



City of Peterborough

Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 25, 2016
Peterborough, ON –

City Clarifies Advertising Authority

The Canadian Centre for Bioethical Reform (the CCBR), a pro-life advocacy group, recently sought judicial review of the City's decision to decline the CCBR's request to run a specific advocacy advertisement on City buses. The City believed the proposed advertisement could be divisive or controversial and might undermine the City's objective of increasing ridership and providing an important service to all residents.

On further review and discussion with the CCBR, the City acknowledged that advocacy advertisement is expressive speech entitled to protection under s. 2(b) of the Charter, subject only to such reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be justified in a free and democratic society. The City concluded that limits on the specific advertisement submitted by CCBR were not justified, in this instance. The Supreme Court of Canada has consistently refused to take into account the content of the speech when ruling on cases under section 2(b) of the Charter, on the basis that controversial and even unpopular communications are often those most in need of protection.

Freedom of expression is a protected right under the Charter and as a government entity, the City must respect the freedom of expression rights of those seeking to advertise on City property, including on City buses.

As a host of advertising, the City does not endorse nor advocate any position put forward by outside advertisers. The City cannot violate freedom of expression under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Though some advertisements may cause concern for customers, the City has no legal authority to decline advertising content as long as the advertisements comply with the Canadian Code of Advertising Standards, the Canadian Criminal Code and other applicable laws.

As a transparent public organization, the City continues to uphold the laws of our country while we work to provide the best possible customer service. We hope concerned customers understand that within defined limits, the City has no legal authority to decline advertising content. Accordingly, we ask customers with feedback regarding a particular advertisement to contact the advertiser directly. In this case, the advertiser is the Canadian Centre for Bio-Ethical Reform: telephone 403-539-2227 or email email@endthekilling.ca.

The City's current Sponsorship, Naming Rights and Advertising Policy (Policy Number 0036) is available for review at www.peterborough.ca/City_Hall/Corporate_Policy.htm.

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For further information, please contact the undersigned:

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