

Conversation Commons Group,
Stoney Creek Library,
777 Highway 8,
Stoney Creek,
Ontario. L8E 5J4.
23rd January 2019

Attention Hamilton Mayor, Hamilton Councillors, Hamilton City Manager and Hamilton City Clerk.

In the recent Hamilton municipal elections in eight of the 15 wards, the first past the post winning candidate received less than 50% of the votes cast, the lowest 25%. Also, we noted that there is a difference between the sizes of the wards, ranging from approximately 31,500 eligible voters to approximately 18,000 eligible voters.

These results indicate that the present voting system is not truly democratic or representative.

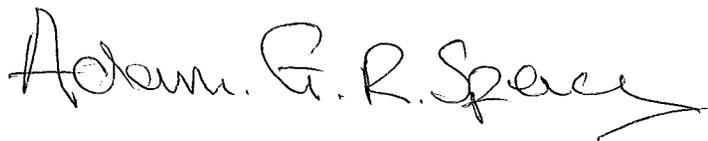
To rectify the inadequacies of the present system of municipal voting for councillors, the following needs to be changed.

First, the fact that a candidate can receive less than 50% of the votes cast means that he/she does not represent a majority in the ward. A more democratic method would be to use ranked voting where voters would rank candidates in order of preference. The candidate with the lowest number of votes would drop out, and the second choice of those who voted for this candidate would be added to those remaining. This process would proceed until one candidate had more than 50% of the votes cast. According to the Hamilton Spectator article by Nicole Thompson, 16th October 2018, London, Ontario has taken the lead in using this system of ranked ballots for their municipal elections on 22nd October 2018. Another article on voter reform by Ed Broadbent and Hugh Segal, (Globe & Mail 9th October 2018), "The evidence is clear. Canada urgently needs proportional representation.....Even the Britain, whose system is the basis of our own, now uses proportional representation in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales."

Secondly, the ward boundaries need to be redrawn so that each ward has a similar number of eligible voters. Then, when councillors are voting on issues, their vote would be equal based on the fact that they represent a similar number of voters. Voters believe that there is fairness when their vote is equal to all others in the larger community.

Lastly, to ensure that the voters have confidence in the candidates, our group proposes that candidates would be required to pass a police check and also would have to demonstrate a basic knowledge and understanding of city governance. Volunteers are required to pass a police check. Why should candidates for council, who are taking on an extremely responsible position, be exempt from this check? Voters need to know that they are voting for the most trusted and knowledgeable candidates.

We respectfully ask that the new council vote on the above points in the next three months, so that these changes can be made for the 2022 Hamilton city election.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Adam G. R. Spence". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Adam. G R Spence, Coordinator of Stoney Creek Library Conversation Commons Group.