



May 19, 2022

Dear Public Office Candidate:

As campaign season begins, the purpose of this letter is to anticipate candidate questions regarding use of City real and personal property for political campaign purposes and to set out the rules regarding use of such property. This letter is separate from that regarding temporary non-commercial signage during election periods and that for employees.

This letter applies equally to all political campaigns. The City cannot use its resources to support or oppose any candidate or ballot measure, and – with some exceptions - therefore generally does not allow its property that is not a public forum to be used for campaign purposes. In addition, in El Centro, a number of parks and other recreational facilities within the City receive federal funding which prohibits any political use of that park or facility. The following rules are intended to provide guidance rather than to address all possible situations.

Campaigning does not include wearing a campaign button or article of clothing supporting or opposing a candidate or ballot measure. It does include using City property or resources to support or oppose a candidate for public office or a ballot measure

As used here, "campaigning" includes but is not limited to the following:

- Displaying, leaving, handing out or posting materials supporting or opposing a candidate or ballot measure,  
Making a speech or presentation regarding a current candidate or ballot measure

City property falls into three categories: a traditional public forum such as sidewalks, streets or parks (with the exceptions noted for El Centro), a limited public forum, and non-public forums. Limited public forums are those limited to the rules of that venue (whether it is physical or on-line) and administrative and other areas used for the business of the City and not available to the public. The latter includes administrative buildings, parking areas of parks and other buildings, City yards and equipment such as fire engines, police vehicles, traffic signals, light poles and landscaping.

The City provides the rules for use of its property as a limited public forum for example, the use of the City's social media pages for campaign purposes is prohibited by the use for those social media pages. That includes tagging from a political campaign and posting pictures with non-public forms.

***City Clerk***

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- Campaign in any way at any of the following City facilities: Adult Centers, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Sports Pavilion, all parks except Bucklin Park (but excluding the Veterans Memorial) or at the skate park
- Use City-funded photographs, videos, or newsletters in campaign presentations
- Use City logos, the City seal (or a replica of it)
- Use the City's email directory or City email addresses to solicit political support.

The City will remove materials in or on its property and attempt to return those to the owner. Those campaigning in violation of these requirements will be asked to leave the facility.

The City's social media pages (Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube) are another type of City property that provide a limited public forum. All those commenting on those pages must follow the rules for use of such social media. Those rules prohibit

- Posting campaign material, including photos or messages on City social media pages;
- Use City-funded photographs, videos, or newsletters to a campaign social media account;
- Creating a link from City social media accounts to a candidate's social media accounts;
- Claim City support or opposition

Under its policies, the City will request removal of political post that violates these requirements. A statement or suggestion of City support may be met with a request by the City to remove that statement, followed by a request for removal of the post from that social media platform.

This letter is intended to provide examples and not to address all situations. Please direct your questions to the City Clerk's Office.

Thank you for your cooperation.



Norma Wyles, CMC  
City Clerk