

Council sets date to review ward boundaries

By Eric Penkala

New Tecumseth councillors have finalized their plan to hold a working session to review the town's ward boundaries.

The town's surge in population since the last review in 2009 is the main reason for the session, with Councillor J.J. Paul Whiteside claiming that the growth since then, as well as the projected future growth of the town, has led the current boundaries to be not representative of the town's population.

“There are certainly some (wards) that are currently out of whack,” he said. “Some, with the projected growth, are going to be even more out of whack.”

Deputy Mayor Jamie Smith agreed with Councillor Whiteside that some wards need to be re-sized.

“Where Councillor Whiteside has a huge ward, Councillor (Marc) Biss has a much smaller ward,” Smith told council. “Moving a couple of lines would probably solve that problem and make life easier for the both of them.”

According to Statistics Canada, New Tecumseth's 2016 population is 34,242, which represented a percentage growth of over 13 per cent since the last census report in 2011. Council also made clear their intent to keep future population estimates in mind when deciding the new ward boundaries.

Council initially opted to rule out the possibility of bringing a moderator into the proceedings, but ultimately agreed to enlist one if a consensus could not be reached before the 2018 election. Council is still hopeful, however, that paying for a moderator will prove to be unnecessary.

“We have the experience ? we have the census data now, we have the planning data going forward,” said Councillor Biss. “All it is, is a matter of us just planning it out.”

The working session will take place on April 10 at 10 a.m. at the council chambers, with council reiterating that the public will have input on the proceedings.