

June __, 2008

By Hand

Mayor Greg Nickels
Seattle City Councilmembers
City Attorney Tom Carr
City Hall
600 Fourth Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104

Re: Campaign-related scheduling

Dear Mayor, Councilmembers, and City Attorney:

As you all are likely aware, this office recently resolved a complaint regarding the appearance of campaign events on an elected official's City calendar. I want to take this opportunity to clarify some advice I gave three years ago on this subject.

Before the 2005 election, I circulated a letter that read in part as follows:

The Commission recognizes two City purposes that intersect with campaign scheduling. First, your public schedule needs to reflect where you are at all times, so that you can be reached on important City matters whenever necessary. Second, you shouldn't be double-booked, scheduled to attend a campaign event and an official event at the same time.

When your scheduler's actions are limited to those necessary to ensure that your public schedule is complete and accurate, and that your whereabouts are known at all times, the primary beneficiary of your scheduler's actions is the City, not your reelection campaign, and there is no misuse of City resources. When your staff schedules a fundraiser or a campaign appearance for you, whether or not they initiate or accept the call, the primary beneficiary of that act is your reelection campaign, and the benefit to the City is incidental. Such activity raises serious issues under the Ethics and Elections Codes.

Campaign scheduling must be performed by campaign personnel, who can and should coordinate scheduling with your City staff to ensure that you are not double-booked and can be reached on important City matters. Your staff can and should communicate with the campaign regarding open

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time slots on your public schedule (to be sure you aren't double booked), and to place campaign events on your public schedule (to ensure you can be reached). Scheduling campaign events, however, cannot be done on City time or using City resources.

In the wake of the recent Commission action, I want to clarify that when placing campaign events on your City calendar, *only* information necessary to ensure that you are not double booked and can be reached may be included on your City calendar. You may include the name of the event, the address of the event, the duration of the event, and a contact telephone number. Details such as how you will be transported to the event, the format of the event, and other event attendees *may not* appear on your public calendar. Placing such details on your City calendar constitutes a use of City facilities to assist a campaign, which violates the Elections Code. To put it another way, if the information in your City calendar about a campaign event would not be essential to efforts to locate you in case of an emergency, it may not appear on your public calendar.

Please don't hesitate to call me at 684-8577 if you have any questions regarding these issues.

Very truly yours,

Wayne Barnett
Executive Director