

Candidate has alternate suggestion for ward system

As a candidate for Aurora Town Council, I commend the efforts of those citizens who advocate a ward system.

We will certainly discover the leanings of our Community for a Ward System versus an At-Large System when it is put to the electorate on the 2014 Municipal Election ballot.

I am concerned however that a strict ward system, like the current strict at-large system, may have serious shortcomings for the Town of Aurora. I find it somewhat disconcerting that one of the other candidates for Council took to The Auroran recently to publicly chastise the Mayor for his views on this important issue.

So, let's look at the issue rather than the players. A look at the Municipal Government Act indicates that there are many choices. The range includes:

? At-large councillors with at-large voting as at present (one group of councillor candidates with all voting residents selecting from all candidates). Each person voting can vote for eight candidates (or the proposed reduction to six candidates but that is not addressed in this letter).

? Ward councillors with at-large voting (councillor candidates grouped on an area basis with voting residents selecting the best candidates in each group). Each person voting can vote for eight candidates.

? Ward councillors with ward voting (eight councillor candidates grouped on an area basis with voting residents restricted to selecting from candidates for the ward where the residents live). Each person voting can vote for one candidate for the ward in which they reside.

? Combinations of ward and at-large councillors with combinations of ward and at-large voting ? such as four at-large councillors and four ward councillors with at-large voting for the four at-large candidates and ward voting for the ward candidates.

My suggestion for consideration is that the next (2018) Aurora Town Council selects the fourth option and becomes a virtual combination of ward and at-large candidates.

The Thunder Bay City Council is a good model to look at. It consists of a mayor and twelve councillors. The mayor and five of the councillors are elected at large, with one councillor being elected for each of the city's seven wards.

The Ontario Municipal Board provides that as much as is possible the total population in each ward should not be greater or less than twenty-five percent of the average population per ward. Aurora could be divided into four wards divided equally by address based upon postal code addresses. Vote for your specific ward councillor and also vote for four councillors at-large. This will allow for a combination of a Ward (of equal representation) and an At-Large System that meets the specific unique needs of each of the four Wards as well as the overall municipal governing services legislative parameters and administrative requirements. Every four years ward boundaries would need to be reviewed to ensure equal ward representation as population density changes evolve.

Therefore, in summary, as a councillor, I would support a process whereby the City Clerk be directed to initiate the process of conducting a Ward Boundary Review and report back concerning the issuance of a Request for Proposal (RFP) for professional services, legislative parameters and administrative requirements and that the City Clerk be directed to initiate the process of implementing a Combination Ward and At-Large System and report back concerning the issuance of an RFP for such implementation.

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