

REPORT TO COUNCIL

The Corporation of the Township of Ear Falls

Date: December 5, 2018

Subject: Accessible Elections – 2018 Municipal Election

For Information

The Clerk / Returning Officer is required to present a Report to Council on the Accessibility Measures that were addressed in the 2018 Municipal Election within 90 days of the Election. In accordance with Section 12.1(1) of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, as amended the Township of Ear Falls has taken the following actions to address the needs of electors and candidates with disabilities:

1. An Accessible Election Plan was developed as part of the 2018 Municipal Election Policy Manual to proactively consider potential barriers and methods to alleviate barriers for electors and candidates with disabilities.
2. A Voting Place that maximized physical accessibility features was chosen. The Council Chambers in the Municipal Government Building located at 2 Willow Crescent was selected for Voting Day and the Advance Voting Day due to the building's central nature within the community, ease of access by electors, clearly noted accessible parking, a ramped entry with a handrail, and entry doors that are at grade, of a sufficient width and have accessible door hardware.

The entire property at 2 Willow Crescent was designated as the Voting Place, which permitted Deputy Returning Officers the option of taking a ballot to an elector in the parking lot, if physical mobility issues restricted access to the building.

3. An election worker position, the Customer Service / Accessibility Officer, was advertised to assist electors that may have required assistance. This position was not filled due to a lack of applicants; however Municipal Office staff provided support in this capacity during Voting Day and the Advance Voting Day. This enabled electors to service provided in accordance with the Township of Ear Falls Accessible Policy - Customer Service.
4. Ballots were printed in an easy-to-read format to assist in reducing visual barriers.
 - sans serif font
 - large print
 - high colour contrast (white on black; white on blue)
 - matte (non-glare) paper

5. Posters and flyer information was presented in large print format to assist in reducing visual barriers.
6. Magnifying sheets and additional lighting (motion activated) were provided at each voting booth to assist in reducing visual barriers.
7. Service Animals were permitted to access each Voting Place.
8. Election workers were trained in methods for good Customer Service and accessibility requirements for electors including:
 - How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disability
 - How to interact with persons who use an assistive device or service animal
 - How to use equipment or devices available to assist with the provision of services
 - What to do if a person is having difficulty accessing the service
9. Seating areas were provided in the voting location for electors needing a rest.
10. Election procedures provided flexibility for a friend or interpreter to assist an elector.
11. Voting tables of an adequate size and height were selected for each polling station to ensure that there was adequate room to maneuver.
12. The Township has an established procedure to receive feedback on service delivery related to accessibility. As well, the Township has an established procedure to address notices of service disruption, provision of documents in accessible formats, and Employment Standards (i.e. Election Worker recruitment, assessment, selection, training)

Action Items

Consideration of Alternative Voting Methods may improve accessibility measures for people with disabilities related to mobility. Internet and telephone voting are solutions that facilitate the opportunity for electors to cast their ballot from a "vote anywhere any time" perspective. These alternative Voting options will be reviewed with Council prior to the next Municipal Election.

Clerk Treasurer Administrator: _____