

Three Rivers Electoral Boundaries Commission

Summary of Recommendations

September 28, 2020

BACKGROUND:

On February 11, 2020, Three Rivers Council appointed the following individual to its Electoral Boundaries Commission:

Heather MacLean - Chair
Anne VanDonkersgoed
Patricia Uptegrove

Prior to appointing the Commission, Council had resolved that there shall be eight (8) wards with one (1) Councillor to be elected from each ward.

The Commission's mandate was to recommend an area and boundary for each of the 8 wards, ensuring that the number of electors in each ward is comparable, and that the number of electors in each proposed ward is within ten (10) per cent above or below the average number of electors in all of the proposed wards.

SUMMARY OF PROCESS:

The members of the Commission feel it is important for Council to understand the complexity and difficulty of our task. Three Rivers covers a large geographic area where population density varies greatly. The tools provided to the Commission to complete our work were a spreadsheet listing current voters and a paper copy map of Three Rivers showing current ward boundaries.

In order to test the feasibility of new ward boundaries, the Commission had to identify the roads and streets within the new boundary and manually change the ward for each address within the spreadsheet to determine the number of voters within the new boundary. This was a very time consuming and labour intensive task but it did allow the commission to get to know each street, road, and corresponding voter count intimately.

We considered many factors when determining wards (familiar groupings, major roads, etc) but population density and projected population growth was seen as the most critical factor. We felt it was very important to develop a ward structure that could stand the test of time so it would not have to be revisited every few years. Three Rivers has population density in both Montague & Georgetown and trends indicate that multi unit development will continue to occur in those areas.

The ward structure we are recommending combines sections of densely populated areas with more rural regions. This structure ensures that as the population grows in & around our main service centres, the 8 wards will remain relatively close in size and number of electors. The recommended structure also mirrors how residents live in the ward (people living in many different areas of Three Rivers but traveling into more populated areas for services like schools, grocery stores, recreation, etc).

We recognize the proposed ward structure is very different from what was utilized in the first Three Rivers election but the change was necessary in order to meet the criteria determined by Council (8 wards with 1 councillor elected from each ward within 10% variance in voters per ward). The only other structure that could have met the council's criteria would involve creating 4-5 wards within a very small geographic area in Montague and Georgetown with 3-4 very large rural wards surrounding them. The commission did not feel this would be a fair or balanced approach to ward structure.

Hundreds of hours were spent working with the data, moving boundaries and testing our work. The commission had to reformat the data several times to meet requirements of Elections PEI and 911 in order to develop the maps that are being presented to Council today. Every line and boundary was carefully considered and necessary in order to balance the number of electors per ward. We are pleased to provide this final recommendation to council and welcome any questions you may have.

The following table displays the final property count and voter count for each of the new 8 wards.

Ward	Property Count	Voter Count
1	750	695
2	800	735
3	511	679
4	561	690
5	518	664
6	497	651
7	650	692
8	602	690
TOTAL	4889	5496