

CITY OF COQUITLAM

Policy and Procedure Manual

USE OF CITY RESOURCES AND FACILITIES FOR POLITICAL ACTIVITY

Chapter:

Section:

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POLICY:

City facilities (save for City Hall) may be rented for political events, including campaign events, under the same terms and conditions as the general public, in accordance with:

- The Parks, Recreation and Culture Service's Department's Facility Allocation Policy;
- Any usual license, invoice, rental agreement or facility use license;
- Any associated fees set out by third parties or the City;

Political activities may be conducted at such rented or permitted facilities during the rental period and must be contained to the specific area (room) that has been rented. Candidates or their supporters are not permitted to actively campaign through such actions as distributing or displaying campaign materials or other forms of direct engagement in the common areas of the City facility (save for the placement of brochures in the candidate brochure racks provided for candidates' use at the Coquitlam Public Libraries – as noted in the "Procedures" section of this Policy).

City personnel, equipment, postage, letterhead or official stationery, and funding, are not to be used for promotion or opposition of any candidate, political party, or slate of candidates for an office or a particular issue on a ballot. This does not preclude the use of City staff and City equipment in connection with the rental of the City facilities in the same manner as would be available to the general public in connection with the rental of City facilities.

Political activities will not be permitted in a City facility being used for an advance voting, assent voting or other voting opportunity on the same day(s) as the facility is being used for that purpose.

REASON FOR THE POLICY:

To limit the use of City property to its intended purpose of conducting official City business and to provide a consistent approach and direction to City employees on how City resources and facilities can and cannot be used during local government, school trustee, provincial and federal election campaigns or campaigns concerning a question on the ballot.

The City must balance the need for freedom of assembly of candidates and its legal responsibility to not provide an unfair advantage to any candidate, political party, third party sponsor or registrant or supporter of a question on a ballot during an election

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REFERENCE:

Election Administration and Procedure Bylaw No. 4504, 2014 (Part 13: Advertising by Federal, Provincial, Municipal, or School Trustee Candidates).

Parks, Recreation and Culture Services Department's "Facility Allocation Policy".

DEFINITIONS:

The following definitions shall apply to the policy related to the use of City facilities for political activity:

CAMPAIGN MATERIALS shall mean any materials used to solicit votes for a candidate(s) or question on the ballot including but not limited to literature (i.e. brochures), banners, posters, pictures, buttons, clothing or other paraphernalia.

CITY FACILITIES shall mean any building, grounds or vehicles owned, operated, controlled or maintained by the City and includes the following locations: libraries, leisure facilities, parks, City Hall, Seniors Centres, the Works Yard and the Animal Shelter.

POLITICAL ACTIVITY shall include any and all activities, whether such efforts are undertaken individually or in concert with others, done for the purpose of supporting or opposing any candidate, party or issue in an election or done to influence the results of that election. This includes activities such as handing out campaign materials (i.e. flyers, buttons) and holding up placards or posting signs.

Political activity does not include the appearance of elected officials, candidates or their supporters at an event in their professional or personal capacity without the display of any signage or graphic which identifies the individual as a candidate and without the solicitation of votes.

POLITICAL EVENTS shall include any and all meetings, fundraisers, gatherings, or other such events organized or conducted for the purpose of supporting or opposing any candidate for public office, any issue which is or may be scheduled to appear on a ballot, or any political party or organization.

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PROCEDURES:

The following forms of political activity shall be prohibited at all times on City property unless otherwise permitted by policy:

- (a) Distribution of campaign material, including cards, brochures and other materials defined by law as political advertising to patrons or employees (save for the candidate brochure racks provided for use by candidates at the City's public libraries during general local elections);
- (b) Placement of political signs in City buildings or elsewhere on City property (See *Election Administration and Procedure Bylaw No. 4504, 2014*);
- (c) Personal appearances of candidates or advocates/opponents of an issue before the electorate unless in a private rented space in accordance with this policy.

Candidates or their agents or supporters wishing to rent space at a City facility shall follow the same procedures as would the general public.

This policy shall not be interpreted to prohibit the distribution or use of newspapers, magazines or programs for City sponsored activities that contain paid political advertising, where the distribution or use of such items is primarily for purposes that are generally of a nonpolitical nature.