

From: Shawn Lewis
Sent: Monday, September 11, 2017 11:32 PM
To: csc <csc@london.ca>; Corman, Sarah <scorman@london.ca>
Subject: RE: Election Sign By-law

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing in regard to the proposed changes to the City of London by-law in regard to election signs.

Having worked in almost every role, from sign crew to campaign manager, in every election campaign period at the municipal, provincial, and federal levels in London since 2003, I have considerable experience in and around this issue.

I believe the recommended changes are an attempt to move in the right direction in regard to managing "sign pollution" and offering a "fair playing field" for the myriad of candidates who offer themselves for public office.

I wholly support the recommended reduction from 9m to 7m in regard to intersection triangles. Frankly, the 9m standard was rarely adhered to and was unrealistic. I believe the 7m limit is more attainable in most places, though 23ft is still a considerable distance. I would actually argue that 5m (16ft) might be more realistic in terms of actual achievable placement. As a member of your Committee of Adjustment, I would respectfully remind committee and council that 7m is a considerable set back in my experience in terms of things such as fences, retaining walls, sound retention walls, and accessory structures, all of which are a more permanent nature, so items of a temporary nature should be less of an issue.

My other concern is the limit requiring a candidate's signs to be a minimum of 10m apart. In my experience one of the more effective traditional sign placement techniques is the "triangle sign", where two signs are fixed to a common centre post and angled in such a way that one sign is visible to traffic on each road way approaching the intersection. Further a move from no limit, to a single sign is a rather drastic approach to a relatively small problem. I would encourage the committee to amend the proposal to limit each candidate to 2 signs per location, with additional signs being a minimum of 10m away. This allows campaigns with lower financial abilities to maximize their sign post inventory in allowing for two signs to be affixed between 3 posts, allowing those candidates to have a better chance to compete with better financed campaigns where signs and sign post inventory less of a financial consideration.

This will still limit sign pollution, eliminating displays of 8 or 10 signs for a single candidate taking up an entire corner, or the vomiting of surplus lawn signs onto the roadways on the eve of an election. (Perhaps a restriction that allowed no more than 6 signs within a 50m radius might also be necessary).

I would also encourage the committee to consider adopting some requirement that signs of different candidates must be a minimum of 1ft (0.3m) apart, to discourage the "blockade effect" where in 1 or more challengers position their signs to block another candidate's sign visibility.

Again, I appreciate that the "sign issue" arises in every election cycle, however in the grand scheme of things it is a relatively small issue, and a generally accepted part of the democratic electoral process. Therefore, going from effectively no limits, to very tight limits should be carefully considered.

Finally, remember none of these by-laws matter if the City of London is not genuinely committed to enforcing them, and it has been my experience over the past 14 years that enforcement has ever been seriously pursued by the city. If you are not prepared to provide adequate enforcement resources, this entire exercise is moot.

I would be happy to speak to the committee or any committee member further in regard to this issue.

Sincerely,

Shawn