

LOBBYING POLITICIANS — Councillor, MPP , MP
by Sharon Howarth

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1. INTRODUCTION

My name is Sharon Howarth.
On my issue of Climate Change, I have lobbied politicians in Washington,
Ottawa, in various MPP and City Councillor's around Toronto--not just my
own representative.
It is an empowering experience.

2. POLITICANS ARE MPs, MPPs, CITY COUNCILLORS

- MPs represent me with the Canadian Govt
- MPPs represent me with the Provincial Gov't
- City Councillors represent me at the city level

When I first started lobbying, I thought of them as being different. But they're not really as they are all politicians. So the method to follow when setting up and participating in lobbying is virtually the same.

3. INFO FOR LOBBYING FROM 'CLIMATE FAST'

Before I cover the steps in preparing for lobbying, this is to let you know that, if needed, Climate Fast can share contact information for City Councillors what the "Ask" is of the Councillor or any other info. So don't worry about that

If you are not lobbying with others but on your own, that is perfectly OK. Having a meeting on your own is far more beneficial than not having one at all.

4. STEPS WHEN ORGANIZING LOBBYING

Those who are lobbying as a group, can chose what task they would like to do. Taks can be combined or delivered by one person, if that is what is decided upon :::

---Email politician's office requesting a meeting, including what you or the group want to talk about

Follow up with a phone call and let them know you sent an email and just wanted to make sure they received it. This is another 'friendly' contact which amplifies your issue in the politician's office.

---Communicate with your group when a meeting is obtained

---Research what the politician has said or taken action on that they can be thanked for.

If nothing can be found that majority agree on, thank the politician for their willingness to "Serve the Public".

---Confirm the "ASK" you or your group are requesting

---Take lead at meeting, ie first to introduce the name of the group and say their name

---ask how much time is available for the meeting and keep track so to give time to take a picture with politician

---someone bring a camera to take a picture with politician at end of meeting

5. ROLES DURING MEETING

If someone chooses not to take on a role and to participate by simply observing and being a body in the room, that is still a big help and has great value

Participating in body only, still has great advantage.

---The person who has volunteered to take the lead, thanks the politicians for agreeing to the meeting and says their name

---Each person then says their name

---Someone thanks politician for something they may have said or taken action on, which majority in the group has agreed to.

If nothing can be found or agreed to, thank the politician for their "Service to the Public".

---Someone asks how much time is there for the meeting. As timekeeper, they will let everyone know a couple of minutes before time is up and leave time for picture with politician

--Someone talks about what the group is asking of the politician

EVENTHOUGH ONE CAN BECOME EMOTIONAL, ALWAYS BE
RESPECTFUL

6. EMPOWERING ONESELF FOR MEETING

When I first thought of lobbying, I felt nervous and had to assess where my nervousness was coming from.

I was feeling anxious about Climate Change.

Politicians are the people that vote on passing legislation and who can influence other politicians.

They were the ones that could help relieve my anxiety.

For my own peace of mind, they had to hear from me to know what my priorities are.

Why should that cause me anxiety?

Should allow my anxiety to hold me back from voicing my feelings?

What if the issue and solutions that I was bringing forward different from what they believed?

I was feeling as if I worked for them.

I was feeling as if they told me what to do

I was feeling as if they were my BOSS.

Politicians work for ME.

They depend on my vote to get them elected.

If they are not civil with me they are most likely not civil to others.

They will most likely not get re-elected next time around

I do not work for them.

I do not have to do what they want

They are not my boss.

I could help fire them. They can't fire me.

They can't fire me but I can certainly help fire them.

I can either keep my anxiety of Climate Change bottled inside me or voice my concern to politicians---those who vote on legislation.

Politicians can't hurt or fire me. Much better to voice my feelings and communicate to those who can vote on legislation.

7. CONSERVATIVE SCARBOROUGH MPP MEETING

I lobbied a Conservative MPP in Toronto, on my own and I was not a constituent. On behalf of a couple of constituents, I offered to arrange the meeting. At the time of the meeting, I was the only person available on the day, so I attended on my own and was happy with the outcome.

When I called to let them know I sent an email asking for a meeting, I spoke to the person answering the phone and told him I wanted to talk about climate change and why I was concerned.

I then asked the name of the Chief of Staff and asked to speak to him. I then told the Chief of Staff about how I was feeling about climate change. Even before having a meeting, the Chief of Staff asked me to forward any information that I thought was relevant. He proceeded to set up a meeting.

It may not have been the recommended method of lobbying but I was tired of carrying this heavy burden of climate change and wanted to express my feelings and fears, genuinely and without blame, to one of the people whose party was exacerbating my anxiety.

I felt listened to intently and felt a whole lot better.

HAVE FUN