

How to Organize a Participatory All-Candidates Session in Your Ward

WATERLOO REGION MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS 2018



Social Development Centre
WATERLOO REGION

Social Development Centre Waterloo Region (SDCWR) has held many meet the candidates sessions over the years. The appeal of an interactive forum and the value of small group conversations have been highly valued by the participants and the candidates alike. They create an environment for the exchange among the equals and for constructive dialogue. The candidates are encouraged to ask questions and residents are encouraged to answer them!

NOT A DEBATE!

Builds common ground for residents to discuss the issues that matter to their lives.



PLANNING TIPS:

- **Date:** Plan with other organizers in your community to make sure your participatory all-candidate session won't be at the same time as other events. You can check when all the candidates meetings are happening at waterlooregionvotes.org.
- **Space:** Well-lit, aired, and accessible space that can host all the people you are inviting. No head table. Best if there are tables spread around the room for 6 to 8 people.
- **Welcoming:** Welcome people as they arrive, have people introduce themselves to each other, use name tags, and ask them to sit with the people they have not met before.

WORK WITH THE KNOWLEDGE IN THE ROOM:

- **Discussion:** Each table can cover an issues that matters in your community. Or, you may have a few different questions at each table to get the conversation going.
- **Facilitation:** Having a dedicated facilitator at each table helps the conversation runs smoothly and everyone has a chance to speak. No grilling of the candidates. The candidates are encouraged to move from table to table.
- **Without facilitators,** everyone moves freely and the people together take responsibility of the conversations.

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR IN A CANDIDATE?

- Candidates have the opportunity to share their thoughts and at the end show how responsive and accountable they can be to the community. What has made an impact on them during the discussions?
- If elected, would they keep in touch regularly with constituents they do not talk to often?
- Did they say how they will be intentional in talking to diverse groups, especially if marginalized?

SAMPLE AGENDA

15 min - Welcome & Plan for the Evening

60 min - Roundtable Discussions

15 min - Break (candidates prepare their responses based on discussions)

30 min - Candidates' Presentations and Wrap Up

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR RESOURCES:

Visit waterlooregion.org/municipal-elections-2018, call 519-579-3800, or email us at info@waterlooregion.org