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Document
CITY CLERK'S DEPARTMENT

Community Standards ByLaw Revisions

Social & Protective Services Committee Nov. 2nd, 2016

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I support many of the revisions proposed in this document, but the ones restricting freedom of expression and speech through the printed page are most troubling and unacceptable. In a free democracy, the rights of the citizens in a minority are easily abridged by the ill consider moods of the majority at a particular time, 75% or otherwise. The desire of the public to grace our communities with the appearance of civilization in property and landscape appeal, depends on a sensitivity to commonly held standards, and even an active ability to dispute those with which we disagree.

The viability of a democracy depends on the active participation and thinking of the majority. To have a municipal government actively punish citizens for reaching out to their neighbors by means of the printed page is an egregious violation of this spirit of participation. To encourage citizens in the illusion that they can cut themselves off from active input from everyday citizens and be contacted only by agents of the government solely, is the road to tyranny.

The whole attempt to revive participation in voting in the electoral process is put into atrophy when we actively suppress the free sharing of ideas and information on all the topics pertinent to public life. Despite the assurances of the City Solicitors, the proposed by-law revision forbidding distribution of literature to stickered mailboxes is a direct violation of the Canadian Charter and International law. It will inevitably end up in Court, perhaps around the time of next year's election. The thousands or even millions spent on defending this errant by-law violation of Freedom of Speech would not be so easily dispensed with if the Legal Council was not spending somebody else's money, the taxpayer's

The increased conflict at the door trying to convince the stickered homeowner of the exceptions allowed during elections are liable to turn confrontational. Basing the Bylaw on a whole plethora of sticker types, put on for various reasons, over long spans of time, in various states of fading, for wide-ranging motivations is also a huge oversight.

The City will be creating a situation that is unliveable for engaged passionate citizens reaching out to their neighbors without the direct sanction of governmental organizations. This is essential in a democracy, especially to keep the government honest and uncorrupted.

The fine structure also creates a situation of double indemnity, where the individual doing the mailbox drop is also the distributor printed the

material. \$100 for the drop, \$300 for being the printer of the material.

The types of printed materials prohibited will range greatly

No announcements of a bottle drive, clothes pickup, block party, garage sale, welcome wagon notice, environmental alerts, land-use-zoning concerns

To enforce the right to not be bothered considering the views of your fellow neighbors, is to speed the process of de-civilization.

I would ask you to exclude these mailbox revisions completely.