

June 8, 2010

To: Members of Toronto City Council

From: Janet Leiper, Integrity Commissioner
Ulli S. Watkiss, City Clerk

Re: **Election Year Tips**

In response to questions from a number of Councillors in the past few weeks, we are writing to provide some practical tips to assist Members of Council in maintaining a clear distinction between their role as Members of Council and their role as candidates during an election year.

Email Communications

You may receive inquiries or other messages on your City Hall email account at either Councillor_(name)@toronto.ca or personal Toronto.ca e-mail account, or on your City Hall phone system concerning your election campaign.

To help maintain a clear line of distinction between your role as a Councillor and your role as a candidate in the election, you may wish to adopt the following strategies for your office operations:

Suggested auto-reply e-mail message:

In accordance with the Council Policy on the Use of Corporate Resources during an Election Year, this email address is being utilized exclusively for the business of the City of Toronto. As such, I will not be reading or responding to any campaign-related communications from you to this e-mail address.

Election campaign inquiries should be directed to the appropriate campaign office.

Suggested disclaimer for bottom of response e-mails:

In accordance with the Council Policy on the Use of Corporate Resources during an Election year, this email message is strictly related to the business of the City of Toronto.

Telephone Communications

Suggested voice-mail message:

Thank you for calling Councillor (name)'s Office. In accordance with the Council Policy on the Use of Corporate Resources during an Election Year, this telephone number is being utilized exclusively for the business of the City of Toronto. As such, our office will not be responding to any campaign-related telephone calls. Election campaign inquiries should be directed to the appropriate campaign office.

Suggested action for staff responding to campaign-related phone calls:

- Once staff receives the phone call and determines that it is a campaign-related call, do not engage in a long detailed conversation. End the call as quickly as possible. Refer the caller to the campaign website or the campaign phone number.

Written Correspondence

Suggested response:

Thank you for your correspondence. As a sitting Member of Council, I must ensure my actions as an elected official are kept separate from any actions related to the forthcoming municipal election. As such, I will not be reading or responding to any campaign-related communications from you to my City Hall office.

Please remove my contact information from your distribution list as this address is intended solely for the purpose of business related to the City of Toronto.

Donations to Council Member-organized community events

There have also been some questions related to donations to Member-organized community events.

As a reminder, the restrictions during an election year, in accordance with the Policy on Donation to Member-organized Community Events 12(j), are as follows:

In an election year, a member of Council must not seek donations and sponsorships for any community event that has not been staged in the previous two years nor accept donations or stage any community event supported by donations and sponsorships after he or she has filed nomination papers for election to any office in the City of Toronto.

A community event is considered to have been staged in the previous two years if it meets the following criteria:

- Has a very similar, if not the same, event name/title
- Takes place at approximately the same time
- Has the same general purpose

Please note that under 12(h) of the Policy on Donation to Member-organized Community Events, the policy does not affect the entitlement of a member of Council to:

- Use his or her office budget to run or support community events subject to the terms of the Councillor Expense Policy;
- Urge constituents, businesses and other groups to support community events staged by others in the member's Ward or elsewhere in the City;
- Play an advisory or membership role in any organization staging community events in the member's Ward, e.g. a Business Improvement Area
- Team with the City and its agencies in the staging of community events, e.g. Environment Days.

Under the Councillor Expense Policy, Councillors can continue the following activities until September 6, 2010, Labour Day:

- use the office budget to supplement events organized by program areas, such as Parks openings;
- use the office budget to sponsor events co-organized with community groups;
- make a donation to community groups for their events.

Practical Tips

1. *Councillor has filed nomination papers for the election. Councillor is organizing a community BBQ and Power Corp has offered to provide free BBQ equipment. Can the Councillor accept this?*

Avoid the dual problem of receiving donations once you have registered as a candidate, and receiving a donation from a corporation who may be a lobbyist. Pay for the use of the BBQ equipment from your office budget.

2. *Councillor has not filed nomination papers for the election. Can the Councillor accept a donation of free pizzas from the local store of a chain pizza company? The company has been making deputations at committee about recycling and waste and is registered as a lobbyist.*

No, the local store is still considered a lobbyist. Councillors may use their office budget to pay for the pizzas to avoid any issues.

These are general guidelines and specific circumstances may require additional deliberation. If you have any questions on individual cases, please contact either of us directly.

Thank you.

Janet Leiper
Integrity Commissioner

Ulli S. Watkiss
City Clerk

c.c. Winnie Li, Director, Council and Support Services
Bonita Pietrangelo, Director, Elections and Registry Services