



Council Report

Report Number: CLK2024-006
Meeting Date: December 10, 2024
Title: Election Sign By-law Amendments
Description: Amendments to By-law 2021-045
Author and Title: Joel Watts, Deputy Clerk

Recommendation(s):

That Report CLK2024-006, **Election Sign By-law Amendments**, be received; and

That a By-law to amend By-law 2021-045 (being A By-Law to Regulate the Placement of Election Signs in the City of Kawartha Lakes and Repeal By-law 2018-077), substantially in the form as Appendix A to this report, be approved and adopted.

Department Head: _____

Financial/Legal/HR/Other: _____

Chief Administrative Officer: _____

Background:

At the conclusion of the last Municipal Election in 2022, a number of recommendations were brought forward by candidates, staff, and Municipal Law Enforcement regarding By-law 2021-045 being the Election Sign By-law.

Further, with an upcoming municipal by-election, and anticipated Federal and Provincial elections in 2025, it is prudent to amend the by-law now prior to those elections. This report addresses that purpose.

Rationale:

Overall, the majority of By-law 2021-045 proved to be an effective guide to regulating the use of Election Signs in Kawartha Lakes over the past provincial and municipal elections. However, some issues were identified that either needed clarification, or amendments, being:

- **Definition of "Election Sign":** The definition is amended to include a flag, but also being amended to not include a billboard which will be addressed below. Flags have been added to clarify a previously received question on if a 'banner' (a term currently used in the definition) might also be a flag. Adding the definition brings clarity that both banners and flags would be considered an election sign. Adding 'flag' to the definition would not detract residents from flying the national, or provincial flag of their choice, it simply regulates the use of flags specifically created for the purpose of depicting, promoting, or advertising a candidate or political party.
- **Billboards:** Billboards will no longer be regulated by the Election Sign By-law. Since billboards are excluded from the definition, it gives more clarity that a candidate may purchase advertising space on an existing billboard as a campaign advertising expense (similar to an expense for purchasing a radio or newspaper advertising spot).
- **Highway Sign Placement:** Maximum Sign height has been lowered to 1.5m (just under 5ft) from 2m to ensure highway visibility is maintained. An amendment also will clarify that no signs may be placed on the road allowances fronting a municipal park. Clarification has further been added that the City and their contractors are not responsible for damage to election signs due to normal road operations and maintenance.
- **Jurisdiction:** Clarification has been made to ensure that wearable election signs (hats, buttons, shirts, etc.) and mobile signs on vehicles may appear outside of the jurisdiction of the office of election (eg: their respective Ward, School Board Trustee district, or electoral constituency), whereas a stationary sign shall remain within the jurisdiction of the office.
- **Median Strips (eg: Victoria Avenue, Lindsay):** Enforcing the previously provision of "One sign, per median strip island, per candidate, to a maximum of 5 signs per island from all candidates" has proven to be difficult to enforce, as it

is often unclear what are the first 5 signs placed on any given median strip island. To improve enforceability, and to ensure minimal disruption to grass maintenance occurs, the new regulation will limit candidates to placing one sign per block (blocks are specifically defined in the by-law) per candidate or registered third party. Usually each block contains two median strip islands, so it is anticipated that this will reduce the amount of sign clutter along the Victoria Avenue median, while remaining more enforceable. Further, as the two median strip islands on Victoria Avenue between Kent Street West and Peel Street are immediately adjacent to City Facilities on both sides (Library, Police Station, and Victoria Park), the by-law has been clarified to prohibit the placing of election signs on the median strips between these two streets. This space is also used for the Lindsay Farmers Market, and signs placed in these medians are often excessively damaged, altered, or moved.

- **Private Property Sign Placement:** No changes are proposed.
- **Fees for Disposal and Removal:** The by-law clarifies that signs that have been collected by Municipal Law Enforcement due to illegal placement shall be charged \$20/sign and \$5/day if they have not been collected by 10 days following voting day. The by-law also clarifies that candidates shall contact Municipal Law Enforcement prior to collection of their signs (as opposed to showing up at a Public Works Depot unannounced). This will allow staff to prepare to ensure a staff person is present at the Depot at the time of collection.

Other Alternatives Considered:

This by-law could remain in its current state, however, due to the proximity to upcoming federal, provincial, and municipal elections, it is recommended to make small tailored amendments now prior to considering a more comprehensive Election Sign By-law review at a later date. Future amendments could include consideration of an election sign deposit to permit placement, prohibition to all election signs on public property (as opposed to private property), or continued amendments to existing regulations.

Alignment to Strategic Priorities

A key priority in the Strategic Plan is for Good Government. Action Item 1 is to promote continuous improvement and innovation to Make It Better in all service areas. By making tailored amendments to the existing by-law to “Make it Better”, we can continue to serve local democracy, and our residents.

Consultations:

Director of Development Services
Manager of Roads Operations, Public Works
Manager of Municipal Law Enforcement and Licencing
City Clerk

Attachments:

Appendix A – Amending By-law to By-law 2021-045



Appendix A -
2024-XXX Amend By-

Appendix B – By-law 2021-045



2021-045 A Bylaw to
Regulate the Placem

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