



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT: MUNICIPAL CAMPAIGN FINANCE ACCOUNTABILITY

Public Engagement - **SESSION 2**
Halifax Hall, Halifax City Hall

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HALIFAX

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INTRODUCTION

In early 2015, Halifax Regional Council recognized there was a lack of clarity regarding election campaign finance. More had to be done to strengthen accountability. The Municipality entered into conversations with the Province, which oversees rules for municipal campaign finance.

As a result, the Province of Nova Scotia (April 2016) made amendments to the Halifax Regional Municipal Charter to allow for a municipal by-law that provides greater clarity on how election campaign finances are administered. Currently, Halifax Regional Municipality is the only municipality in Nova Scotia directed to do so.

Halifax Regional Council has instructed staff to continue the conversation and engage the public to gain a better understanding of the values and ideas citizens would like to see represented in the by-law.

Karen Densmore Communications has been engaged to gather feedback from elected officials, former candidates and the public on election campaign finances. Input and feedback will be taken into consideration when crafting the new by-law and related recommendations for Council to consider.

The public engagement will focus on the five main areas that correspond with the mandate of the by-law:

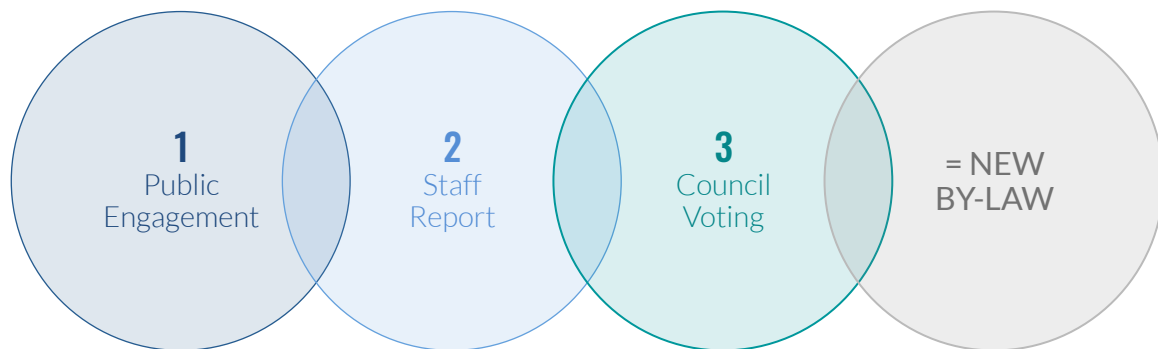
1. **Who Can Contribute?**
2. **Maximum Contribution Amount**
3. **Campaign Contribution Timelines**
4. **Maximum Spending Amounts**
5. **Disclosure, Expenses, Deficits and Surpluses**

These five areas do not exist in isolation; they are inter-connected. They are important in considering how the campaign process can include more rigor and accountability, without creating barriers for people interested in running for office.

Information collected during the public engagement will be shared with staff in a summary report after each session and posted on Shape Your City, the municipality's online engagement site. A final report will also be shared publicly, highlighting the main themes from the engagement.

DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

This public engagement is part of a three-step decision-making process, including the public engagement, the staff report and Council's vote on the by-law. The public has a chance to influence and share their ideas upfront, to inform the development of the by-law. The public will also have an opportunity to provide feedback when the by-law goes before the Executive Council.



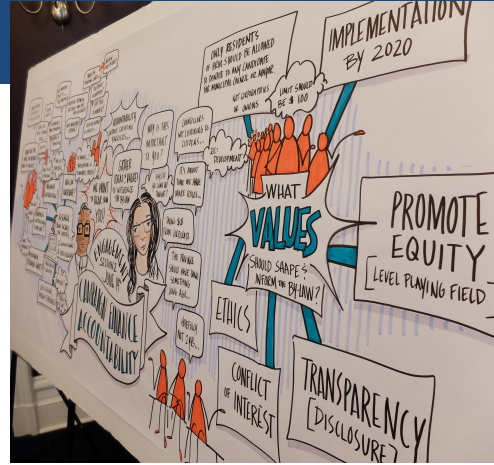
ENGAGEMENT

The engagement schedule included pre-engagement focus groups on May 24th and 25th 2017 with previous candidates and official agents, as well as Councillors who ran in the last election. The engagement will continue to run through the month of June where the public will have the opportunity to fill out a survey online or meet in person at one of the upcoming engagements or the pop up engagement. The following document captures comments and themes that emerged from the first public engagement on June 14th in Halifax.

Why is Campaign Finance Accountability Important?

- Councillors are not listening to citizens.
- It's about time we have more rules.
- It's about development.
- I'm concerned with Councilors taking money from Corporations.
- The Province should have done something long ago.
- Hopefully it won't take two years to get something in place.





WHAT IS IMPORTANT FOR US TO CONSIDER ABOUT CAMPAIGN FINANCE ACCOUNTABILITY?

The following comments (listed on the right) were delivered in response to the five main areas that correspond with the mandate of the by-law. This included comments from the table conversations and breakout sessions. For efficiency, they have been organized into key themes. (listed on the left).

1 WHO CAN CONTRIBUTE?

Individuals

- 4 people voted for individuals to fund
- Should be 18+ voting age
- Have citizenship
- Residence status in HRM, District and Province, 6 months prior to election.

Family Members

- 4 people voted that family members could contribute

Self Fund

- 3 people voted for candidates to self fund

2 MAXIMUM CONTRIBUTION LIMITS

Low Limits	• Yes. Contribution limits should be low, so councillors don't feel beholden to certain individuals, say \$50 max. • Yes and my suggestion is \$100/donation to each candidate. Again, we want a candidate to seek wide support not just support of a few \$1000 donors.
\$1000 Limit	• Yes. Individuals only, \$1000 max
Total caps per donors	• Total cap on contributions from each donor should be \$2000.

3 CONTRIBUTION TIMELINES

Within the election year	• Yes. Municipal elections are in mid-October so donations only are allowed in year of election after May 1st—i.e. 5 months before the date of the election. • Yes. During election years only because the purpose is campaign financing. • Coincide date of filling nomination papers with eligibility to vote • No donations prior to campaign
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4 MAXIMUM SPENDING LIMITS

10k Campaign Spending Limits	• Municipal elections don't require massive spending—say 10 k. • Yes, 10k or less for 2020. We do not want a person to win because they are well financed or wealthy. We want them to win because they are widely supported and well organized on the doorstep.
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Spending Limits

- Yes, with \$/resident limit, to keep campaigns reasonable.
- There should be spending limits within each district
- Just pick a number
- Depends on redistributions of districts

Limit with per voter amount

- Yes. Councillors: \$10,000 base + 0.50/voter in district. Mayor: \$20,000 base + 0.50/voter.
- Per vote geography

5 DISCLOSURE, EXPENSES, DEFICITS & SURPLUSES

Disclosures

- Yes, all candidates should report their expenses and hold receipts for one year if audited. Real penalties if they do not report.
- Yes, to avoid conflict of interest.
- Yes, so incumbent can't amass war chest by raising more contributions than expenses.
- Yes. < \$50 = disclosed and max \$50 in cash, more than that should be cheque.
- Submission of bank statements. Auditors?
- Non-monetary expense
- Donations between elections, how are they reported?

Incumbent Surplus

- Incumbents surplus, what are they already holding from the previous election?

6 OTHER COMMENTS

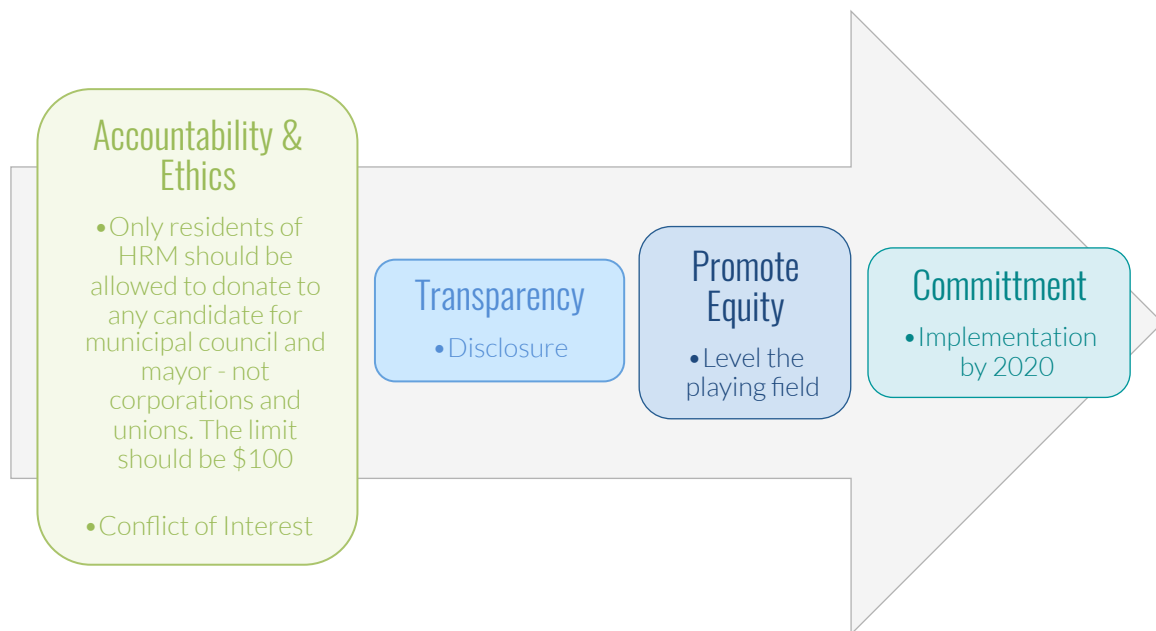
Democratic process

- The system is daunting
- Participation in a democratic process

Term limits

- Access to new candidates
- Councillor seats turning over
- Term Limits
- Incumbent has advantage

WHAT VALUES DO WE AS CITIZENS WANT APPLIED TO SHAPE AND INFORM THIS BY-LAW?



IN SUMMARY

The pre-engagement sessions quickly revealed how one focus area cannot be addressed in isolation – they are all interconnected. One cannot make decisions on contributions without understanding expenses, and it's not possible to fully understand expenses without addressing disclosure requirements.

A few points that stood out from the latest public engagement on June 14th are contributions should be collected during the election year only.

There were also suggestions for limiting campaign-spending limits to \$10,000 for Councillors.

Lastly, there were comments about limiting terms to give access to new candidates.

The public engagement will continue with one more public session on June 22nd in Bedford.

As previously mentioned, information collected during the public engagement will be shared with staff in a summary report after each session and posted on Shape Your City, the municipality's online engagement site. A final report will also be shared publicly, highlighting the main themes from the engagement.



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SCHEDULE



ONLINE ENGAGEMENT:

JUNE 1st - 30th

Background
Document & Survey

Online at
Shapeyourcityhalifax.ca



JUNE 7, 2017
Dartmouth
COMPLETED

JUNE 12, 2017
Eastern Shore
COMPLETED

JUNE 14, 2017
Halifax
COMPLETED

JUNE 22, 2017
Bedford



SUMMARY REPORTS

Read the Summary
Reports online after
the Engagement
Sessions

HOW TO PARTICIPATE

Online

We highly recommend that you review the background document online at **shapeyourcity halifax.ca**. The document outlines requirements currently in place, key considerations and a jurisdictional scan.

You can participate by taking the survey online at **shapeyourcityhalifax.ca** [hyperlink]

In person

Several public engagement events have been scheduled throughout the month of June.

~~Wednesday June 7th~~

~~6:30pm – 9:00pm~~

~~Dartmouth~~

~~Harbour East Community Council Room~~

~~Alderney Landing,~~

~~40 Alderney Dr.~~

~~Monday June 12th~~

~~6:00pm – 8:00pm~~

~~Eastern Shore~~

~~Part of the Halifax Green Network public information meeting~~

~~Old School Community Gathering Place,~~

~~7962 Highway #7, Musquodoboit Harbour~~

~~Wednesday June 14th~~

~~6:30pm – 9:00pm~~

~~Halifax~~

~~Halifax Hall in City Hall,~~

~~1841 Argyle St., Halifax~~

Thursday June 22nd

6:30pm – 9:00pm

Bedford -Sackville

Bedford-Hammonds Plains Community Centre

Youth / Seniors Room

202 Innovation Dr., Bedford

Feedback can be sent using the following channels by June 30th.

- **Email:** election@halifax.ca
- **Twitter:** @hfxelections
- **Instagram:** hfxgov
- **Mail:** Election Office