

## **Tips for Planning a Candidate Event**

### **How to Start**

- Set the date, time and location for the event. Inquire with the candidate or staff to determine which days and times work best.
- Try to make sure the event lasts no more than 90 minutes. Keep the meeting focused on issues your community wants to discuss with the candidate.
- Send invitations. Ideally this should be a personal invitation from someone with a connection to the candidate or from a key municipal official.
- Also send invitations to other local officials including school superintendents and principals, county commissioners, and business, civic and community groups.
- Consider offering snacks and refreshments.
- Think about parking and audio/visual equipment needs. Are they available at your site? Is the meeting space adequate to accommodate a larger than normal attendance?
- When planning the agenda, make sure there is adequate time for community members to share stories and raise concerns.
- Follow up with a phone call and confirmation letter.

### **One - Two Weeks Before the Event**

- Develop talking points or scripts for the event and the order in which people will speak.
- Ask candidates to provide biographical information.
- Draft a press release or news advisory announcing the event, follow up with phone calls a week prior to the event.
- Arrange for a photographer.
- Let your local public access channel know that the event will be taking place.
- Follow up with caterer for snacks, if necessary.
- Call candidates to confirm their attendance a few days before the event.
- Make name tags for known guests and speakers.
- Create a sign-in sheet to collect names and email addresses in case there are materials to be shared after the event.

### **The Day of the Event**

- Place signs at all key intersections leading to the location, if necessary.
- Set-up a table with the sign-in sheet and name tags.
- Make sure the meeting host recognizes local elected officials, municipal staff as well as other local leaders in the audience.

### **The Day After**

- Send thank you letters to all those who helped prepare for the event.
- Send thank you letters to all participating candidates and reiterate your key messages.
- Meet with staff to discuss the lessons learned to inform future events.
- Consider publishing a summary of the meeting on town website or town newsletter and share a copy with participating candidates.
- Send a follow up news release.