

Municipal elections

Dear editor:

It is deplorable that we have a wonky system for the election of municipal councils across Ontario.

Why is there such a long period between the opening of nominations and the actual election day ? some 10 months later?

I feel that this huge gap can only benefit the current councillors who are running again for the next four year term.

Sitting councillors get the press and publicity. Meanwhile, a citizen who has decided to run can only, basically, watch. A short run?up to a municipal election can give all participants equal opportunity.

Any municipal election should last eight weeks: from nomination-opening to the actual election day. Some will say that we need months to get ready which is nonsense. Everything is on a computer somewhere in a government office. Lately, we've gotten into the habit of having elections, at all levels, at close proximity. The election lists are available and only need updating for those of us who have moved.

Perhaps the running of an election has become big business and those businesses want the long-haul to make money. Also, it's sad that even with all the long effort to get to election day, a myriad of things go wrong. I've seen screw-ups at polling stations on election day. Why?

A shorter election period could improve voter-turnout. At the present, only 30 per cent of eligible voters bother to turn into a polling station on election day. Most men and women on the voters-lists are more excited about going to the food store or the beer-one than marking their 'X' on a municipal ballot.

Short municipal election periods might liven-up the infamous all-candidate meetings which can be deady-dull and excruciatingly long. A short election-period would concentrate both the minds of the candidates and the people asking the questions.

We must engage the electorate ? endorsing a 10 month election period does nothing for our democratic aspirations, it only stifles the system. The reduced voter turnout, election after election, is pointing us in only one direction ? dictatorship.

Vaughan G. Harris,

Tottenham

Editor's note: Vaughan, I agree. The 10 month campaigning period is torture ? even for the media. I too dread the infamous 'All Candidates Meeting?' which I, in fact, host for the Free Press. I want to change how things are done this election period. Can you suggest a better way? Also, let me assure you that even though we print many, many pictures of politicians 'kissing babies' in our pages, it's only because that's what's happening in our community ? if I'm missing something, let me know. That said, let me assure you that equal press coverage will be given to all candidates running in the 2014 election. Anything a candidate wants to share ? so long as it is not libelous or to the detriment of another campaign ? will be printed in these pages. Send it in. Until the news is received each week, my pages are empty.