Presentation to

the Prince Edward Island Electoral Boundaries Commission

Mayor Kevin Jenkins
Town of Stratford
September 7, 2004

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by His Worship Mayor Kevin Jenkins, Town of Stratford

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The Town of Stratford has reviewed the interim report of the PEI Electoral Boundaries Commission dated June 30, 2004. We thank the Commission for the opportunity to review and comment on the draft electoral boundaries before a final recommendation on the boundaries is made to the Legislature. The following are our comments on the interim report and proposed electoral boundaries.

We commend the Commission for recognizing the importance of the municipal boundaries, community of interest with adjacent communities and the anticipated growth of the Town of Stratford in proposing the new boundaries. It is a very difficult task to balance all of the competing interests in determining the appropriate distribution of electors and we generally agree with the approach of the Commission in this delicate balancing act.

The one issue we have with the proposed electoral boundaries is the way that Stratford is proposed to be split into District 21 - Stratford and District 22 - Pownal. As indicated in our original submission, we foresee a time in the not too distant future when Stratford will have two electoral districts entirely within the Town boundaries. All indications are that our rapid growth will continue and possibly even accelerate, based on 2003 and 2004 building permits, which show that new dwelling units are approximately 50% higher than the average of the previous five years.

In our original submission, we proposed that there should be two districts with half of the Town represented in one district and half of the Town represented in another district where the remainder of each district would be made up from electors outside of the Town who share a community of interest with Town electors. The fundamental reason for this is so that electors in the Town will not have to switch from one district to another when the inevitable growth occurs. The boundaries within the Town would essentially stay the same and the rural portion of the districts would be reduced in future re-distributions. This can be accomplished by a re-distribution of the two districts, 21 and 22, proposed by the Commission. The districts could be named Stratford-Pownal and Stratford-Mermaid or such to reflect their urban and rural components.

Another issue with the proposed boundaries of District 21 and District 22 is that the majority of the recent growth in the Town is contained within the proposed boundary of District 21. It is anticipated that this growth pattern will continue and the result will likely be a significant disparity between the two districts in the future and a significant variance over the average number of electors for District 21 in the future. The proposed re-alignment of the two districts so that half of the Town is in each would resolve this issue. If the Commission accepts the Town's arguments in favour of splitting the districts more evenly within the Town, care should be taken to select a boundary that reflects anticipated growth trends. Town officials would be happy to meet with Commission representatives to discuss anticipated growth trends.

Thank you for inviting our comments on the interim report and proposed electoral boundaries.

Respectfully Submitted

Mayor Kevin Jenkins
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