

Submitted by Mayor Ford

Toronto Star

CC 38.1.1

Toronto council should back a byelection for Etobicoke Centre: Editorial

Steve Russell / Toronto Star

Toronto Mayor Rob Ford believes a byelection should be held to replace former deputy mayor Doug Holyday.

Published on Mon Aug 26 2013

Mayor Rob Ford, for once, is taking a prudent step in urging a byelection to replace former deputy mayor Doug Holyday. Existing city hall policy calls for having residents vote under these circumstances, and so does precedent set in every previous case of a council seat going vacant since amalgamation.

With that in mind, city councillors should set aside cost concerns and vote firmly in favour of letting the people of Etobicoke Centre decide who should represent them. It's the only reasonable outcome of a special city council meeting called for Monday. The sole alternative — filling Holyday's seat by appointment — would certainly be cheaper, but it would sacrifice democratic principle.

Toronto's existing policy couldn't be clearer: a byelection is to be held when a seat is declared empty with more than a year left in council's term of office. Holyday's Ward 3 seat lies vacant in the wake of his Aug. 1 election to Queen's Park. He was officially sworn in as a Progressive Conservative MPP on Thursday. Council's current term of office ends on Nov. 30 next year (a month after the next election) so stated conditions for a byelection have obviously been met.

Furthermore, previous councils found nothing wrong with these requirements. As reported in a memorandum to councillors by city clerk Ulli Watkiss, the existing policy was followed all nine times a seat went vacant, resulting in two byelections and seven appointments since amalgamation. There's no reason to break with this pattern now.

Despite all that, a significant number of city councillors appear intent on replacing Holyday by appointing a successor. Their main argument is financial. Watkiss has pegged the cost of an Etobicoke Centre byelection at about \$225,000. This includes \$50,000 to be spent on a rebate program, providing people with partial compensation for the political donations they give to candidates.

But politics should be about more than saving money. It's telling that even Ford, a notorious penny-pincher, considers a byelection a worthwhile expense. Indeed, in the context of the city's \$9.4-billion operating budget, this is hardly a prohibitive cost.

If council votes on Monday to support democracy, Ward 3 residents could go to the polls on Nov. 25, giving the successful candidate about a year in office. A stint that long is worth putting to the people. Previous councils thought so, and existing policy says so. There's no compelling reason for today's councillors to cast all that aside

<http://www.thestar.com/opinion/editorials/2013/08/26/>

2013 AUG 26 A 8:51
CITY CLERK'S OFFICE
SECRETARIAT SECTION 1

TORONTO SUN

AUGUST 24TH 2013

CALL A BY-ELECTION TO REPLACE HOLYDAY

Mayor Rob Ford is right.

City council should vote Monday to hold a byelection on Nov. 25 to replace Doug Holyday's now-vacant Ward 3 seat in Etobicoke Centre.

It's the democratic way to decide the issue and the cost — about \$225,000 out of a \$9.4 billion annual city budget — is a small price to pay for choosing the new councillor the right way.

The alternative, which would see council appoint a representative for the people of Etobicoke Centre on Oct. 10, would be a disservice to voters in that ward, even though a majority of councillors appear to favour it.

So did Holyday when he was asked about the issue while running in the Etobicoke-Lakeshore provincial byelection, in the interests, he said, of saving taxpayers' money.

But in this instance, that would be penny wise and pound foolish.

Councillors are so bitterly divided along ideological lines, with so many personal agendas at work, Etobicoke Centre residents could well end up having a councillor imposed on them who represents neither their interests nor values.

Appointing a caretaker councillor should be confined to cases where there are only a few months left before the next general election, not well over a year.

This is especially true given that whoever ends up as the councillor for Etobicoke Centre prior to next year's municipal election, will have a significant advantage over any and all opponents who may want to run at that time.

All the more reason the successful candidate should be endorsed by voters in that ward now, when anyone can choose to challenge for the job.

When councillors are chosen in the backrooms by other councillors, as would happen through an appointment process, most candidates are shut out right from the start, unless they know the right people at City Hall.

Clearly, the voters of Etobicoke Centre are best qualified to decide who they want as their representative, not councillors from elsewhere across the city who constantly argue in all other contexts that their authority to speak for the people of their wards comes from the fact they were elected by them.

If council opts for a byelection, it will be held on Nov. 25, almost a full year before the Oct. 27, 2014 general election, meaning the winning candidate will have plenty of time to get down to work before the next election.

Holding a byelection would also be consistent with council's past practice of doing so if a council seat is declared vacant by Nov. 30 in the year before a general election.

Holyday's seat became vacant well before that deadline — on Aug. 1 of this year when he won the provincial byelection in Etobicoke-Lakeshore for the Tories over fellow Etobicoke councillor and Liberal candidate Peter Milczyn.

In deciding how to replace Holyday, council should practice what it preaches — democracy.

<http://www.torontosun.com/2013/08/23/call-a-byelection-to-replace-holyday>

Without a By-Election, Democracy Is a Sham

Mark Towhey – Former Chief of Staff to Mayor Rob Ford

Posted: 08/25/2013 10:41 am

On Monday, Toronto city council will decide how to replace Doug Holyday as councillor for Ward 3, Etobicoke-Centre. Although it will cost up to \$225,000 to hold a by-election, council's own policies say that's the right choice. Anyone who values democracy will agree. Not just on principle, but because the alternative process of appointment being considered by council is a sham.

If council chooses to proceed with a by-election, voting day is proposed to be November 25. Potential candidates will have time to get organized and conduct a meaningful campaign that connects with residents in Ward 3. They will get the pulse of the community and residents will get a sense of the candidates. Voters can then choose who will best represent their interests at City Hall for the next year.

The newly elected councillor will have a strong mandate to take into council chambers where she can stand up, empowered by the people of Ward 3, to advocate for her community's interest.

By contrast, a new councillor appointed by other councillors will be beholden not to the people of Ward 3, but to the politicians who appointed him. That, alone, should be a fatal blow to the validity of an appointment process. But, it gets worse.

Some current councillors want potential candidates for appointment to promise they will not seek election in 2014. They say this is a way to avoid giving an appointee an unfair advantage in the next election. But asking for such a promise is dangerous for democracy in three ways.

First off, there's absolutely no way to enforce such a promise, so it gives an advantage to the candidate who is willing to lie. Second, it deters candidates with a genuine passion to represent and serve their community's long-term interests, and gives an advantage to those who are just after the job.

Finally, it doubly ensures the appointed Councillor will be responsible to the wrong people since, not only weren't the elected in the first place, they will never be held accountable in an election. This not what democracy should be.

The final nail in the coffin is the appointment procedure council is planning to use. The clerk proposes that council use the same process it's used before. In a nutshell, there are two steps. Step one is a selection meeting to be held at the local community council, where it will be easily accessible by those who live in Ward 3. Candidates will appear, make their pitches and community council will choose one. Local councillors, who know the community much better than their colleagues from other parts of the city, will make the decisions at this meeting. This makes sense.

It would then make sense for step two to be a meeting of the full city council to ratify the decision made in step one. The power to appoint a replacement is vested in city council, not community council, so it must give make the final decision. It makes sense for council to review the nominee proposed by the community council and approve, or veto, the local decision.

But, that is not what has been proposed. Instead, the proposed step two is a complete "do-over" at city council. Any citizen can apply and appear before city council in step two, even if they didn't do so first at community council. Councillors from across the city can then choose anyone they want, regardless of what the Etobicoke Community Council has decided. The effect of this is to say: "Thanks, Etobicoke, but we really don't care what you think." This does not make sense.

If city council doesn't care what the people of Ward 3 have to say when choosing their next councillor, it should have the guts to stand up and say so. Creating a sham process so locals can think they're having a say, when they really aren't, is offensive.

For all these reasons, council should choose a by-election as the only fair and democratic way to choose a new representative for the people of Ward 3. The people deserve that much.

http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/mark-towhey-/toronto-by-election_b_3813233.html