

Gravenhurst Ward Boundary Review and Recommendations

I am responding to the material presented at the Opera House yesterday. I have evaluated all 7 options presented along with the comments as to their merits and failures against the criteria.

The criteria presented were in order of importance, equity or parity, simplicity, accountability, communities of interest, allowance for growth, recognizable boundary lines and size and composition of council.

The last criterion is no longer a consideration as your research showed that a 9 member council is appropriate for a municipality with the current and projected Gravenhurst population and that change in the municipal wide election of the District councillors is outside your scope.

The options which best meet the criteria are options 5 A and 5 B with 5 wards and 1 councillor per ward. The division into 5 wards meets the equity and simplicity and accountability and growth criteria and is the most successful on these dimensions. **For that reason the concept of 5 wards and one councillor per ward should be adopted.** The population disparity between wards 3 and 4 is still quite high so the boundary change suggestions below could bring greater parity.

The variation between 5 A and 5 B is in how you handle the urban area and the adjacent area along the Lake Muskoka shore to the Bracebridge boundary. Between these 2 choices I would suggest that 5B is the best option as it keeps the representation for the downtown area with one councillor and also reflects the character of the old town as different from the areas of newer development to the north part of the town.

So I would prefer adopting Option 5 and option 5B.

There is however a problem with the the boundaries as outlined in the rural/lake areas. You have proposed that the 2 large lakes, Kahshe and Muldrew, be partitioned across wards. It is important to recognize that **lake residents identify strongly with the lake community as a whole.** No matter by what route you access a lake you are a “Kahshe cottager”, a “Muldrew resident”. Many of the issues which these residents would bring to a councillor are shared by all residents on the lake. You should consider a lake as a traditional community of interest. To this end I suggest a redrawing of the boundaries of wards 3 and 4, which will increase the equity and allow for the lake communities to remain intact.

This suggestion is based on rough estimates of the population effects of the changes proposed, but equity should be the overriding principle. You will again have to crunch some numbers and draw the boundaries accordingly. It is important to stress that the idea is to keep the lake communities intact and populations in the wards roughly equal.

I suggest for ward 4

- Extend the western boundary of the ward to highway 11 or to a straight line drawn north south from the bend on the highway adjacent to Kahshe Lake. This would place all of Kahshe Lake in ward 4. Your decision as to the highway or a north south line should be made on population.
- At the same time take a line from the current intersection of the proposed ward 3 and 4 boundaries and highway 11 just north of Kahshe Lake and angle north east to the corner of the municipality just north of Buck Lake. This would remove Silver and Sunny and Doe lakes and adjacent rural areas from the proposed ward 4. Add these areas to ward 3. The rationale is to balance the large population brought in by the Kahshe Lake shift. This area has not traditionally been part of the old ward 4 and could easily be served by a councillor from the old ward 3 area as the rural and lake character are much the same both sides of the highway.

I suggest for ward 3

- Add the area east of the highway to the ward as proposed above
- Slightly change the northern boundary of the ward by incorporating all of south Muldrew Lake in Ward 2.

With these slight boundary changes you achieve equity, simplicity, accountability and maintenance of communities of interest.

Hence, I **recommend adoption of the Option 5B with the boundary changes proposed.**

Lola Bratty