

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - JUNE 16, 2008

ADDITIONAL CLARIFICATION RESPECTING OFFICIAL BUSINESS INVITATIONS

Recommendation:

Councillor Carella recommends that the attached "Guidelines for Distinguishing Municipal 'Official Business' Events from Social Events" be received and distributed by the Clerks Department to the Mayor and Members of Council, the Senior Management Team, Directors and Managers, for their information and action.

Economic Impact:

Nil

Communication Plan:

Nil; this is a "housekeeping matter".

Purpose:

To assist the Mayor and Members of Council, the Senior Management Team, Directors and Managers in determining whether or not an external event to which they are invited constitutes official municipal business, and therefore subject to the protocol in respect of such invitations as previously adopted by Council.

Background and Analysis:

Council has adopted a protocol regarding the handling of invitations extended to the Mayor and Members of Council, the Senior Management Team, Directors and Managers in regards to events that qualify as "official municipal business". According to the protocol, the particulars of any invitations received from an external source by the aforementioned, as representatives of the City and in regard to official municipal business, are to be referred to the Clerks Office, and reported by the Clerks Office on a monthly basis. Such reports are to indicate who, if anyone, attended official events that have already occurred (along with an explanation, if no one attended), and who will be attending upcoming events.

The intent of the protocol is to ensure that all officials of the City of Vaughan are aware of such invitations. Indeed, situations have in fact arisen where several individuals in different departments have been invited to the same official business event, and have in fact attended, only to discover at the event that several colleagues were also present. In an organization as large as the Corporation of the City of Vaughan, this is understandable. But, in several of these cases, a single representative from the City would have sufficed, with time—and money—saved by the corporation (since attendance at some events requires the pre-payment of a per person fee).

Thus, adherence to the protocol will preclude multiple acceptances of such invitations by senior staff members, unaware that other senior staff are also attending the same event. In addition, and since the monthly reports will reveal if no one intends to accept an invitation issued to a number of officials, steps can be taken in advance, particularly by the Senior Management Team, to ensure there is representation, if appropriate.

The attached guidelines will assist invitees in determining whether an invitation is to a “social event”---and therefore need not be reported to the Clerks Office, or to an “official business event”---and therefore to be reported. The guidelines cites thirteen components of such events as indicators that can be used to distinguish events that are to be reported, or need not be reported. These include information on the host/sponsor of the event, intended participants, terms of admission, notice given for the event, its timing, whether registration is involved, who will direct the event, the order of business undertaken, topics for discussion, expectations of participants, physical arrangements for the event, any dress code, and whether spouses are included in the invitation.

Regional Implications:

Nil, except in respect of invitation issued by the Regional Municipality of York.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020:

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

Conclusion:

These guidelines will assist those obligated to furnish information to the Clerks Department regarding official business invitations to determine whether a given invitation is in fact a matter of official business, or an invitation to a social event.

Attachments:

“Guidelines for Distinguishing “Official Business” Events from Social Events”

Report prepared by:

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Respectfully submitted,

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Councillor - Ward 2

Guidelines for Distinguishing Municipal "Official Business" Events from Social Events

<i>Indicators</i>	<i>"Official Business" Events</i>	<i>"Social" Events</i>
Hosts / Sponsors	Municipalities, municipal (elected and non-elected) officials, municipal associations (FCM, AMO), other levels of government, or interest groups dealing with various levels of government (OGRA, etc.)	Family, friends, neighbours, acquaintances or members of the general public
Participants	Elected officials, municipal administrators, representatives of municipalities that are members of municipal associations (FCM, AMO), representatives of interest groups dealing with various levels of government (OGRA, etc.)	Family, friends, neighbours, acquaintances, or members of the general public.
Terms of Admission	At the invitation of a municipal or municipally-related host/ sponsor (broadly cast, like FCM and AMO, or targeted like LUMCO), and upon payment of an admission fee, if required	At the invitation of a host/ sponsor and upon payment of an admission fee, if required.
Notice	As the event may be annual (e.g., FCM or AMO conferences) or at least regular (e.g., LUMCO) notice is often provided well in advance	Notice usually takes the form of event-specific advertising or word-of-mouth communication.
Timing	Generally held during "business hours"	Outside business hours, over lunch hours, evenings, weekends
Registration	Invitees are often accredited in some way, hence registration is typically required, often with the (pre-)payment of a fee	At most "registration" usually involves an enquiry as to a table assignment or the collection of a name tag.
Direction	Usually provided by a "chair"	Usually provided by a "master of ceremonies".
Order of Business	According to an agenda, usually circulated in advance; with business carried on according to a prescribed set of rules (e.g., Robert's Rules of Order)	According to a program which may or may not be provided in print; any "rules of procedure" are strictly customary.
Topics	Relating to some municipal interest	No restrictions
Expectation	Exchange of information; discussion; consensual decision, if needed	"A good time" or "a nice event" or "a pleasant evening"
Physical Arrangements	Furniture is arranged to facilitate discussion by all attendees (e.g., classroom, roundtable, or rectangular lay out)	Furniture arrangement usually precludes focused discussion beyond individual tables or clusters of guests.
Dress Code	Generally "business attire"	Dependent on a wide range of factors: the nature of the event, the season, the location, the time of day (e.g., shorts and sandals at a picnic, gowns at a gala).
Spouses	Generally not present unless qualified to attend in their own right	Typically included in invitations
Conclusions	<i>If an event answers to all or most of the above descriptions, it is "official business"</i>	<i>If an event answers to all or most of the above descriptions, it is "social"</i>