

We as residents of West Elgin would like to take this opportunity to bring a petition forward for consideration to move away from a ward system of councilors to a council comprised of a Mayor and 4 councilors at large.

West Elgin is comprised of the former township of Aldborough, the village of Rodney, and the village of West Lorne.

In 1994 Aldborough township and the village of Rodney amalgamated to form an expanded township of Aldborough.

The present day municipality of West Elgin was established Jan 1 1998 through the amalgamation of the expanded township of Aldborough and the village of West Lorne.

It was a decision at that time to form 3 wards allowing local representation on council from Rodney, West Lorne and Aldborough Township. This structure of council makeup was well suited at the time, but today 25years since the start of amalgamation, decisions of council are indeed West Elgin decisions with the interest and decisions being made executed using West Elgin tax payer dollars as one with an interest for all.

Some facts as per the 2021 Census report:

- West Elgin has approx. 2100 dwellings
- with an approx. population of 5100
- of which approx. 80% are eligible voters

Some further facts from the election stats website show that

- 2010 Election had an approx. 42% voter turnout

-2014 Election had approx. 30% voter turnout

-2018 Election had approx. 21% voter turnout

-2022 Election had a Mayor acclaimed, Deputy Mayor acclaimed and 2 councilors acclaimed. This resulted in election for only a Ward 1 councilor with 344 votes cast. Which is approx 7% of the eligible voters having any influence on the selection of council

- This shows a progressively falling interest of voter turnout for varying reasons.

The 2010 and 2014 councils, had Councilors representing wards they did not reside in. The present council has no councilors living in the ward they represent. Reinforcing the idea that local representation is no longer a factor.

Therefore presenting the proposal to change to a council consisting of a Mayor and 4 councilors at large (with the councilor receiving the most votes assuming the deputy mayors chair) is a logical idea.

This should attract greater voter turnout and no situations where there is a Ward or wards with an acclaimed position resulting in eligible voters not bothering to vote for Mayor. Everyone would have a reason to exercise their vote.

An election with a Mayor and 4 councilors at large, would probably cost the municipality less due to less logistics involved to run the election.

CONCLUSION. With a Mayor and 4 councilors at large system, we as a municipality should benefit from the strongest council representation available with greater voter interest and turnout.