

MOTION ON NOTICE

3. Taking Steps to Ensure the Integrity of Voting in the 2018 Vancouver Municipal Election

MOVER: Councillor Affleck

SECONDER:

WHEREAS

1. At the January 21, 2015, Planning, Transportation, and Environment Standing Committee, Vancouver City Council passed a motion regarding the planning and delivery of the 2014 municipal election and directed staff to report back on the 2014 municipal election – including the role of Elections BC in municipal elections, the processes in place for the 2014 municipal election, and the public inquiries submitted to the City;
2. Media reporting during the 2014 municipal election included reports of confusion and irregularities at polling stations, including but not limited to, insufficient ballots, eligible voters – including seniors and persons with disabilities – being discouraged by long waits, inconsistent identification checking, inconsistent information regarding the role of Elections BC in the civic election process, and other technical issues;
3. The 2014 municipal election was the first time the City of Vancouver allowed voters to vote at any polling station in the city and saw the introduction of electronic Voters List technology into the Vancouver election process, with real-time strike off intended to ensure voting integrity under the “Vote Anywhere” model;
4. In the 2014 Vancouver municipal election there were 5,930 “over-votes” in the councillor race, which translates into 593 over-voted ballots, while in 2011 there were 159 over-voted ballots for the council race and in 2008 the comparable figure was 134 over-voted ballots;
5. Subsequent to the 2014 municipal election, Vancouver City Council established an Independent Election Task Force to recommend changes, based on Council directives, concerning the delivery of municipal elections in the City of Vancouver, including an intention to improve public confidence in the electoral processes at the municipal level and increase voter engagement;
6. The Task Force’s Final Report cites six measures of public confidence and voter engagement:
 - political equality where participation is not limited by ethnicity, geographic location, political affiliation, gender, sexual orientation, etc.
 - the representation of diverse viewpoints
 - accountability of representatives to voters on an ongoing basis between elections
 - voter satisfaction in candidates

- voter political knowledge
 - voter turnout;
7. New ballot tabulating machines, which count ballot selections by optically scanning ballots as they are placed through the machine, were leased by the City in 2014 to replace machines purchased by the City in 1996, and new ballot tabulating machines were introduced for the 2017 Vancouver By-election;
 8. The introduction of “Vote Anywhere” in 2014, which required the use of new voting technology (i.e., electronic Voters List software, laptops, and card scanners), also necessitated significant changes to the hiring process for the local election to ensure that election officials possessed the necessary skills to operate the equipment;
 9. An 11-year-old boy was recently able to hack into a replica of Florida’s election system in 10 minutes during a test ahead of upcoming US midterm elections – the fastest of 35 children who were able to hack into replicas of the websites of six swing states during the three-day Def Con security convention – raising concern about the security of America’s election systems and the security of election systems globally.
 10. Section 122 (6) of the Vancouver Charter (Retention and destruction of election materials) states that ballots and other election materials must be “destroyed as soon as practicable following 8 weeks after the declaration of the official election results under section 108” which could preclude any subsequent need to confirm and/or affirm the legitimate outcome of the 2018 Vancouver election.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, in the interest of fostering and maintaining public confidence in the municipal voting process, Vancouver City Council direct staff to request approval and consent from the Province to retain the physical election ballots that will be cast in the upcoming October 20, 2018, Vancouver municipal election for an extended period of time before they are destroyed, compared to the 8 week period in previous elections under the Vancouver Charter, to ensure that these physical ballots are available for any subsequent manual recount that may be required to confirm and/or affirm or legitimate the outcome of the 2018 Vancouver election.

FURTHER THAT staff be directed to employ the services of an accredited third party to test and harden the City’s elections security protocols and electronic voting systems to ensure that they are not, and cannot be, compromised by illegal hacking activities that could invalidate the integrity of the voting process.

* * * * *