

# Election forces region to re-examine sign bylaw

BY PATRICK CASEY  
Staff Writer

Less than two months after approving a bylaw permitting temporary signs on regional roads, the municipal election has forced York Region to re-examine the policy.

Earlier this month, council agreed to waive the mandatory permits now required for signs, allowing municipal candidates in the Nov. 13 election to erect signs between Oct. 13 and Nov. 15 at no cost.

However, Vaughan Mayor Lorna Jackson said the changes create holes in the bylaw since businesses are being charged \$100 for a six-month permit to place a 1.2-metre square removable sign at a regional intersection on weekends.

"We will now allow election signs at the corners without a

permit or licence sticker," Jackson said during a finance meeting last week. "There is just terrific confusion."

With 20 signs allowed at the majority of regional intersections, the four corners will quickly become crowded with election signs.

Council approved the regional bylaw on Aug. 31 after the Greater Toronto Home Builders' Association indicated it would pursue a legal challenge on behalf of its members if a new, less restrictive scheme, was not implemented.

Since 1987, the region prohibited signs on all regional roads, although a policy adopted in 1994 allowed exemptions for signs advertising community and charity events.

Regional chairperson Bill Fisch told committee members that staff is now reviewing the

bylaw with an updated report presented at Thursday's council meeting.

Possible changes include a one-month exemption for all users during any election.

"We recognized this almost immediately after approving the resolution," Fisch said. "We are looking at the problems we have brought on ourselves and what solutions we can come up with."

"We do have a community sign bylaw and if an election is a community event, it is appropriate to allow signs. What we have to do is make sure there are safety aspects in place. You get overkill if candidates put out too many signs."

A person convicted of violating the new bylaw faces a maximum fine of \$5,000 and a \$50 retrieval fee for each confiscated sign. Signs must be picked up within 30 days.

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# Mayor upset with photograph

BY KATHLEEN GRIFFIN  
Staff Writer

A Thornhill candidate says he did not mean to imply Mayor Don Cousens had endorsed his campaign when he used a picture of them together in his literature.

Howard Shore, Thornhill school trustee, is running for Ward 1 Councillor in the town of Markham and included a photo of himself and Cousens attending a forum on amalgamation in his

brochure.

Cousens was not pleased.

"It gives the impression I am endorsing and supporting him, and I am not," Cousens said, adding if Shore wanted to use the picture, he should have had the courtesy to check with him first.

But Shore defended the move, saying nothing in his literature states Cousens is endorsing him.

"If the mayor is suggesting the implication

is that it's an endorsement, that's not the case," Shore said. "I have a good working relationship with the mayor and the deputy mayor and the members of council. In fact, I've used another photo of me at Markham council."

Shore has also used a similar picture of himself with Deputy Mayor Frank Scarpitti. It was taken at the same event, but did not generate the same reaction.

"Once I saw the

brochure and read the material I was satisfied there's no statement in there that I am endorsing him," Scarpitti said, adding he's not endorsing anyone.

Shore said if members of his campaign team didn't call for Cousens' permission, it was simply an oversight.

"I regret that he's upset, but it's not like I morphed two pictures together. We were at the same event," Shore said.

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