

EX15.4 Donations to Councillor-Organized Community Events
(November 12, 2007) Report from the Integrity Commissioner

Committee Recommendations

The Executive Committee recommends that:

1. City Council approve in principle amendment of the 2002 Council Policy on “Use of Corporate Logo, Donations and Sponsorships and Personal Funds by Members of Council” and Article IV of the Code of Conduct for Members of Council and Local Boards (Restricted Definition) to permit Members of Council to accept sponsorships and donations for community events that they organize or run;
2. City Council request the Integrity Commissioner (in consultation with the City Clerk) by March 2008 to provide recommendations (through the Executive Committee) as to the appropriate mechanisms for implementing this change in the City’s policies; and
3. *City Council direct that, pending the further report of the Integrity Commissioner, sponsorships and donations to community events be added to the list of permissible gifts and benefits provided for in Article IV of the Code of Conduct for Members of Council and Local Boards (Restricted Definition), though subject to the reporting obligations provided for in that Article and a monetary limit of \$5,000 total per event from all sources.*

Financial Impact

There is no financial impact beyond what has already been approved in the current year’s budget.

Summary

City Council requested the Integrity Commissioner “to review the policy that prohibits Members of Council receiving donations to community events, consider an alternative policy, and submit a report to the Executive Committee, no later than November 2007 on this policy matter.”

My work on this is only partially complete and, in this Report, I ask the Committee to approve in principle a lifting of the current prohibition and direct the development of an appropriate protocol.

The 2002 Council Policy on “Use of Corporate Logo, Donations and Sponsorships and Personal Funds by Members of Council” prohibits Members of Council from receiving funds outside of their allocated operating budgets. Article IV of the Code of Conduct for Members of Council and Local Boards (Restricted Definition) (“Code of Conduct”) bans Members of Council from accepting gifts and benefits connected directly or indirectly with the performance of their duties unless the gift or benefit comes within a list of exceptions. Donations of funds, goods or services for community events are not among the listed exceptions.

Many Members of Council regard the organization of community events (such as barbecues and picnics) as an important part of their role. Events such as this enhance community life and build bridges. If Members of Council are allowed to accept hospitality at banquets, receptions and similar events, they should also be permitted to accept sponsorships and donations for community events that they organize or facilitate in their Wards.

For this to happen, Council will have to amend the Code of Conduct and possibly the relevant prohibition in the 2002 Council Policy. However, there is a great variety of community events for which Members of Council seek sponsorships and donations and there are particular difficulties associated with cash donations. There also need to be special rules for election years. This means that it is not simply a case of including an exemption for community events within the relevant Article of the Code of Conduct and the terms of the 2002 Council policy. A distinct policy is necessary.

Background Information

Donations to Councillor-Organized Community Events

(<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/ex/bgrd/backgroundfile-8805.pdf>)

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