

## Political Activity – Board of Management

### 1. Policy Statement

The Ralph Thornton Community Centre recognizes the right of appointees to the Board of Management to participate in political activity. All members have the fundamental right, to be a member of and publicly support a political party, to attend all-candidates meetings, to seek appointment or election to public office, and to vote in municipal, provincial and federal elections and referenda respecting any and all aspects of community life.

However, the Ralph Thornton Community Centre, as a City of Toronto agency, is both and shall appear to be impartial in political matters and processes. The Board of Management and Centre, as entities, take no position respecting candidates for election to City Council or provincial or federal office, and will neither support nor oppose political parties or candidates.

### 2. Definition of Political Activity:

Political activity includes:

- Supporting or opposing a political party and/or candidate before or during an election;
- Seeking nomination or being a candidate in an election;
- Seeking appointment to a municipal council or school board; or
- Canvassing or campaigning on a Toronto municipal referendum question.

### 3. Prohibited Political Activity

Sitting members of the Board of Management may not:

- Reference or rely on their position as RTC board members when engaging in partisan political activities (e.g., when canvassing or campaigning for a party or candidate).
- Engage in partisan political activity, including wearing clothing or buttons that advertise any candidate, political party or referendum issue, while at a Board or Board committee meeting or carrying out their duties as a Board member.
- Use his/her title or position as a Board member in a way that would lead a member of the public to infer that the Ralph Thornton Centre is endorsing a candidate, political party or particular response to a referendum question.

### 4. Seeking Appointment or Election to Public Office:

A Board member who is seeking election to a municipal political office is required to resign his or her position on the Board of Management.

A board member who is seeking election to a provincial or federal political office is required to take a leave of absence from the Board. The Board is entitled to appoint another member to fill the his/her position if the required leave of absence will exceed six months.

## **5. Use of RTC Resources for Political Purposes**

The RTC shall not use resources (funds, staff, facilities, equipment, supplies and/or information technology and communication vehicles) provided by the City for partisan political purposes, including to oppose or endorse a named party or elected official, or directly or indirectly devote grants received to such activities or, through provision of resources, to a third party engaged in partisan political activities.

Members shall not use the services of RTC staff for partisan election-related activities during the working hours in which the individual receive any compensation from the RTC or City.

In the case where the RTC facilitates or enables public or civic engagement in political processes via its programming, its activities will not include the direct or indirect support of or opposition to any political party or candidate for public office.

## **6. Permitted Political Activities**

Without limiting generality, the RTC may sponsor or participate in:

- The organization and/or hosting of all-candidates meetings to foster civic engagement and voter participation in political processes, (e.g., Toronto Municipal Elections)
- The development and presentation of oral and written information or briefs containing information and/or recommendations to relevant committees of Council
- The provision of information and the expression of non-partisan views to the media that fall within the general ambit of the RTC's mandate or purpose, as long as the devotion of resources to such activity is reasonable in the circumstances (i.e., is intended to inform and educate by providing information and views designed primarily to allow full and reasoned consideration of an issue, rather than to influence public opinion or to generate controversy),
- Publications, conferences, workshops and other forms of communication that are produced or organized in order to inform public opinion on political issues and matters of public policy,
- Advertisements in newspapers, magazines or on television or radio to the extent that they are designed to attract interest in, or gain support for, civic engagement;
- Public meetings or lawful demonstrations that are organized to publicize and gain support for matters of community public policy and issues, and campaigns encouraging its members or the public to participate in civic life;
- Letters or other written communications to the media and government expressing support for the organization's views on matters of public policy.

RTC may pose questions to candidates for election respecting community issues and priorities and publish their responses to such questions, providing:

- The questions are posed to all candidates; and,
- The responses of all candidates who provide such responses are made public without editing or further comment by RTC.

**7. Related Policies:**

- Board of Management Conflict of Interest Policy
- *Toronto Public Service By-Law, 2015 (Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 192, Public Service)*
- City of Toronto. *Code of Conduct for Members of Local Boards* (restricted Definition)
- RTC Board of Management – *Code of Conduct, Roles and Responsibilities of Board Members, 2016*
- RTC Board of Management – *Code of Conduct, Roles and Responsibilities of Committee Members, 2016*

**History:**

- Supersedes 2014 *Interim Policy on Municipal Election Activity*