



The Corporation of the Municipality of Arran-Elderslie

Information Report

Report From: Christine Fraser-McDonald, Clerk

Meeting Date: December 12, 2022

Subject: SRCLK.2022-23 – 2022 Municipal Election Accessibility Report

Attachments: n/a

Report Summary

The *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* states that a Clerk is responsible for conducting an election and shall have regard to the needs of electors and candidates with disabilities.

The Clerk shall prepare a plan regarding the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities and shall make the plan available to the public before voting day in a regular election.

Within 90 days after voting day in a regular election, the Clerk shall prepare a report about the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities and shall make the report available to the public.

Background

In accordance with the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* and the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, the Clerk is authorized to establish procedures and provide appropriate measures to ensure that persons with disabilities can participate fully in the Municipality's 2022 Municipal Election.

The 2022 Municipal Election was held on October 24, 2022. For the 2022 Municipal Election, Council opted to vote by internet and telephone. The internet and telephone voting methods were authorized by By-law No. 70-2021, which was passed on November 8, 2021.

The Municipal Election Accessibility Plan that was adopted by By-law 27-2022 earlier this year, supports and strengthens the municipality's commitment and efforts to respond to the needs of persons with disabilities. The focus of the plan was to ensure that election services were accessible to all electors and candidates, to identify and eliminate barriers for persons with disabilities and to create a positive voting experience for everyone.

Analysis

For the 2022 election, Arran-Elderslie utilized Internet and Telephone Voting. Staff ensured the accessibility of the Municipal Office for electors, candidates and staff as this location was utilized for anyone to access the voting equipment, if needed. The Municipal Office was setup to offer touch screen computers, laptops and a push button telephone, magnifying equipment for any elector who required assistance and to vote at the office location.

Voter Assistance Centres were also set up to be accessible along with laptops and a push button telephone, magnifying lens for any elector who required assistance and to vote at the office location.

The Voter Assistance Centres were established at the Paisley and Tara arenas as well as the Municipal office. The Municipal Office was available during regular and extended hours on October 8 and October 22 and October 24, 2022. The Arenas were available October 18, 19 and 22. The dates and times were posted on Facebook, the municipal website, as well as the local newspaper and general mail to property owners.

In addition to the Voter Assistance Centres, the Act required that a voting place shall be provided at institutions in which 20 or more beds are occupied by persons who are disabled, chronically ill or infirm and at a retirement home in which 50 or more beds are occupied.

Election officials made arrangement to attend the two (2) retirement homes within the Municipality (Elgin Abbey and Parkview Estate). Election Officials arrived with a computer and keyboard and were able assist those who were able to vote.

The Municipal Office has designated accessible parking spots, level pathways leading to facility entrances, automatic door opening devices, or were propped open in a safe manner with doors being wide enough to accommodate a wheelchair or other mobility device.

The Voting booths set up in the Council Chambers and arenas featured a wide area to allow individuals using mobility aids to vote independently and secretly.

Electronic (telephone and internet) Voting provided alternate accessible formats for voting.

Elections Staff ensured Election Procedures were flexible yet secure to allow parttime/seasonal, and full-time residents the ability to have Voter Information Letters reissued, or, for qualified electors to be added to the Voters' List up to and including Election Day.

Simply Voting, the municipality's election vendor, supports a minimum of WCAG 2.0 Level AA accessibility standards and is compatible with all market leading screen readers and web accessible devices. Simply Voting's system fully complies with AODA requirements for optimal user experience.

No candidates were identified with the Clerk as requiring any accommodation.

Link to Strategic/Master Plan

6.6 Modernizing Services

Financial Impacts/Source of Funding

Funds were allocated for the 2022 Municipal Election to assist with any expenditures.

Approved By: Sylvia Kirkwood, CAO