

Planning Advisory Committee rules and procedures regarding the use of board resources during the election campaign period

As set out in the [Advisory Body Review report](#) (ACS2023-OCC-GEN-0008), approved by City Council on July 12, 2023, and pursuant to Section 88.18 of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, the Planning Advisory Committee establishes the following rules and procedures with respect to the use of board resources during the election campaign period:

Purpose

To provide direction to Advisory Committee members regarding the use of board resources with respect to election-related matters.

Principle

In compliance with the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, Advisory Committee resources are not to be used for any election-related purposes, including the promotion of or opposition to the candidacy of a person for elected office.

Policy elements

1. Definition

For the purpose of this policy, “election-related purposes” refer to the occurrence of a municipal election or by-election. It also includes any participation in federal and provincial elections that is partisan in nature.

2. Campaign-related materials

At no time shall Advisory Committee resources be used to sponsor or produce any campaign-related materials. For the purposes of this clause, the phrase “campaign-related materials” means those materials that promote or oppose the candidacy of a person for elected office.

3. Member involvement in elections

A member of an Advisory Committee shall not at any time use Advisory Committee resources to sponsor or produce any materials that promote or oppose the candidacy of a person for elected office, or that promote or oppose a campaign related to a question on the ballot.

A member of an Advisory Committee shall not engage in political campaigning of any sort (municipally, provincially or federally) on behalf of the Advisory Committee or as a member of an Advisory Committee.

4. Guidance and enforcement

Guidance and interpretation

The City of Ottawa's City Clerk, or designate, shall have the delegated authority to provide guidance with respect to election-related matters in relation to this policy, and to issue in writing any interpretation on the application of this policy and any related approvals or prohibitions. Such guidance, interpretation, approvals and prohibitions shall be based on the overarching legislative requirement for public funds and resources not to be used for any election-related purposes, including the promotion of or opposition to the candidacy of a person for elected office.

Enforcement

The City of Ottawa's City Clerk, or designate, shall have the delegated authority to receive and investigate any written complaint with respect to the alleged use of Advisory Committee resources in contravention of this policy. The written complaint must be submitted to the City Clerk or designate and set out specific example(s) and corresponding details of how the alleged use of a particular resource may have contravened this policy.

Upon completion of any investigation, the City Clerk or designate may resolve any issues and, if necessary, determine appropriate corrective action based on the findings of the investigation, in consultation with the City of Ottawa's Integrity Commissioner as necessary in relation to the Code of Conduct for Members of Local Boards, as described below. If the investigation determines that a member of the Advisory Committee contravened this policy, the member shall be required to personally repay any direct costs associated with the breach. The City Clerk shall advise the complainant of the outcome of the complaint and any repayment that was made. The City Clerk shall report on the exercise of delegated authority under this policy to the appropriate City Standing Committee following a municipal election or by-election.

It is also recognized that matters related to election-related activity are included in the City of Ottawa's Code of Conduct for Members of Local Boards, which is under the mandate of the City's Integrity Commissioner and to which separate complaint protocols

apply. For example, Section 12 of the Code of Conduct for Members of Local Boards states as follows:

“Members of local boards are required to conduct themselves in accordance with the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* and the local board’s policy regarding use of board resources during the election campaign period (as required under Section 88.18 of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*).”

And:

“The use of board resources, both actual property and staff time, for election-related activity is strictly prohibited. The prohibition applies to both the promotion and opposition to the candidacy of a person for elected office. Election-related activity applies to campaigns for municipal, provincial and federal office.”

5. Enquiries

For more information on this policy, contact:

City Clerk

City of Ottawa

Telephone: 3-1-1 (TTY: 613-580-2401)