

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (WORKING SESSION) - MARCH 28, 2006

SIGN ENFORCEMENT

(Referred from the Council meeting of February 27, 2006)

Council, at its meeting of February 27, 2006, adopted the following:

That this matter be referred to the Committee of the Whole (Working Session) meeting of March 28, 2006, to ensure that the recommendations contained in the additional report of the Commissioner of Legal & Administrative Services, dated February 27, 2006, are not in contravention of the Regional By-law.

Recommendation of the Committee of the Whole (Working Session) of February 14, 2006:

- 1) That staff provide a report to the Committee of the Whole meeting of March 6, 2006 addressing the following recommendations:
 - (1) That election signs be permitted on minor arterial road allowances and that a maximum of one sign per candidate per corner be permitted to be placed at an intersection;
 - (2) That all candidates be required to pay a deposit for posting election signs and that the charge be \$150 per candidate running for the office of Ward Councillor and \$300 per candidate running for the office of Regional Councillor or Mayor;
 - (3) That election signs shall not be erected more than three (3) weeks prior to the date of the election;
 - (4) That no signs shall exceed 4 feet by 4 feet on public road allowances in areas with a posted speed limit of up to 60 km/h;
 - (5) That guidelines regarding the posting of election signs in accordance with provisions in the related by-law be communicated to all candidates clearly and concisely in plain language;
 - (6) That staff work with the Region of York to develop a consistent approach with respect to posting of election signs and that guidelines in accordance with the Region's by-law be communicated to all candidates clearly and concisely in plain language; and
 - (7) That staff bring forward a report to a future Committee of the Whole (Working Session) meeting with respect to restricting the posting of election signs in succeeding elections, including criteria on such restrictions and a summary of comparator municipalities election signs by-laws;
- 2) That the memorandum from Councillor Carella, dated November 28, 2005, be received; and
- 3) That the deputation of Mr. Adriano Volpentesta, be received.

Council, at its meeting of December 12, 2005, adopted the following:

That this matter be referred to a future Committee of the Whole (Working Session) meeting.

Report of the Commissioner of Legal and Administrative Services dated November 29, 2005

Recommendation

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

That Council provide direction respecting the following:

- i) restricting election signs to designated locations
- ii) requiring a deposit from candidates as a measure of enforcement to reduce illegally placed election signs
- iii) a reduction in the size of election signs

Economic Impact

Should Council opt to require a deposit in respect of election signs from candidates as a measure to increase enforcement, some revenue would be realized.

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 May 9th, 2005 (Item 4, Report 28) requested Enforcement Services staff research the feasibility of having designated locations for election signs to be displayed on Public Property and what size limitations might be recommended.

Inquiries with a number of municipalities 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 require a \$200.00 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 Ward 5 by-election in November 2004, Enforcement Services confiscated 532 election signs, which were placed contrary to the By-law. If candidates were charged twenty dollars (\$20.00) per sign, it would have resulted in more than \$10,000.00 being collected from offenders.

It was also noted during the last municipal election that numerous complaints were lodged from the public regarding the size of election signs. We also received complaints from candidates regarding the posting of numerous candidate signs on the same supporting structure.

Presently, the City of Vaughan has more than 40 locations on Private property (see Attachment 1) that allows for the display of third party signage by permit (\$50.00) if a commercial enterprise, or written authorization (free) if a charity or religious organization. These areas include open spaces, storm management areas, woodlots, and Ontario Hydro corridors, and are enforced under By-law 178-2003, administered by the Commissioner of Engineering and Public Works and enforced by Enforcement Services.

In an effort to control the proliferation of election signs, consideration might be given to allow designated areas for the display of election signs. In light of complaints that election signs are too large, Council may wish to reduce the maximum size allowed under the sign by-law which is 5 square meters, to 2 square meters.

In addition, should Council wish to increase enforcement on illegally placed signs, a deposit could be required from each candidate with an amount forfeited for each illegal sign seized by enforcement staff.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2007

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

Conclusion

Over time many complaints from the public have been received respecting the proliferation and size of election signs and illegally placed election signs. Council has requested a report addressing this matter. Recognizing that Council will ultimately decide the appropriate level of election signage and enforcement, staff are presenting options for consideration.

Attachments

1. Information Sheet: Election Signage Criteria For 2006 Elections
2. Additional Report of the Commissioner of Legal and Administrative Services dated February 27, 2006

Report prepared by:

David B Madore
Supervisor, Enforcement Services

Election Signage Criteria For 2006 Elections

This information sets out details of where you can erect election signs, the maximum size of signs and how long they can remain up. If a contractor or someone other than yourself will be erecting signs on your behalf, please make sure that they read and understand this information.

Where can I put my signs?

Council has identified public land across the City for election signs as listed below. You cannot put signs on any other public land or property.

APPROVED LOCATIONS FOR ELECTION SIGNS

STREET	INTERSECTION	DETAILS	Ward
Ansley Grove Rd- east side	Blue Willow Dr	Open Space	Three
Bathurst St.-east side	Hwy 407	South of 407; in hydro corridor	Five
Bathurst St.-west side	Hwy 407	South of 407; in hydro corridor	Four
Bathurst St.-west side	Hwy 7	n/w corner in sugar bush	Four
Centre St.-North side	Atkinson Ave	Open Space	Five
Centre St.-south side	Atkinson Ave	Open Space	Five
Centre St.-south side	Hwy 407	s/e corner in Hydro corridor	Four
Clark Ave.-north side	Havenbrook Court	N/S across from Vaughan Secondary School in open space area between plaza & start of residential area	Four
Clark Ave.-north side	Promenade woodlot	Beside Bathurst/Clark Library	Four
Clark Ave.-north side	York Hill	Bevshire Parkette	Five
Chancellor Dr-north side	East of Bordeaux Dr	Open Space	Three
Chancellor Dr-south side	West of Cloverleaf St	Open Space	Three
Dufferin St.-east side	Langstaff Rd	Woodlot	Four
Dufferin St.-east side	Glen Shields Ave	Open Space north of C.N. Rail	Four
Dufferin St.-east side	Rutherford Rd.	n/e corner north of house in drainage area	One
Dufferin St.-east side	Major Mackenzie	s/e area away from corner	One
Dufferin St.-east side	Major Mackenzie	n/e corner	One
Hwy 27-east side	Martin Grove Rd.	south of Rainbow Creek	Two

APPROVED LOCATIONS FOR ELECTION SIGNS (CONTINUED)

Hwy 27-east side	Sanremo Ct.	Between Sanremo & Langstaff Plaza	Two
Hwy 27-west side	W. Royal Gate Blvd.	South of Royal Gate in hydro corridor	Two
Hwy 7-south side	Martin Grove Rd.	Between Martin Grove & Hwy 27	Two
Hwy 7-north side	Martin Grove Rd.	Between Martin Grove & Hwy 27	Two
Islington Ave.-west side	Sunset Ridge	s/w corner	Two
Islington Ave.-east side	Major Mackenzie Dr.	n/e corner in woodlot	One
Islington Ave.-west side	Hwy 407	in hydro corridor	Two
Jane Street - east side	Springside Road	open space	One
Keele St.-west side	Steeles Ave.	South of CNR tracks; in hydro corridor	Four
Langstaff Rd.-south side	Pine Valley	In Woodlot	Three
Langstaff Rd.-south side	Keele St.	Between bicycle path & Don River	Four
Major Mackenzie Dr.-south side	Millwood Parkway	s/w corner	One
Martin Grove-east side	Hwy 407	North of 407; in hydro corridor	Two
Martin Grove-west side	Hwy 407	North of 407; in hydro corridor	Two
Pine Valley Dr.-east side	Langstaff	South side in woodlot	Three
Pine Valley Dr.-east side	open space	South of Chancellor	Three
Pine Valley Dr.-east side	Embassy Dr.	North of Vineyard Crt.	Three
Rutherford Rd.-north side	Fossil Hill Rd	Open Space	One
Rutherford Rd.-north side	Greenock Dr	Open Space	One
Rutherford Rd.-north side	Westburne Dr.	n/w corner in open space area; east side of bicycle path	One
Steeles Ave - Northside	250 m east of Dufferin	Open Space	Five
Weston Road - west side	North of C.N Rail line	Ontario Hydro corridor	Three
Weston Road - east side	North of C.N Rail line	Ontario Hydro corridor	Three
Yonge St - west side	Longbridge Rd	Ontario Hydro corridor	Five

COUNCIL

FEBRUARY 27, 2006

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
ITEM NO. <u>2</u>
Report No. <u>8</u> Council <u>Feb 27/06</u>

SIGN ENFORCEMENT
ELECTION SIGNS

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Legal and Administrative Services recommends:

1. That City of Vaughan Sign By-laws be amended to provide that:
 - a) election signs to be permitted on public property, only at the four corners of intersections of minor arterial roads, outside the sight triangle;
 - b) limit of one sign per candidate per corner;
 - c) sign posting shall be restricted to 21 days prior to the date of the election. All election signs shall be removed within 48 hours after the election;
 - d) the maximum size of an election sign shall be restricted to 1.5 square metres, except on roads with a speed limit of more than 60 km/h where the size limit shall be 5 square metres;
 - e) candidates for Local Ward Councillor shall post a refundable deposit of \$150.00 and candidates for Regional Councillor or Mayor, and Federal or Provincial candidates shall post a refundable deposit of \$300.00;
 - f) signs erected in contravention shall be subject to seizure and may be discarded 7 days after impounding if not claimed by the candidate, and any costs incurred by the City in removing and storing such election signs may be charged to the candidate.
2. That the new election sign rules be provided to all candidates.
3. That York Region be requested to amend and enforce its Sign By-law as it applies to election signs in a manner consistent with Vaughan.
4. That the Clerk be directed to provide the required public notice for a sign by-law amendment.
5. That this report be brought back to the appropriate Committee of the Whole session in accordance with public notice date.

Economic Impact

Not applicable.

Purpose

This report is to provide information relating to the posting of election signs and the amendment of City of Vaughan Sign By-laws, the Sign By-law.

Background - Analysis and Options

Council, at its meeting of February 27, 2006, requested a report to be brought back to the Committee of the Whole outlining any recommendations to the regulation relating to the erection of election signs in the City of Vaughan.

The current restrictions on posting election signs are found in City of Vaughan Sign By-laws. Election signs are restricted to private property only, with a maximum size of 5 square metres, and can be posted 6 weeks prior to the election.

Sign proliferation during election campaigns has historically been problematic for the public, candidates, and City staff. During the Ward 5 by-election in November 2004, over 500 signs were seized, and in the recent Federal election, over 600 signs were seized from municipal road allowances and other public property. This has the potential for conflict or even confrontation. The current By-law requires the City to store any signs confiscated for 30 days. Confiscating hundreds or potentially thousands of signs creates logistical problems for secure storage facilities large enough for that volume.

Therefore, in order to clarify the rules, and simplify the processes related to election signs, the following amendments are recommended to City of Vaughan Sign By-laws:

- a) Allow the posting of election signs on public property at the corners of municipal, minor arterial roads. The signs would need to be set back from the sight triangle for safety purposes. Each candidate shall be restricted to one sign per corner.

It should be noted that during a municipal election, there would be the potential for over 20 signs per corner.

- b) Reduce the time prior to an election that signs can be posted to 21 days. It is currently 42 days. The time for removal remains the same at two days after the election.

This reduces the amount of time staff would spend managing the sign issue and will also reduce the potential for signs to become damaged, creating complaints relating to unkempt signs.

- c) Reduce the maximum size of election signs to 1.5 square metres. On properties abutting roads where the speed limit exceeds 60 km/h, the maximum sign size will remain at 5 square metres.

- d) In order to recover the costs incurred removing illegally placed election signs, it is recommended that each candidate post a refundable deposit. The cost of removing illegal signs would be deducted from such deposit. Where such costs exceed the deposit, other collection action would need to be pursued. The suggested fee is \$150.00 for candidates for local ward Councillors and \$300.00 for candidates for Regional Councillor, Mayor, School Board Trustee, Provincial or Federal Member of Parliament.

For municipal elections, the fee would be requested at registration as a candidate. For provincial and federal elections, a notice will be sent to each candidate requesting the deposit at the time the election is called, or as soon as candidates are identified.

No candidate will be permitted to erect signs on intersection corners unless such a deposit is posted.

- e) Current provisions require that any sign impounded becomes the property of the City after 30 days. Usually after 30 days the City disposes of these signs.

Due to the volume of election signs usually seized during an election campaign, the cost to the City of storing the signs is increased.

It is recommended that the retention requirement regarding election signs be eliminated.

All of these steps will assist to streamline the election sign enforcement process. New rules will be reflected in the handbook provided by the Clerk's Department. For anyone that is already registered for the 2006 Municipal Election, these new rules will be communicated to them, including the requirement to post the deposit.

York Region has restrictions on posting election signs, including one sign per corner of an intersection. This is further restricted by having some intersections excluded. York Region does allow signs on Regional road allowances with certain conditions.

York Region also has a policy of destroying any confiscated signs within 72 hours if they are not claimed. The size restriction for election signs is also 1.5 square metres in York Region.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2007

This report is consistent with Vaughan Vision and the necessary resources have been approved and allocated.

Conclusion

The recommended amendments to the Sign By-laws provide for an improvement in election sign management and also bring some of the restrictions on election signs closer in line with those in York Region.

Attachments

None

Report prepared by:

Tony Thompson
Senior Manager of Enforcement Services

Respectfully submitted,

Janice Atwood-Petkovski
Commissioner of Legal & Administrative Services