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City Staff Report

Report Date: August 27, 2019
Meeting Date: September 3, 2019

To: City Manager
From: Director of Development Services
Subject: Political Campaign Sign Bylaw

Purpose

Review and propose a revision to the Political Campaign Sign Bylaw

Summary

- The City began controlling political campaigns signs in 2016 of which two elections were held under, many communities across the country have started restricting campaign signs.
- Over the past two elections a few issues have emerged with the new bylaw which this review will address.
- It has been time consuming for staff to control and monitor signage on public properties as candidates were not limited to specified areas. Identified areas which will allow one sign per area will significantly reduce this complexity.
- Other clarifications regarding the new regulations were identified as required in this bylaw revision including whether or not signs could be two sided; how many signs could a candidate running multiple positions could have; could candidates share signs and then double coverage, etc.
- The Policy and Bylaw Committee reviewed a staff report, provided recommendations and directed staff to proceed to Council with a revised bylaw.

Recommendation

THAT Council consider the proposed Political Campaign Sign Bylaw No. 1875 and proceed with the first three readings in the bylaw section of this agenda.

Statutory Requirements

Community Charter – Council may, by bylaw, regulate and impose requirements in relation to signs.

Council Policy

Political Campaign Bylaw No. 1808

Background

In 2016 Council adopted the City of Quesnel Political Campaign Bylaw to regulate the number and size of political campaign signs in the community. The policy limited candidates to 6 signs of a restricted size in public spaces and restricts the size of signage on residential and commercial properties.

Election signage was significantly reduced in the City over the last two elections with some candidates choosing not to erect any signage.

A number of communities have begun putting in stricter policies in place with regards to campaign signs in public areas. These vary significantly but include completely banning in public areas, restricting from specified areas, and specifying areas where they are permitted. See Table 1 below.



During the elections that followed adoption of the current Political Campaign Bylaw the following issues were realized by staff:

- 1) For the provincial election some parties were unaware of signage rules;
- 2) Obtaining the locations for public property and confirming that the signs were limited to six was time consuming for bylaw enforcement staff;
- 3) Candidates requested variations such as allowing them to move locations; and
- 4) Some candidates erected signs on recreational properties such as the arena property which was not intended.

The Manager of Legislated Services will contact the Elections Officers when announced to advise them of the sign bylaw policy to assist in making candidates aware of the signage rules early in the process.

During earlier considerations staff proposed limiting the signs to identified locations and permitting one sign per location. Staff are recommending the bylaw be amended to do this in order to assist with the enforcement of the bylaw.

The recommended sites are as follows and can be clearly identified in schedules B through G of the proposed bylaw:

- 1) Johnston loop;
- 2) North Star interchange;
- 3) Moffat Bridge East;
- 4) Moffat Bridge West;
- 5) Airport Highway Frontage; and
- 6) South Hills Neighbourhood Entry.

The last two issues identified above will be solved by limiting the signs to pre determined areas and only allowing one sign per area. Should Council choose not to move to specified areas amendments to the existing bylaw to clarify policy does not permit moving/changing locations and identifying areas of public property not permitted such as parks and recreational sites should be added to the existing bylaw.

Attachments

- 1) Proposed City of Quesnel Political Campaign Bylaw No. 1875
- 2) Table 1 – Policies in other communities – attached below

Options

1. Proceed with first readings of bylaw.
2. Propose additional changes to bylaw.
3. Deny changing bylaw.



TABLE 1 Political Campaign Sign Policies in other Communities		
City	Locations	Other policy notes
Surrey	Banned on all public property due to cost of removal.	Note had \$25 fee to reclaim if staff took down. Still too cost prohibitive to allow.
Brampton, Mississauga and Vaughan Ontario	Banned all on public property	
Prince George	Specified locations only on public property.	Remove in 7 days or property of City and may be destroyed
Nanaimo	No parks, highway medians, affixed to utility poles or trees	Deposit – refundable upon removal
Langley	Specified locations only on public property	20 day limit; Considering \$200 deposit, deductible if staff required to pick up signs Remove in 7 days
Kingston, Ontario	Considering banning on public property. In process.	
Victoria	Prohibited on: •Medians and traffic islands, and in planting beds; •Boulevard trees, or within one (1) metre of a boulevard tree; •All City facilities or structures, parks, and playing fields, including the adjoining boulevard area. •Signs are prohibited on public or private property that: •Are within one (1) metre of a fire hydrant; •Obstruct or detract from any traffic control device or signage; •Obstruct the line of vision at an intersection; or •Are placed in a manner that may constitute a hazard to pedestrians, cyclists or vehicles.	Removed within 4 days