

March 6, 2014

**CORPORATE SERVICES – LEGISLATIVE SERVICES
REPORT – 2014-06**

TO: Mayor Van Bynen and Members of Council

ORIGIN: Lisa Lyons, Deputy Clerk

SUBJECT: Advance Voting Opportunities and Language and Communication for the 2014 Municipal Election

RECOMMENDATIONS

THAT Corporate Services Report – Legislative Services 2014-06 dated March 6, 2014 regarding “Advance Voting Opportunities and Language and Communication for the 2014 Municipal Election” be received and the following recommendations be adopted:

- a) THAT a by-law be enacted to permit the following dates, times and locations for Advance Voting in the Town of Newmarket for the 2014 municipal election;**

Date	Time	Locations
Saturday, October 11, 2014	12:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.	Ray Twinney Recreation Complex
	8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.	Magna Centre Farmer's Market/ Community Centre
Sunday, October 12, 2014	12:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.	Ray Twinney Recreation Complex Magna Centre
Saturday, October 18, 2014	12:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.	Ray Twinney Recreation Complex
	8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.	Magna Centre Farmer's Market/Community Centre
Sunday, October 19, 2014	12:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.	Ray Twinney Recreation Complex Magna Centre
Monday, October 20, 2014	4:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	Ray Twinney Recreation Complex Magna Centre
Tuesday, October 21, 2014	4:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	Ray Twinney Recreation Complex Magna Centre
Wednesday, October 22, 2014	4:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	Multi Unit Residences (to be identified at the discretion of the Clerk)
Thursday, October 23, 2014	4:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	Ray Twinney Recreation Complex Magna Centre

- b) AND THAT a by-law be enacted to provide for reduced voting hours with respect to a voting place that is only for the use of residents of the institution or retirement home;**
- c) AND THAT a by-law be enacted to include other languages in addition to English and French in order to relay election related information to the general public.**

COMMENTS

Advance Voting

Section 43 (1) of the *Municipal Elections Act* (the "Act") specifies that Council shall pass a by-law at least 30 days prior to Voting Day, establishing one or more dates for an advance vote and the hours during which voting location(s) shall be open on advance vote days. Advance voting provides a choice for eligible electors that may not be available on Voting Day.

In 2010 there were a total of eight (8) advance voting days; six (6) days held at the Municipal Office; one (1) day for designated multi unit residences; and the Saturday of the Thanksgiving weekend at the Upper Canada Mall. Although two additional advance vote days were implemented for 2010, there was a 6% decrease in the advance vote from 2006.

For 2014, staff is proposing that eight (8) advance vote days be maintained, however additional vote locations will be offered including the following changes:

- Provide advance voting locations Saturday and Sunday of the Thanksgiving weekend to allow electors who may be away at post-secondary institutions to vote while home for the holiday weekend. This weekend will also offer an early opportunity for voting for those electors who may travel out of the country during the winter months.
- In an effort to improve convenience, locations are recommended at recreation facilities and events where individuals and families are already gathered. The Ray Twinney Recreation Complex and Magna Centre will be utilized throughout the advance voting period. Additionally, advance locations will be established at the Farmer's Market/Community Centre on two (2) Saturday mornings. Feedback from staff in 2010 had indicated that the advance vote location at the Upper Canada Mall was not as well attended as anticipated as many of the interested voters were not eligible Newmarket electors.
- Voting hours on weekends will remain 12 pm to 4 pm except at the Farmer's Market/Community Centre location which will be 8 am to 1 pm. Weekday advance voting will occur from 4 pm to 8 pm.
- Advance voting opportunities will be available at multi unit residences throughout the Town on Wednesday October 22, 2014 from 4 pm to 8 pm. Staff are currently confirming multi unit residences throughout the Town, and it is proposed that the Clerk be delegated the authority to make this determination. At a minimum, the same multi unit residences will be used as established in the 2010 election, where applicable multi unit residence voters, candidates and the community will be advised in advance of October 22nd.
- "Vote Anywhere" - all advance voting locations will operate by utilizing a real-time, live voter strike off system that allows election staff to process electors by accessing an electronic version of the voters' list. This also provides efficiencies when updating the voters' list in advance of the Voting Day.

The objective of improving an election event is to ensure that the election is accessible and easy for the electors to schedule when they intend to vote. The proposed advance voting locations are well distributed throughout the Town, and Staff will continue to ensure that all voting places are accessible. Staff will also ensure the advance voting opportunities and accessible vote opportunities are communicated well in advance of these dates and utilize a variety of communication tactics.

Reduced Voting – Long Term Care Facilities

Section 46(3) of the Act specifies that Council may pass a by-law to provide for reduced voting hours with respect to a voting place that is only for the use of residents of the institution or retirement home. The Act provides that a voting place shall be provided on the premises of:

- An institution in which, on nomination day, 20 or more beds are occupied by persons who are disabled, chronically ill or infirm.
- A retirement home in which, on nomination day, 50 or more beds are occupied.

Staff is currently having discussions with administrators from the institutions and retirement homes that meet the requirements of the Act regarding reduced voting hours at the respective facilities. When identified, a by-law will be brought forward directly to Council at a future meeting. A roving poll will be established at these facilities, being open for a period of two (2) hours which will provide an opportunity for all eligible electors to vote. The operating hours of these polls will be coordinated with the administrators of the locations and be communicated with the electors and candidates accordingly.

Language and Communication

Section 9(2) of the Act specifies that Council can pass a by-law allowing for the use of languages other than English in notices, forms (other than prescribed) and other information provided under the Act. Like other GTA municipalities, in 2010 Newmarket passed a by-law in recognition of the diversity of the community and to make key voting information accessible to more electors by providing it in a language that is easier for them to comprehend.

The 2011 Statistics Canada Census indicates that Newmarket is ranked fourth in York Region for immigration with 24% of the population being immigrants. Staff is working with the York Region Local Immigration Partnership to provide input on the voting process and on a Civic 101 Guide, outlining how government works and the decision making process. Outreach strategies will also be formulated to promote the municipal election to newcomers.

Given the potential communication barriers for participation in the Municipal Election, it would be beneficial to provide voters with election material in languages that most widely represent Newmarket. The proposed by-law is worded broadly to allow for the Clerk's discretion in determining the language groups and scope of information to be provided.

BUSINESS PLAN AND STRATEGIC PLAN LINKAGES

This initiative supports the Town's Vision, Mission and Community Strategic Plan goal of being well-equipped and managed by implementing policies and processes that reflect sound and accountable governance and fiscal responsibility in achieving service excellence.

HUMAN RESOURCE CONSIDERATIONS

There are no human resource considerations associated with this report.

BUDGET IMPACT

All costs associated with Advance Voting and providing election related information in additional languages can be accommodated within the election budget of the Legislative Services department.

CONTACT

For more information on this report, contact Lisa Lyons, Deputy Clerk (ext. 2203, llyons@newmarket.ca).



Lisa Lyons, Deputy Clerk



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