

## Excerpt from Council Meeting Minutes – November 1, 2022

### 9. LS71-2022 Accessible Election

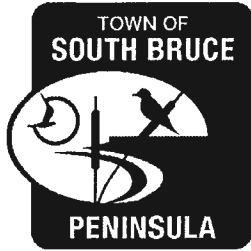
The Director of Legislative Services/Clerk explained the legislative requirement to provide this report. Staff worked to remove barriers for those with accessibility challenges.

Discussion included the ease of the new voting system, the Voter's List and how it will be provided from Ontario and not MPAC in the next election.

#### **R-397-2022**

It was **Moved** by J. Kirkland, **Seconded** by T. Bell and **Carried**

**That** report LS71-2022 Accessible Election, be received for information purposes.



**Angie Cathrae**  
**Director of Legislative**  
**Services/Clerk**

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**Report To: Council, November 1, 2022**

**Report No: LS71-2022**

**Subject: Accessible Election**

**Recommendation:** That report LS71-2022 Accessible Election, be received for information purposes.

**Link to Strategic Planning:** Goal 1: Transparent and Accountable Governance would be the general link to the Strategic Plan

**Background:** In accordance with Section 12.1 (3) of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, as amended, the Clerk is required within 90 days after voting day to submit a report to Council about the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities.

Throughout the election process, Town staff (election officials) identified barriers and worked diligently to overcome the barriers.

The completion of forms proved challenging for some electors; sometimes an elector could not understand what was being asked on the forms and other times the forms contained writing which was too small for the elector to read. Election Officials aided electors in completing the forms, which made the process easier for electors, took up less of the elector's time and aided the elector in successfully reaching their goals. Election Officials also discovered that some people had difficulty standing at the counter while completing the forms. Through a re-arrangement of the upstairs lobby furniture and placement of a table and chairs, electors were provided with a comfortable location to complete forms.

Election Officials assisted electors by offering to explain in detail, the process of both internet and telephone voting. The video produced by Simply Voting was played for electors as some electors are visual learners as opposed to audible learners. Instructions were also included on the Town's website for those who wanted to see a visual demonstration in the comfort of their own homes.

Physical office barriers were identified and overcome. We encountered electors who were unable to negotiate the stairs to access the Clerk's Department and there were individuals

who were unable to walk from their vehicle to come into Town Hall to file paperwork. In those instances, staff “went to the elector” providing service in the downstairs lobby and in the parking lot outside of Town Hall. At close of regular business on voting day, electors were received in the downstairs area of Town Hall in order to eliminate the need for electors to negotiate stairs. The downstairs area is accessible with full push button door opening capabilities and single level access. Due to continued COVID safety protocols, while one-way traffic is encouraged (meaning that electors would have to navigate one flight of stairs to leave the building), exceptions were made for those with mobility issues.

Election Officials identified early in the process that people were afraid that when using the phone system, they would not hear the selections or would not be able to remember the selections. The Deputy Clerk developed an excellent resource sheet which we provided on the Town website and to both candidates and electors. We mailed this resource sheet, when requested. This resource sheet mirrored what a person would hear when casting a ballot by phone. Many people were thankful for this resource and felt that it assisted them with their voting experience.

An alternative voting system is used to provide an accessible choice to voters who cannot attend a traditional vote polling station. The Town used the Vote by Telephone and Internet alternative voting system in the 2022 election. Most people have access to mail to receive their voter information letter, and to a telephone or the internet to cast their vote. This alternative voting system allowed people the opportunity to vote in their homes or to seek the assistance of a trusted friend or family member. Election Officials offered in person assistance at Town Hall to those who required it. The elector was required to make an appointment at a time convenient to them. The candidates and/or scrutineers would be contacted so that they could be permitted to attend the appointment to view the voting process. While several people inquired about this option, none actually booked appointments as they did not wish for people to view them while voting. Some were identified as not having accessibility issues but instead looking for an in-person voting experience.

Personal support workers and representatives of local seniors’ organizations and churches contacted Election Officials seeking guidance on how to assist the various seniors and physically challenged individuals in our community. After detailed discussions including the review of the Simply Voting video and provision of the resource sheet, Election Officials received positive feedback regarding the ease of providing assistance to those who were anxious about navigating this new alternative voting method.


### **Options:**

This is an information report which is being presented in accordance with the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, as amended. There are no options to consider at this time.

### **Attachments:**

One Excerpt from *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, as amended.

**Inter-departmental Impact:** All Election Officials worked together to provide accessible customer service to electors during the 2022 Municipal Election.

**Financial Implications:**  Approval of Director of Financial Services/Treasurer

There are no budget implications with respect to this report.

**Expected Date of Completion:** Once Council passes a resolution accepting this information report, no further Council action will be required.

Prepared by,



Angie Cathrae  
Director of Legislative Services/Clerk

Date: October 25, 2022

Respectfully submitted,



Angie Cathrae  
Director of Legislative Services/Clerk

Date: October 25, 2022

Approved by,



Bill Jones, CMM III  
Chief Administrative Officer

Date: OCTOBER 25, 2022

**12 (3) Clerk - powers - require proof - identification**

Subject to subsection (4), the power conferred by subsection (1) includes power to require a person, as a condition of doing anything or having an election official do anything under this Act, to furnish proof that is satisfactory to the election official of the person's identity or qualifications, including citizenship or residency, or of any other matter. 1996, c. 32, Sch., s. 12 (3); 2002, c. 17, Sch. D, s. 4; 2016, c. 15, s. 10 (1).

**12 (4) Clerk - powers - require proof - exception**

The power conferred by subsection (1) does not include the power to require a person, for the purposes of the procedure set out in subsection 52 (1), to furnish proof of identity and residence in addition to what is prescribed for the purposes of subparagraph 1 ii of subsection 52 (1). 2016, c. 15, s. 10 (2).

**12.1 (1) Electors and candidates with disabilities**

A clerk who is responsible for conducting an election shall have regard to the needs of electors and candidates with disabilities. 2009, c. 33, Sch. 21, s. 8 (8).

**12.1 (2) Plan - barriers**

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. 2016, c. 15, s. 11, *part*.

*Date - Clerk to make plan available - Last day is Sunday, October 23, 2022.*

**12.1 (3) Report - barriers**

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. 2016, c. 15, s. 11, *part*.

*Date - Report to council - Monday, January 23, 2023.*

**13 (1) Clerk - to give notice - how - when**

Any notice or other information that this Act requires the clerk to give shall be given in a form and manner and at a time that the clerk considers adequate to give reasonable notice or to convey the information, as the case may be. 1996, c. 32, Sch., s. 13 (1).