

RICHMOND COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

PUBLIC HEARING

DISTRICT BOUNDARY REVIEW

NOVEMBER 22, 2006

Location: Council Chambers, Municipal Office

Warden Boudreau called the Public Hearing to order at 7:00 p.m.

Warden Boudreau indicated that Councillor Boudreau was unable to attend because of Parent Teacher night.

Warden Boudreau indicated that tonight is the third public hearing being held, noting that the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board requests that the process of examining municipal boundaries be done, noting that the purpose of the public hearings is to address the boundaries of Richmond County.

Warden Boudreau indicated that a hand-out has been provided to the individuals present, which outlines the variances within the districts, noting that boundary guidelines stipulate that voter equality is the ultimate democratic principle, and that variances should not exceed 10%. He noted that only District #5 and District #7 fall within this range, which will result in significant boundary changes to most districts.

Warden Boudreau indicated the hand-out specifically asks three questions and requested that the three individuals present express their views on any or all questions. He noted that the results from all public hearings will be taken into consideration by Committee of the Whole, prior to being submitted to the U.A.R.B.

Mr. Victor David, District #1, Arichat

Mr. David indicated he felt there should be a reduction in the number of Councillors and that there should be an increase in payment for the Councillors. He indicated the MLA represents 7,000 people, while the MP represents 30,000 people, therefore he felt that five Councillors could easily represent a population of 7,000. He further noted that there could be two Councillors representing Isle Madame (one Councillor representing Districts 1 & 3; with the second Councillor representing Districts 2 & 4); and three Councillors representing the Mainland (one Councillor representing Districts 5 & 7; one Councillor representing Districts 6 & 9 and one Councillor representing Districts 8 & 10).

Mr. David indicated he would prefer a Mayor elected by all voters of the County, which would be a full time position, and which he felt would be a good representation. He also indicated he felt that this would entice good people to run for the position.

Mr. David indicated that running a county is like running a business, which requires committed individuals, and noted he felt that a Mayor elected by the whole County will be elected by the residents and felt this position should be made full time; also noting this needs to be run as a business and be executed properly.

Mr. Lorenzo Boudreau, District #1, Arichat

Mr. Boudreau indicated he felt the number of Councillors should not be reduced, noting that all Councillors are doing a good job, and he indicated he felt that the pay for the Councillors should be left up to administration.

Mr. Boudreau indicated the Councillors should continue to elect the Warden because they know best who is the best qualified for the position, because they work with these individuals year round, noting that the public don't put enough time at meetings to know what goes on.

Mr. Boudreau indicated he felt the boundaries should not change, noting he felt that Councillors in each area should look after it better.

Mr. Boudreau commended Councillor Cotton for the wonderful job and great work done in his community; and noted he would like to see more Councillors do the same.

Mr. Boudreau expressed grave concerns with severe foul smells in several communities on Isle Madame (i.e. West Arichat and D'Escousse), and urged Councillors to attempt to correct these problems. He also noted that the mess at Claude's garage in D'Escousse should be cleaned up, because it is a complete disaster, which is not impressive to tourists; and also stressing that he feels the reason why no one else attends meetings is because nothing is being done.

Mr. Boudreau indicated he has been following Council meetings for a long period of time and he is very happy that Municipal Council supports the Richmond Arena, and also stressed the need for proper signage in the county, although he felt that the requested \$150,000 for signs at the last meeting was significant.

Mr. Boudreau noted that the number of voters are going down all the time, and something should be done.

Mr. Boudreau noted that he had did a map for Gerry Bourque several years ago, with boundary changes.

Mr. Vincent Landry, District #2, Petit De Grat

Mr. Landry indicated he felt that residents are being better represented by their own Councillors in their own areas under the present system of ten Councillors, noting that he felt residents would not be as well represented if represented by a Councillor outside their own district.

Mr. Landry indicated he felt the Warden should continue to be elected by Councillors because he felt that residents put their trust in their own Councillors who can decide who they want for Warden. He indicated he is very happy with the way things are being run, and indicated he felt that people want to leave well enough alone, since there are only three people in attendance at tonight's hearing.

Councillors' Comments:

Warden Boudreau indicated that there are areas that require aligning, and this has not been addressed, and asked if anyone had any further comments or suggestions regarding this matter.

Councillor Martell indicated that the question of how to align the boundaries has not been addressed in any of the three public hearings.

Warden Boudreau indicated he had received a petition signed by 18 residents (12 households), who do not wish to pay for sidewalks, and therefore requesting to have their boundary changed and move from District #6 to District #5 (copy attached).

Deputy Warden McNamara indicated that she and Councillor Cotton had held discussions with these residents several years ago, who felt that they had more of a common interest with the community of Kempt Road, and she felt that this was the logical thing to do.

Councillor Cotton noted that in 1999, Municipal Council felt that Black River Road should be used as a cut-off and everything else should be in District #5, and indicated that two residents were moved into District #6 from District #7 at that time.

Warden Boudreau indicated that 12 individuals from the Lennox Passage area had also submitted a request to be considered in a district change from District #6.

Councillor Cotton thanked Warden Boudreau for the manner in which he dealt with the Lennox Passage residents at last week's public hearing, because he was unable to attend. Councillor Cotton indicated the residents of Lennox Passage never saw themselves as part of the community of Louisdale, and now they can be considered for another community, noting that he feels this could help District #3.

Councillor Beaton indicated he felt that 547 specified as the number of names on the final list of electors for his district is incorrect, noting that when he had reviewed the list, he realized that many names had been left off the voters list, and that number should be 638, which would bring the number up by at least 5%. He noted that there had not been a municipal election held in his district in 2004, because he was re-elected by acclamation. He indicated that there is a total confusion in federal and provincial lists whereby all residents in Lochside, Pondville and Rocky Bay Road all vote in District #3, other than the municipal election, whereby some vote in District #1, while others vote in District #3. He indicated he felt the only way to get an accurate number would be to do a head count.

Councillor Beaton stressed the need to make a decision regarding boundaries within his district, noting many residents in his district are unsure if they belong in District #1 or District #3.

Warden Boudreau indicated that Councillors may also bring forth concerns or suggestions received from residents that will help inequality, which can be incorporated in the report that will be submitted to the UARB. Warden Boudreau noted that Councillors represent individual districts, but if everyone works as a group, then they help each other to represent all of the county, and also help to reach a common ground.

Warden Boudreau thanked everyone for attending.

Warden Boudreau adjourned the public hearing at 7:40 p.m.