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Subject: FCS26023 - 2026 Municipal Election Information Report - Council Agenda GIC Report

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Dear Honourable Mayor & Council

I've spoken to a few of my friends & neighbors, and the general consensus is that Community Polls held on September 24th in select areas in select locations will without a doubt negatively impact the integrity of our upcoming municipal election and further erode public trust.

Other than being mandated to ensure every Voting Location is accessible to electors with disabilities, City Clerks have very broad powers* on the selection of dates and locations.

Council's acceptance (approval to receive) of the above report will also be viewed as a vote to support any alleged impropriety; which is why I'm taking the time to reach out to you.

I appreciate that it's hard to lose focus sometimes when the measure of a successful election process usually boils down to hard numbers: Voter Turnout.

Voter Turnout however is not the municipality's responsibility. The municipality's mandate is to ensure the election is conducted in accordance with the principles of the Act.

*The principles include, but aren't limited to **Voters and candidates shall be treated fairly and consistently***

Will holding Advanced Votes in some wards 30 days before Voting date, but in other wards not until 2 weeks later, enhance or diminish the integrity of the process in the eyes of the electorate?

Will this decision increase or erode public trust in the eyes of the electorate?

Timing: September 24, 2026

As everyone knows, name recognition is a key component to any successful campaign.

Name recognition is garnered through various means; one of which is advertising via lawn signs.

Signs don't vote however the date that signs are allowed to be used for name recognition purposes, is when the playing field is level for incumbents & non-incumbents campaigns.

Lawn signs cannot be placed on properties until September 31st; a full week after an Advanced Vote will take place.

In addition, in the last election, we had historical voter turn-outs during the Advanced voting..

Will holding Advanced Votes ahead of allowing lawn signs enhance or diminish the integrity of the election?

Will holding Advanced Votes ahead of allowing lawn signs increase or erode public trust?

Locations:

(a) Everyone also knows, GOTV is key to a successful campaign.

With respect, there is a fine line between methods a municipality uses to increase voter turnout or equitable accessibility for the whole electorate v. the public's perception the municipality is GOTV for a campaign by bringing the Voting Place to certain electors in only certain wards.

FWIW, the Auditor's report did not identify this need under their 50 recommendations nor have the locations been made public.

From experience, I can share with you what occurs in an apartment building where the Voting Place is located in the common area.

Campaigning on that date is not allowed in the Voting Place however it is allowed throughout other areas of the building where dwellings are located.

Door knocking, telephone calls & directing occupants on their way in/out of the building to "go vote for xxx" is a reality.

It's a method that is not unlike the municipality appointing an Election Official to go from house to house, on the heels of a volunteer canvasser, & the occupants casting their vote on the spot.

(b) There is a significant difference between seniors residences and apartment buildings where the residents are mostly seniors.

Voting in Senior's Residences is mandatory (retirements homes with more than 50 beds such as Amica, Seasons etc)

Outside of retirement & LTC homes, birthdates and/or mobility issues are not a matter of public record on the Voter's List

Presently, we have processes in place in every ward to address mobility issues for the *whole* electorate.

Were locations selected based on anecdotal information and by whose request?

How was the public even made aware a request could be made?

(c) Although high density (>100 units) buildings are allowed to be chosen as a voting location, at the core of this selection process is equal access (fairness & consistency) for the electorate. This would encompass dates, times, locations, etc.

In my neighbourhood, where access to voting is by car we have 3 high-density apartment buildings (@ 575 dwellings) plus 4 more mid-density within 5 min. walking distance.

I can tell you anecdotally 2 of 3 are places that are primarily senior occupied.

Regular Advance Voting is scheduled to occur at a location that is 7 kms away a full two weeks after other Hamiltonians are being given a location to vote.

From what I've been able to gather, not only will this area not have a Community Poll, there will also not be a Community Poll located anywhere in the ward for Ward 10 residents to vote on the same day as other voters for their next mayor.

Is it fair that a candidate in Ward X can cross off names on their Voter's List a full 2 weeks before candidates in other wards can?

Will restricting Advance Voting on September 24th to high density apartments in only certain wards, enhance or decrease the public's perception re: principle of Fairness & Consistency for the Electorate?

Will introducing High Density Apartments as a voting place (where eager members of the public can 'canvass') , increase or erode public trust?

As always, with respect,

Viv Saunders

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Number and location of voting places

45 (1) The clerk shall establish the number and location of voting places for an election as he or she considers most convenient for the electors. 1996, c. 32, Sched., s. 45 (1).

Accessibility

(2) In establishing the locations of voting places, the clerk shall ensure that each voting place is accessible to electors with disabilities. 2009, c. 33, Sched. 21, s. 8 (23).