

Environment Days during an Election Year

The purpose of this briefing note is to clarify that Environment Days are joint City/Councillor events and to set out how the Policy on the Use of Corporate Resources in an Election Year and the Policy on Donations to Council Member-organized Community Events apply to Environment Days.

Background:

Environment Days

- Environment Days have been organized for more than 20 years and are popular ward events where residents can drop off recycling and other items, pick up containers and compost, visit booths on different environmental initiatives and meet with their ward Councillor to discuss various issues.
- The City provides staff, resources, equipment and pays for venue rentals and all expenses related to the organization of Environment Days. Councillors, as partners in the event, determine the dates, locations, programming as well as provide additional promotional support for the event through their office budgets.
- As Environment Days have been held for more than 20 years, the host role of the Councillor in an election year is consistent with their role as a Member of Council.
- 2010 Community Environment Days are scheduled between Saturday April 3 and Saturday, October 2.
- The Integrity Commissioner has determined that Environment Days are joint City/Councillor events.

City Policies which Impact Environment Days in an Election Year

Since the Integrity Commissioner has determined that Environment Days are joint City/Councillor events, the Policy on the Use of Corporate Resources in an Election Year and the Policy on Donations to Council Member-organized Community Events apply to Environment Days as follows:

Policy on Donation to Member-Organized Community Events:

- In July 2008, City Council approved the report from the Integrity Commissioner titled "Issues Arising out of Operation of Members of Council Code of Conduct and Complaint Protocol." Recommendation 12 of the report sets out a Policy on Donations to Council Member-Organized Community Events.
- As joint events, Environment Days are covered by 12 (h)(iv) of the Council Member-Organized Community Events Policy: "The policy does not affect the entitlement of a member of Council to team with the City and its agencies in the staging of community event."

Policy on Use of Corporate Resources during an Election Year:

- In July 2008, City Council approved the Councillor Expense Policy. Section 4.7 of the policy sets out the policy on the use of corporate resources during an election year.
- The policy states that all advertising and promotional materials paid for by City funds cannot name a Member of Council after Labour Day (September 6, 2010), irrespective of whether the Member of Council is running for re-election or not. The Policy also states that Councillors cannot use their office budgets for community events or for any advertising or promotion after Labour Day.
- **The Labour Day cut-off date applies to Environment Days.**

Prepared by: Winnie Li – Director, Council & Support Services – City Clerk's Office
Circulated to: Members of Council, City Manager, Deputy City Manager (Cluster B), General Manager,
Solid Waste Services, Integrity Commissioner, City Clerk
Further information: Winnie Li, 416-392-8676, wli@toronto.ca
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Next Steps:

- Environment Days are currently scheduled until October 2, 2010 and there are 9 Councillors whose Environment Days are scheduled after Labour Day. Solid Waste Management Services staff will work with the affected Councillors to reschedule their events to be held prior to Labour Day.
- Councillors can continue to be named in promotional materials for Environment Days until Labour Day, September 6, 2010.
- Councillors will not be named in promotional materials for Environment Days after Labour Day.
- In all future Election Years, all Environment Days will be scheduled prior to the Labour Day cut-off date.

Integrity Commissioner Q & A:

The Integrity Commissioner has provided the following Questions and Answers re Environment Days.

Q. Can a Councillor publicize a Community Environment Day?

A. Yes. These events are supported by City of Toronto staff, publicized by Councillors and have traditionally been "team events." Councillors are consulted on location, date and whether they wish to have an Environment Day in their ward. As such, these events are covered by 12 (h)(iv) of the Council Member-Organized Community Events Policy and may be publicized by Councillors in a way that reflects the joint nature of the event. Councillor advertising should not include references to any partner or supporting organization that is a lobbyist, a client of a lobbyist or that has a pending planning or related application before the City.

Q. What election year limitations exist on the publication of Community Environment Days?

A. After Labour Day in an election year, Councillors must discontinue expenses for community events, including jointly hosted environment day events with the City of Toronto (4.7 b Councillor Expense Policy). Councillors may attend Community Environment Days after Labour Day in an Election Year but will no longer be able to participate as a partner and be advertised as such at the event. Councillors cannot distribute promotional or campaign materials such as newsletters, flyers, fridge magnets, business cards etc. at the event.

Prepared by: Winnie Li, Director, Council and Support Services, City Clerk's Office

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