

Town of Yarmouth
USE OF TOWN RESOURCES DURING
AN ELECTION POLICY

Effective: February 13th, 2025
TOY 80



1.0 Policy Statement

1.1 This policy sets out provisions for the use of Town facilities, resources, and infrastructure during an election period, in order to preserve the public trust and integrity in the elections process and to comply with applicable legislation. This policy allows the Town to balance the need for freedom of expression and assembly of candidates and its legal responsibility to ensure that no candidate, registered third party advertiser or political party is provided with an unfair advantage.

1.2 This policy recognizes that Members of Council are holders of their office until the end of the term and supports them in continuing to fulfill their responsibilities as Members of Council. Nothing in this policy shall preclude a Member of Council from performing their duty as an elected official, nor inhibit them from representing the interests of their constituents.

2.0 Purpose

To establish rules and procedures for the use of municipal resources during an election period.

3.0 Application

This policy applies to municipal, school board, provincial or federal elections or by-elections and to questions on the ballot. References in the policy with respect to political parties refer to provincial and federal elections or by-elections and do not apply to the Town's municipal elections or by-elections.

4.0 Access to Town Facilities during an Election Period

4.1 Town facilities and infrastructure may not be used for any election-related purpose by a candidate, registered third party advertiser or political party. In particular, signs may not be erected or displayed in any street right-of-way, on or adjacent to a Town park or facility that is owned or operated by the Town.

4.2 No permits, licenses, leases or any other agreement for the use of Town facilities, including civic squares and parks, will be issued to promote, support or oppose a particular candidate, registered third party advertiser or political party.

4.3 All-candidate meetings may be held at Town facilities for a nominal fee provided that all candidates for an office are invited to attend such meetings.

4.4 Candidates, registered third party advertisers or political parties may not distribute campaign materials on or in Town facilities or at Town events, but are permitted to distribute campaign materials on public right of way sidewalks and thoroughfares, during all-candidates meetings, at public parks.

4.5 The Town may issue a permit for the use of a Town facility for election-related education purposes only, as long as no particular candidate, registered third party advertiser, political position or political party is promoted, supported or opposed at the event. These events may include but are not limited to: providing information on how to become a candidate, or informing them on how to organize an election campaign.

5.0 Access to Town Resources during an Election Period

5.1 The Town's logo, crest, slogans, etc., may not be printed, posted or distributed on any election-related campaign materials or included on any election-related website.

5.2 Candidates may not post photographs of themselves with Town employees in uniform during.

5.3 Photographic or video materials which have been or may be created by Town employees or with Town resources may not be used for any election purpose or in campaign materials.

5.4 Websites or domain names that are funded by the Town may not include any campaign materials, refer to and identify any individual as a candidate, registered third party advertiser or political party or profile any slogan or symbol associated with a candidate, registered third party advertiser or political party.

5.5 Domain names or websites that the Town funds may not include any election related campaign material and may not be re-designated for campaign purposes or provide a link to a campaign site.

6.0 Access to Town Information during an Election Period

6.1 Information provided to one candidate, registered third party advertiser or political party that is of a general nature and may provide valuable guidance to all others will be provided to all candidates, registered third party advertisers or political parties. The Town will post the information on the internet or through other mechanisms to ensure equal access to information.

6.2 With the exception of the sitting Mayor and Councillors requesting meetings with staff on current matters, requests by a candidate, registered third party advertiser or political party for personal meetings with Town employees, as well as requests for tours of Town facilities shall not be accommodated. If a meeting or a tour is organized, the department must commit to organizing a similar meeting or tour for all other candidates, registered third party advertisers or political parties.

7.0 Attending Town Events during an Election Period

7.1 Candidates registered third party advertisers or political parties are permitted to attend Town events, or events held at Town facilities, as private citizens, but may not campaign. No election signs may be posted, and no campaign materials may be disseminated, at Town events.

7.2 Elected officials are permitted to attend Town-organized events or events held on Town facilities and act as ceremonial participants in their capacity as elected officials, including speaking at the event and partaking in ceremonial activities. Once the writ is issued for Provincial or Federal elections, MLAs and MPs, respectively, should not be invited to attend Town events.

8.0 Restrictions to Services Provided to Members of Council After Nomination Day an Election Year

8.1 Members of Council may also be candidates in a municipal election. Accordingly, after Nomination Day in the municipal election year, the Town will discontinue the following activities for Members of Council.

- a. All forms of advertising and communication, including in municipal publications and social media accounts, that are paid for by Town funds or operated and distributed by the Town, will not reference the name or image of a Member of Council.
- b. Signage for Town events, including banners and posters, will not reference the name or image of a Member of Council.
- c. The Town's media releases or materials will not reference the name of a Member of Council. Where the Town would typically name a specific Member of Council or the Mayor in its communications or media materials during an election period, it will refer to the generic term "Councillor " or "Mayor" without naming the specific Member of Council. Except for inter-governmental initiatives or emergency messaging through the Regional Emergency Management Office, this practice will be used for all Town programs, events, announcements and to ensure effective communications with residents and businesses with respect to operational requirements, and impacts.
- d. Ceremonial documents such as retirement scrolls for employees, scrolls in celebration of anniversaries, Letters of Greeting and other celebratory documents normally signed and distributed by the Mayor will be signed by the Mayor and the Clerk will mail documents.

8.2 After Nomination Day in the municipal election year, the Mayor will be subject to the same restrictions as other Members of Council, but will continue to be named in media releases and materials related to inter-governmental activities only, in their capacity as Mayor.

Clerk's Annotation for Official Policy Book

Date of Adoption: February 13th, 2025

I certify that this 'Use of Town Resources During an Election Policy' was adopted by Council as indicated above.

Town Clerk:

Date: