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SECTION (FOR COUNCIL - DECEMBER 12, 2006)



CITY OF VANCOUVER

OTHER REPORT

Report Date: November 30, 2006
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VanRIMS No.: 01-1500-10
Meeting Date: December 12, 2006

TO: Vancouver City Council

FROM: Councillor Suzanne Anton
Councillor Heather Deal

SUBJECT: Federation of Canadian Municipalities' Getting to 30% - National Campaign

RECOMMENDATION

- A. *THAT Council support the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) national campaign to increase the number of women on council to 30% of the total by 2026;*
- B. *THAT Council demonstrate their support of the FCM's campaign by championing an event that includes other Lower Mainland municipalities.*
- C. *THAT the event be held in March 2007, in celebration of International Women's Day.*
- D. *THAT Council approve an initial budget of \$5,000 for a consultant to assist in securing partnerships and funding support from other municipalities to plan a joint event; source of funding to be from 2006 contingency fund.*
- E. *THAT Council approve seeking funding partner(s) to offset costs.*

CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The City Manager RECOMMENDS approval of the foregoing.

COUNCIL POLICY

There is no applicable Council Policy.

PURPOSE

Council support is requested to endorse FCM's "Getting to 30% initiative", and to provide funding for a consultant. The consultant will liaise with other municipalities and women's organizations to plan, organize, and find additional resources for a joint event to promote this initiative and bring awareness to the community at large. This event will also be a City's celebration of the International Women's Day.

BACKGROUND

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) has launched an initiative called "Getting to 30%". The goal is to increase women's participation in local government from the current 21.4 per cent of municipal councils to 30 per cent by 2026.

To support this effort, FCM has developed a set of strategies and tactics that municipal councils can use to further the involvement of women in municipal government.

Councillor Anton and Councillor Deal request Council support for the "Getting to 30%" initiative, and for funding to organize a joint event with municipalities from the Lower Mainland. The event will promote awareness and participation, and begin the work of getting women to be interested in politics; as well, it will provide support to women who are participating or who have the aspiration to participate in municipal affairs. The intention is to have the event close to or on International Women's Day as a special celebration.

DISCUSSION

FCM has been studying ways to increase women's participation in municipal affairs for a number of years, and it is an issue recognized across the country as an important one. Women make up 52 per cent of the Canadian population but only 21.4 per cent of municipal councils.

The United Nations defines 30 per cent as the minimal percentage of women required for government to reflect women's concerns. According to FCM, women represent 12.9 per cent of mayors and 22.9 per cent of councillors in Canada, for an average of 21.4 per cent, and a total of 5,242 women out of a total of 24,542 mayors and councillors.

Based on current statistics, FCM calculated that Canada would need 2,120 more women in elected office today to reach the 30 per cent target. That means increasing the number of women in municipal government by roughly 100 every year for the next 20 years.

In 2005-2006, FCM held a series of workshops and events across the country to determine what barriers exist to women's participation in politics and brainstorm about what could be done to remove them.

Women interviewed identified a number of reasons why they were not involved in municipal politics, including:

1. inadequate information about how to get involved;
2. lack of connections between municipality and women's groups;
3. the perception that volunteer groups afford women better opportunities to make a difference;
4. family responsibilities;
5. a lack of inclusive policies; and
6. discrimination.

As a way to help provide information and networking opportunities to women, and to make connections between the City and women's groups, Councillor Anton and Councillor Deal would like to propose the following for consideration :

The City will host an event for past, current, and potential female politicians in the Lower Mainland. Other women's organizations and woman politicians in the region will be invited to partner in the event.

The event should take place on or about International Women's Day 2007. FCM will provide a speaker, and FCM staff will attend the event.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONSThe request is for \$5000 from 2006 contingency reserve to hire a consultant to secure partnerships from other municipalities and women's organizations, as well as financial sponsorships for a joint event to promote women's interests and participation in municipal politics. This event will also be the City's 2007 special event celebrating International Women's Day.

CONCLUSION

The issue of gender equality and women's participation in municipal decision making is increasingly being recognized as an important issue within local governments. A number of cities in Canada and around the world, including Ottawa, Toronto, Montreal, London, Glasgow and San Salvador have developed gender equality initiatives. Two recent documents created by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities had been well received across the country -- *A City Tailored to Women: The Role of Municipal Governments in Achieving Gender Equality* and *Increasing Women's Participation in Municipal Decision-Making: a resource kit* both describe gender equality initiatives being undertaken by local governments around the world.

Based on the 2001 census, there are approximately 277,965 females living in Vancouver; this comprises slightly over half of Vancouver's population of 545,671. Of these, approximately

12.5% are girls (0 to 14 years) and 5% are youth (15 to 19 years). Almost 50% of the women in the city are foreign-born. Our current City council comprised of 4 women and 7 men - 37 % female councillors. Therefore, the City of Vancouver has already reached the 30% target. However, work is still needed to ensure that the awareness, interests and support for women to participate in municipal decision making are being harnessed continuously, and that City of Vancouver can be a role model for other municipalities.

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