

POLICY

POLICY TITLE: Use of Corporate Resources during an Election Year

POLICY NUMBER: PLCY-2018-0002

DATE: APRIL 16, 2018 (Adopted By Council)

PURPOSE:

Section 88.18 of the Municipal Elections Act requires that municipalities establish rules and procedures regarding the Use of Corporate Resources, before May 1 in an Election year.

The provisions identified in this policy are in effect throughout the duration of the campaign period in a municipal election year or in the event of a by-election and apply to candidates, current members of Council, Registered Third Party Advertisers and staff.

DEFINITIONS:

The Act means the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, as amended.

Campaign materials means any materials used to solicit votes for a candidate(s) or question in an election including but not limited to literature, banners, posters, pictures, buttons, clothing, or other paraphernalia. Campaign materials include, but are not limited to, materials in all media, for example, print, displays, electronic radio or television, online including websites or social media.

Campaign period means the date a candidate files their nomination through to Voting Day in a municipal election year or in the event of a by-election.

Candidate means any individual running for an elected office, including Mayor, Councillor, Regional Chair or School Board Trustee.

Common Areas means areas within Town facilities including but not limited to foyer, halls, atriums and parking lots.

Corporate Resources means anything that a person would have access to only by virtue of their elected Office or employment with the Town of Halton Hills. This includes but is not limited to town facilities; town funds; town events; town employees; information and infrastructure.

Town of Halton Hills employee means any individual working for, or receiving compensation from, the Town of Halton Hills; including those in part-time, seasonal or contract positions.

Election means any municipal election including by-elections.

Election related purposes means any participation in an election that seeks to promote or oppose the candidacy of an individual seeking office.

Members means Councillors, the Mayor or anyone acting on behalf of a Councillor or the Mayor.

Registered Third Party Advertiser means in relation to a municipal election, an individual, corporation or trade union that is registered under section 88.6 of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 as amended.

SCOPE:

This policy is to be followed by candidates, current members of council, registered third party advertisers and those acting on behalf of a member, candidate or registered third party advertiser, and staff.

POLICY DETAILS:

USE OF TOWN FACILITIES, SERVICES AND PROPERTY

Town of Halton Hills facilities, services and property may not be used for any election related purposes except as identified in this policy.

This provision does not prevent current term council members from conducting their regular duties as political representatives for their constituents.

TOWN OF HALTON HILLS EMPLOYEES (EXPECTATIONS OF STAFF)

- Staff are expected to take extra care to ensure that they behave in a manner that residents, members of Town Council and potential candidates for election see as impartial, fair and unbiased.
- Staff are to consult with their Manager prior to agreeing to perform any task asked by an incumbent member of Council, registered candidate or registered third party advertiser that is beyond their normal duties and/or could be construed as contributing to an election campaign.

- Staff are discouraged from assisting with municipal election campaigns in Halton Hills, including posting election signs on their property, phone and e-mail solicitations, distribution of brochures and wearing candidate buttons; due to a perceived conflict of interest.

MEETINGS/SPECIAL EVENTS

As in non-election years, corporate project meetings/public information centres will continue to be planned and coordinated by Town staff during a municipal election year.

NOMINATIONS

In order to keep staff apprised of candidates for office, the Clerk will send an electronic broadcast to all Town staff upon receipt of a candidate's nomination form. Upon the receipt of and verification of a completed nomination form, the Clerk will ensure a list of all registered candidates is included on the Town's website.

MUNICIPAL FACILITIES AND PROPERTY

- Rental of closed meeting room space in Town owned facilities (with the exception of Town Hall) is permitted, however no campaign materials are to be displayed within common areas of a facility.
- Members, candidates and registered third party advertisers may not use the common areas of any municipally owned or run facilities for any election related purposes.
- No campaigning, including the distribution of campaign literature, is permitted to take place inside Town Hall.
- No campaigning, including the distribution of campaign literature, is permitted to take place outside on the property of Town Hall.
- Members, candidates and registered third party advertisers may not campaign or distribute campaign literature at any function hosted by the Town of Halton Hills.
- Election signs, or other election material, including third party advertising may not be displayed in, or on the property of, any Town of Halton Hills owned or run facilities.

TECHNOLOGY

- Websites and domains that are operated or funded by the Town of Halton Hills shall not include any election related campaign materials or links to any sites which include election related campaign material.
- Member's social media accounts, domain names or websites, that are funded by the Town , may not include any election-related campaign material and may not be re-designated for campaign purposes or provide a link to a campaign site or campaign activities.
- Notwithstanding the ban on election related campaign materials and links on websites and domains operated or funded by the Town of Halton Hills, the Town of Halton Hills election website which lists candidates may include one link per candidate to a website which features the candidate's specific election related campaign material.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Town of Halton Hills logo, crest, coat of arms, flag, slogan, or other similarly branded corporate resources or property shall not be used by any candidate or registered third party advertiser for any election related campaign materials, including printed literature, signage and websites.

In any material printed or distributed by the Town of Halton Hills, candidates may not convey that they, or any other individual, are a candidate in an election.

POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed every four years, prior to the commencement of a municipal election.