plan, for consideration by Council at some future date.

Purpose

To encourage greater participation in the upcoming municipal election by citizens who are relatively recent immigrants and are fluent neither in English nor in French.

Background - Analysis and Options

Recent deputants and other concerned citizens have noted the general decline in voter turnout, particularly low in the case of municipal elections. In light of this situation, it is a reasonable assumption that given the increasingly diverse, multicultural nature of Vaughan's population, it is incumbent upon the City to ensure that basic information relating to the upcoming municipal election as provided in a variety of election notices---reaches the broadest possible range of the electorate. As many of these individuals are not yet fluent in either of Canada's official languages, providing notices in their mother tongue is essential.

This is the strategy recently adopted by the Town of Newmarket, which passed (on May 9, 2006) a by-law to provide 2006 municipal election notices in Chinese, German, Punjabi, Spanish, and Vietnamese, as part of the Town's "New Faces in New Places" component of its *Vote 2006* campaign.

In passing the by-law, the Town noted that attaining Canadian citizenship is typically a five-year process that starts with arrival to Canada and ends with the citizenship ceremony. According to some linguistic experts, complete fluency in English can take up to seven years, thereby leaving a two-year gap between citizenship and complete fluency, which gap the Town's new by-law is meant to address.

In the case of Vaughan, and as reported in the Region of York's *Community Snapshots: Recent Immigrants Living in York Region*, the number of recent immigrants increased by 127% between 1991 and 2001 the second largest percentage increase amongst municipalities in York Region that have a sizeable immigrant population. The top **places of birth** for recent immigrants are the Russian Federation (16%), Ukraine (9%), and India (7%). With respect to the **ethnic origin** of recent immigrants, Russian is first at 23%, Chinese second at 19%, and East Indian third at 17%. The most common **visible minority** groups among recent immigrants are South Asians (32%), Chinese (21%), and Filipino (10%).

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF JUNE 12, 2006

Item 3, CW Report No. 33 – Page 2

Fully 56% of recent immigrants are Canadian citizens, and thus eligible to vote in municipal elections.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2007

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council and the necessary resources have been allocated and approved.

Conclusion

In an effort to increase voter turnout at the next municipal election, it is appropriate that the City of Vaughan develop a plan for reaching out to potential voters among recent immigrants to Canada, who have become citizens---and are therefore entitled to vote, but who still lack sufficient fluency in English to participate fully in the election process.

Attachments

Region of York's *COMMUNITY SNAPSHOTS: Recent Immigrants Living in York Region*, pp. 78-83

Report prepared by:

Councillor Tony Carella

(A copy of the attachments referred to in the foregoing have been forwarded to each Member of Council and a copy thereof is also on file in the office of the City Clerk.)

**IS YOUR NAME ON THE 2003 VOTERS' LIST?
ÊTES-VOUS SUR LA LISTE ÉLECTORALE?**

**MUNICIPAL ELECTION IN THE CITY OF VAUGHAN
ÉLECTIONS MUNICIPALES POUR LA VILLE DE VAUGHAN**

**MONDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2003
LUNDI, 10 NOVEMBRE 2003**

N.B. Ce document est également disponible en français au bureau du Secrétaire, à l'Hôtel de Ville de Maple au 905-832-8504.

How do you know if your name is on the Voters' List? *IT'S EASY!*

To ensure your name is on the Voters' List and that the information is correct, come to the Clerk's Department in the City of Vaughan Civic Centre, 2141 Major Mackenzie Drive, Vaughan, Ontario (Maple).

OR:

You can call us at (905) 832-8504 and if your name is not on the Voters' List or is shown incorrectly, we will mail you an application to amend the Voters' List. We will be open weekdays, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., for the purpose of amending the Voters' List starting Tuesday, September 2, 2003.

Who can vote?

You may vote in the municipal election if on voting day, November 10, 2003, you are:

- a resident of the City of Vaughan; or
- the owner or tenant of property in the City of Vaughan or the spouse or same-sex partner of such owner or tenant.
- a Canadian Citizen; and
- at least 18 years of age; and
- not prohibited from voting by law.

For further information please contact the Clerk's Department at (905) 832-8504.

YOUR VOTE COUNTS!

First published: August 28, 2003

John D. Leach
City Clerk and
Returning Officer
City of Vaughan



NOTICE OF ELECTION/ AVIS ÉLECTORAL

N.B. Ce document est également disponible en français au Bureau du Secrétaire, à l'Hôtel de Ville de Vaughan au 905-832-8504.

When Is The Election?

Voting Day is Monday, November 10, 2003. Polls will be open from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

How Many Candidates/Offices Can You Elect?

Voters are entitled to vote for:

Members Of Council

One candidate for the office of Mayor, three candidates for the office of Local and Regional Councillor and one candidate for the office of Local Councillor representing the particular ward in which you live. The City of Vaughan has five wards. The office of Local Councillor for Ward 5 has been acclaimed.

In addition, if you qualify, you may vote for:

York Region District School Board

Area 1 - One (1) Member to be elected by electors in Wards 1, 2 and 3

Area 2 - One (1) Member to be elected by electors in Wards 4 and 5

York Catholic District School Board

Area 1 - One (1) Member to be elected by electors in Ward 1

Area 2 - One (1) Member to be elected by electors in Ward 2

Area 3 - One (1) Member to be elected in Ward 3 - ACCLAIMED

Area 4 - One (1) Member to be elected by electors in Wards 4 and 5

Le Conseil Scolaire de District du Centre-Sud-Ouest

One (1) Member

Le Conseil Scolaire de District Catholique Centre-Sud

One (1) Member - ACCLAIMED

Who Can Vote?

A person can vote in the municipal election if he or she is a Canadian citizen, at least 18 years old, resides in the City of Vaughan or is the owner or tenant of land in Vaughan, or is the spouse or same sex partner of such person and is not prohibited from voting by law. Note: Corporations or Limited companies are not eligible to vote.

Where Do You Vote?

A notice will be sent to each voter appearing on the Voters' List advising of the location of your polling station. This notice will also contain information such as your ward, poll number, school support and residency status. Please watch for your notice during the month of October and if any of the information listed is incorrect, contact our offices.

Advance Voting Dates And Times

You will be able to vote at one of the Advance Voting days to be held on November 1 and 2, 2003 from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and November 5, 2003 from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Watch for notices in the local papers regarding Advance Voting locations.

Questions?

For further information, please contact the Clerk's Office at 905- 832-8504.

First Published October 9, 2003

John D. Leach
City Clerk & Returning Officer
City of Vaughan

YOUR VOTE COUNTS!