

A Message From – Doug Dickerson



Long Ordeal Over

On July 19th, following an exhausting two-year ordeal which reviewed expenses relating to my 2010 re-election campaign, we concluded the case.

The process has determined that I inadvertently failed to meet all reporting requirements required by the Ontario Municipal Elections Act. Regardless of my intent and good faith, I misinterpreted rules about the timing and reporting of certain campaign expenses which occurred following the close of polls, and that led to an inaccurate financial statement being filed with the City Clerk.

For all of this, I am truly sorry. I always believed that I was complying with the letter and spirit of the Act. It is my belief that voters rightfully expect their elected representatives to comply with the law which governs election campaigns. I apologize to my campaign team, the residents of Ward 2, and to my colleagues on city council.

Following the election, I paid two workers to pick up, take apart, clean & store my elections signs. I believed this was a post election expense. It was determined that this ought to have been a pre election expense and, as such, placed me over the

spending limit allowed.

While I continue to maintain that some of the language contained in the Municipal Elections Act still needs to be clarified - a belief expressed also by a judge - clarification to better protect everyone involved in the election process, I accept the outcome and will personally pay all financial penalties. Every one of those dollars will go directly to the city's general revenues. To be clear, there was never any allegation that any public monies were involved in any of my campaign expenses nor any allegation that excess spending occurred during the election period ending on election day.

Let me assure you that my commitment to this community is as strong as ever. In this term alone, I have been proud to play a role in the reconstruction of the Frenchmans Bay harbour entrance; of realizing a long held vision of a pedestrian bridge between the GO Station and Downtown Pickering; and enhancing our community through the gardens and beautification projects championed through Sustainable Pickering.

During the remainder of the term ahead of us, the voters of Ward 2 can be confident that I will continue to dedicate my time to issues that are important to residents and to the city as a whole -- from plans to guide the development of Seaton; to efforts to attract a hotel and convention

centre; and an ongoing commitment to good governance within our municipality.

Questions and Answers

Q: How do you feel about the ruling?

A: It has been a two-year, emotional roller coaster. From the very beginning I believed that I was complying with the spirit and letter of the Municipal Elections Act. But regardless of my intent and good faith, I misinterpreted the rules.

Q: Don't you agree that you broke the rules?

A: I did misinterpret the rules, and that led to an inaccurate campaign financial statement. For that, I am truly sorry.

Q: Don't you see a problem with the alcohol purchased and the honorarium given?

A: Let me be clear about this. Everyone agreed that these would be lawful types of post campaign expenses. The issues all relate to the timing of the related expenses and how they were reported on the forms.

Q: Didn't you exceed campaign spending limits?

A: I paid two campaign workers to help remove election signs after the election and prepare them for storage. But since that work occurred after the campaign, I thought the costs did not apply to the pre election spending limit. I was wrong.

Q: After running so many campaigns, shouldn't you understand the Municipal Elections Act?

A: This is a complex regulation with 96 individual sections -- and I believed I was complying with each and every word. But as I have always maintained, some of the language is vague, and it needs to be clarified to protect everyone involved in future elections.

Q: You sound a lot more contrite than you have in the past.

A: That's true. I hope everyone can appreciate that this was an emotional ordeal, and I truly believed that I was following the Act to the letter. I take election campaigns and their rules very seriously.

Q: Do you believe residents care about this process?

A: Voters rightfully expect their elected representatives to comply with every rule that governs an election campaign, as do I. I always believed that I was complying with the Municipal Elections Act. But regardless of my intent and good faith, I misinterpreted the rules. Now that this ordeal is over, we can focus on key issues in the term ahead of us, from planning the development in Seaton, to attracting a hotel and convention centre, and remaining committed to good governance.

Doug Dickerson
City Councillor, Ward 2
City of Pickering