

REPORT ON 2006 ELECTION

NOVEMBER 27, 2006

FOR: The Council of Tiny Township

FROM: The Federation of Tiny Township Shoreline Associations

**THE DECISION TO STAY WITH VOTING BY MAIL** was most welcome. In a Township where so many voters are at a distance on election day, it is especially appropriate.

**STAFF MANAGEMENT OF THE COUNT WAS EXCELLENT.**

Scrutineers were impressed at how hard and efficiently the staff worked on Election Day. And the new computerized tabulation system got the results out much more quickly than ever before.

**A FEW CHANGES MIGHT MAKE THE NEXT ELECTION EVEN BETTER**, among them

- 1) **Improvements to the Voters' List.** Inevitably the **Preliminary List will be flawed, but we think more could be done** to eliminate those who have moved or died, to include those who have recently moved to Tiny, and to include spouses. We suggest that, several months before the next election, a **Voter Information Sheet** be distributed to every address in the Township, asking the occupants to update names and mailing addresses.
- 2) **More vigorous use of the Township website.** The Election 2006 section of the Township's website was already very useful. We suggest that the website also be used to emphasize **key dates** – the date when the Preliminary Voters' List will be available in the Township Offices, the date when voters should have received their packages, the date by which votes should be in the mail. It could also be used to let people know about **unanticipated**

**problems** (such as, in this election, the widespread failure to include signed declaration forms).

A good, complete election website section could potentially **provide staff with relief** during a busy time. Queries could be directed there; as well the phone answering message could suggest checking the website for election information.

On election night (and perhaps at other key moments) we also wonder whether the **banner headline** could be used? It would have been great to see the results on the banner headline.

- 3) **Keeping the Township Offices open for a number of hours on Saturdays** through the election period so that problems could be dealt with. It is difficult for most voters who live at a distance from Tiny to resolve problems if the Township offices are only open from 9 to 4:30, Monday to Friday.
- 4) **Making changes to the Vote-by-Mail packages.** The lack of clarity in the instructions to voters, a problem that resulted in many invalid votes, has received plenty of press coverage. There were a couple of other problems too. A larger secrecy envelope would have minimized the inadvertent cuts made to ballots as Township staff opened them. If each Township using the system had had a different coloured envelope, Canada Post would not have been as confused about where to send them.
- 5) **Collecting information about voting patterns on a poll-by-poll basis.** In previous elections, the ballots were sorted by poll prior to being opened and counted. The resulting information is useful to all candidates and potential candidates, and we think it is important to ensure that it be available in future elections.

Poll by poll data confirms the integrity of the count. This in fact is a practice endorsed by the electoral officer of Canada.
- 6) **Supplying an official, secure, well-advertised drop box** at the Township Offices so that votes can be dropped off during evenings and weekends. Again, particularly for those who live at a distance, this would be very helpful.