

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MAY 11, 2010

2010 GENERAL MUNICIPAL ELECTION VOTER INFORMATION LANGUAGES AND DEFINED HOURS FOR INSTITUTIONS AND RETIREMENT HOMES

Recommendation

The City Clerk & Returning Officer recommends that for the 2010 General Municipal Election:

- 1) The City Clerk & Returning Officer be authorized to provide election forms, notices and information that relate to the manner or place of voting in the following languages in addition to English and French: Italian, Russian, Chinese, Spanish, and Punjabi;
- 2) The City Clerk & Returning Officer assign either a morning voting period (10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.) or an afternoon voting period (3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.) on Election Day for voting places required to be provided at institutions and retirement homes pursuant to subsection 45(7) of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*; and
- 3) That any necessary by-laws be introduced.

Contribution to Sustainability

N/A

Economic Impact

Translation costs are not expected to exceed \$4000. Defining reduced hours of voting at retirement homes and qualified institutions will reduce staffing and tabulator costs by the equivalent of six poll locations.

Communications Plan

The resulting by-laws will be posted on the City's web site as well as on www.vaughanvotes.ca, the City's dedicated election site. Related information will also be posted on the election site, and on other notices and forms distributed in the course of election administration. Feedback from this initiative will form part of a post election review.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's authorization to provide information to voters in certain languages other than English and French (the latter being required by virtue of the election of French school board trustees), and to establish defined hours for voting at institutions and retirement homes.

Background - Analysis and Options

Languages:

Section 9 of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* (the "Act") provides that notices, forms and other information provided under the Act must be provided in English, and in French in respect of French-language district school boards, unless the municipality has passed a by-law authorizing the use of other languages.

In 2006, Council authorized the use of English and French, as well as Italian, Russian, Chinese, and Filipino (based on information relating to immigration patterns in the City of Vaughan).

It is proposed that information on language use at home better informs a decision on which languages should be used for election purposes. A review of 2006 census data (the most recent information about languages in the City of Vaughan) shows that the languages set out in Table 1 are the principle (top five) languages used at home by residents of Vaughan, other than French English:

Table 1
Language Spoken Most Often At Home
(Single Responses)

Language	Single Responses	Percentage of Total Single Responses
Italian	15540	6.80%
Russian	9490	4.15%
Chinese *	6080	2.66%
Spanish	3235	1.41%
Punjabi	3195	1.40%
TOTAL Single Responses	228695	

* NOTE: Chinese includes Cantonese, Mandarin, Taiwanese, Chaochow (Teochow), Fukien, Hakka, Shanghainese and other Chinese languages not listed.

Though there are a variety of Chinese spoken dialects, the written form of Chinese is much less variant across those dialects. Accordingly, although Cantonese, for example, would not be among the top five home languages in the City were it measured alone, combining it with other Chinese languages reported in the census has the effect of making Chinese the third highest home language other than English.

Institutions and Retirement Homes

Subsection 46(3) of the Act provides that a By-law may be passed to provide reduced operating hours at:

- a) Institutions for the reception, treatment or vocational training of members or former members of the Canadian Forces (not applicable in the City of Vaughan);
- b) Institutions in which, on Nomination Day, 20 or more beds are occupied by persons who are disabled, chronically ill or infirm; and
- c) Retirement homes in which, on Nomination Day, 50 or more beds are occupied,

it being the case that such locations must be established as mandatory voting locations pursuant to subsection 45(7) of the Act.

Election Project Team members have consulted with administrators of the relevant institutions and homes and have received broad support for a reduction of voting hours at those locations. Accordingly, it is proposed that once the information is finalized as of Nomination Day, qualified

institutions and homes will be assigned to either a morning (10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.) or afternoon (3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.) voting period (each voting period covering at least one meal period). Institutions will be paired so that one team of election officials, and one vote tabulator, can support two voting places over the two time periods.

In 2006, the mandatory voting places set up at the then ten qualifying institutions/retirement homes had, on average, 24 voters over the course of the 10 hours they were open on Election Day. Current information shows that there will be twelve qualifying institutions/retirement homes in the City as of Nomination Day in 2010.

The advantages in proceeding in the manner proposed for the 2010 election include:

- Convenience for the residents
- Minimal disruption to the operations of the institution or retirement home;
- Compliance with statutory requirements;
- Efficient use of resources; and
- Adherence to the principles which guide the election (set out in greater detail in the Conclusion to this report)

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council, in particular “Demonstrate Leadership and Promote Effective Governance.”

Regional Implications

N/A

Conclusion

The recommendations set out in this report enhance customer service and promote effective administration of the 2010 election. The recommended supplementary languages for election information and the defined hours for institutions and retirement homes demonstrate application of the principles which guide administration of the election, namely:

- the integrity of the process should be maintained throughout the election;
- the secrecy and confidentiality of the individual votes is paramount;
- the election should be fair and non-biased;
- the election should be accessible to the voters;
- there is to be certainty that the results of the election reflect the votes cast;
- voters and candidates should be treated fairly and consistently within a municipality; and
- a proper majority vote decides the election by ensuring, so far as reasonably possible, that valid votes be counted and invalid votes be rejected.

Report prepared by:

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Respectfully submitted,

Jeffrey A. Abrams, City Clerk & Returning Officer