

Legal Time Constraints and Administrative Considerations

Legal Time Constraints

The next municipal election will be held October 16, 2017.

Section 144(1) of the *Municipal Government Act* (MGA) states that a bylaw changing the number of Councillors or changing ward boundaries must be passed at least 180 days before the next election to be effective for the next election. To meet this provision, third reading of the bylaw should be passed by Council no later than April 18, 2017.

A bylaw changing the number of Councillors under section 144 of the MGA or changing the ward structure under section 148 of the MGA must be advertised at least once per week for two consecutive weeks before receiving second reading. In order to meet the advertising requirements, first reading of the bylaw should be passed by March 28, 2017.

Under section 231(4) eligible voters may petition Council to not pass the bylaw or to hold a referendum on the bylaw. The petition must be filed within 60 days after the last date on which the proposed bylaw was advertised. Administration has 30 days following the receipt of the petition to declare to Council whether the petition is sufficient or not. The total time required for this process is 90 days. 90 days before March 28, 2017 is December 28, 2016. **First reading of the bylaw should be passed by the December 13, 2016 Council meeting.** This time frame allows for the worst case scenario.

Administrative Considerations

Planning for the 2017 election will begin in November 2016. One of the first steps of election planning is reviewing voting subdivisions and voting stations. Until the ward boundaries are finalized, this cannot be done. Administratively, it would be beneficial if third reading of the bylaw was passed no later than October 25, 2016. Taking into consideration the 90 day petition period, first reading should be passed on or before the June 21, 2016 Council meeting.