



Corporate Report

NO: R008

COUNCIL DATE: January 16, 2006

REGULAR

TO: Mayor & Council

DATE: January 12, 2006

FROM: City Clerk

FILE: 0042-00

SUBJECT: 2005 Election

RECOMMENDATION

That the information be received.

DISCUSSION

Legislative Services is in the process of wrapping up the 2005 election. A tremendous amount of work is done in this department, and all of our staff took a keen interest in participating in the election process. As well, we received excellent support from all of the departments in City Hall in areas where their expertise was required.

Election Issues

Some issues arose out of the election which we will be looking to address in future elections. The report will highlight some of the most requested/commented on concerns.

1. Candidate Information

The concern that we received the most comments on were that there was limited candidate information available, particularly prior to the Advance Poll. To address this, for the next election we will be looking at providing candidate profiles on the City election website similar to the process the City of Vancouver undertook for the 2005 Election. When filing nomination papers, the candidate will be given an opportunity to provide a photograph and short biography for us to post in a candidate section of the web site.

2. Advance Poll Locations

Many voters at the Advance Poll felt that the Fleetwood location was quite far away from their homes, and asked that more advance poll locations be provided. We will be looking at increasing the advance polling locations to a total of four to be located in the South Surrey area, Cloverdale/Fleetwood area, Newton area and North Surrey area.

Concern was also expressed with the facility used for the South Surrey advance poll, and we will be looking into finding a different location for the next election.

3. Voters Disenfranchised between close of Advance Poll and Voting Day

Some voters were unable to vote as they were leaving town for the winter months prior to the opening of the advance poll or found out that they had to go out of town after the advance poll had closed and wouldn't be back in the city until after voting day. This information will be conveyed to the Province as the legislation does not provide for any voting opportunities between the close of the advance poll and voting day. A possible solution may be to expand the legislation for mail in ballots. It is presently restricted to persons who have a physical disability, illness or injury that affects their ability to vote at another voting opportunity.

4. Election Signs at or near Polling Stations on Election Day

We received many complaints on voting day regarding election signs close to or at polling stations. This is an area where we do not receive a lot of cooperation from the candidates in getting the signs removed. This has been so problematic in the 2005 election, that for the next election, we will have to hire a crew to go out at midnight and remove all signs that are within 100 metres of a polling station.

5. Schools – Access and Lighting

We received numerous complaints from voters concerning access to polling stations and in the late afternoon/evening hours, lighting complaints.

We will have to meet with the school district administration in 2007 and find some resolution to this problem. The voting typically takes place in gyms, and the school district only wants to give access through the gym exit doors. This in many cases is not practical for voters who cannot walk long distances. Proper lighting is also important to ensure voters can easily access the polling station. To obtain access to the main entrance to schools, we may have to look at providing security.

Cost of Election

The cost of conducting the 2005 election was \$800,000. This is up by approximately \$100,000 from the 2002 Election. The significant increase in the number of registered voters and associated mailing cost and the addition of 4 new polling divisions were the major factors in the increased cost of running the 2005 election.

Election Results Reporting – City Web Site

We received numerous positive comments on the election results reporting on our city website, and this has been conveyed to our IT Division, who was totally responsible for all aspects of designing the results page and getting the results from our election equipment to the web site.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the 2005 election process went well, and all problems/concerns are documented and will be worked on to enhance the 2008 election process.

City Clerk