



Presentation to

**the Prince Edward Island
Electoral Boundaries Commission**

Mayor Kevin Jenkins

Town of Stratford

February 12, 2004

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The Town of Stratford has reviewed the information published by the Prince Edward Island Electoral Boundaries Commission on the world wide web. Section 17 of the *Electoral Boundaries Act* requires the Commission to consider:

- the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms;
- enumeration data from the most recent general election;
- polling divisions from the most recent general election;
- geographical features;
- population patterns;
- community of interest;
- municipal boundaries; and
- other factors the Commission regards as relevant.

The *Electoral Boundaries Act* limits the number of electors in any district to not more than 25% above, nor more than 25% below the average number of electors in all districts.

According to the enumeration data published by the Commission for the 2003 general election, the District of Glen Stewart-Bellevue Cove had 4658 electors compared to 3599 generally in the Province which is a variance of 29.4%. This boundary of the District of Glen Stewart-Bellevue Cove will therefore have to be adjusted.

The current boundary of the District of Glen Stewart-Bellevue Cove does not exactly accord with the boundary of the Town. The District of Bunbury is included in the district, the Tea Hill subdivision is excluded from the district, the Burhoe subdivision and surrounding lands are excluded from the District and one side of Mount Herbert Road is excluded from the District. There were 4713 electors in the Town at the time of the 2003 municipal election, which was held shortly after the Provincial general election, so the number of electors is comparable.

The number of electors generally in the Province has increased by 5.4% from the 1994 general election to the 2003 general election. The number of electors in the District of Glen Stewart-Bellevue Cove has increased by 33.2% during the same time period. The Town of Stratford is the fastest growing full service community in the Province and all indications are that the trend will continue for some time. Over 100 new dwelling units were created in the Town in 2003. From 1998 to 2002, 10.6% of the new housing starts in the Province were in the Town where just 4.7% of the population of the Province resides.

If the growth pattern from the last 3 general elections is repeated for the District of Glen

Stewart-Bellevue Cove and the province generally for the next three general elections, there would be 6204 electors in District of Glen Stewart-Bellevue Cove versus 3795 in the Province on average (a variance of 63.5%). Projecting 3 more general elections using the same growth rates would result in 8264 electors in District of Glen Stewart-Bellevue Cove versus 4002 in the Province on average (a variance of 106.5%). The figures are attached as Annex A to this report.

The Town is already too large to be represented by only one MLA according to the *Electoral Boundaries Act*. If the Town's growth continues as projected, two MLA's will be required within the boundary of the Town to satisfy the variance requirements of the *Electoral Boundaries Act*. This should be planned for now in the district redistribution so that there are not pockets of Town residents represented by a number of rural ridings requiring a major redistribution in the not too distant future. These residents would be under-represented by MLA's whose riding is mostly rural and the majority of the constituents therefore have much different needs.

The Town's community of interest is with the Town and close surrounding areas. Most of the local sport organizations draw from the greater Stratford area. Pownal Minor Hockey is a good example where approximately 65% of the participants are from the Town of Stratford. Other examples include the Stratford Soccer and Ball Associations where more than 20% of the participants are from the communities surrounding the Town. Residents of the Town and surrounding area have a strong community of interest. The Town is the regional service centre for area residents.

One way to resolve the boundary issue is to re-arrange the districts so that half of the Town is represented in one district and half of the Town is represented in another district with the remainder of each district made up from electors outside of the Town who share a community of interest with Town electors. If the Town was evenly split between 2 districts based on 2003 enumeration data, there would be 2329 electors in each district from the Town and 1270 additional electors would be required from outside the Town to bring the districts to the provincial average as shown in attached Annex A. Projecting 3 elections from now shows that just 693 electors are required to be added to the two proposed districts to meet the provincial average. Projecting 3 more elections into the future indicates that the two proposed districts would be approximately as large as the provincial average without any electors from outside the Town.

If Districts 6,7 and 8 were reconfigured so that there were two urban and one rural district, the current polling divisions from Districts 6 and 8 that are closest to Stratford could be added to the proposed two urban districts and the remaining District 6 and 8 polling divisions could be

combined to create a new rural district. Additional re-balancing that is required can be on the periphery of the new rural district to accommodate the overall formula of 25% plus or minus per district.

Stratford has a strong community of interest with the surrounding communities of Alexandra, Pownal, Hazelbrook, Mount Herbert, Bunbury District and Mermaid. Stratford also has a community of interest with residents of Earnscliffe, China Point, Cherry Valley, Waterside, Mount Mellick, Village Green, Mount Albion, Bethel, Donagh and Johnston's River as evidenced by their participation in town recreation activities. Adding a part of Stratford to District 6 or District 8 to balance the District electors would not recognize the strong community of interest between the Town and the surrounding communities.

An issue that is frequently raised during elections is the confusion between poll boundaries between municipal, provincial and federal elections. There is no need to have the confusion if the three levels of government work together to harmonize the boundaries. The Town has, through Elections PEI, harmonized the Town poll boundaries as much as possible but can not fully harmonize the poll boundaries because some provincial and federal polls do not use the Town boundary as a poll boundary.

The Town of Stratford makes the following recommendations for the consideration of the Commission:

- that the districts be re-balanced so that half of the Town's electors are represented by one MLA and the other half by another MLA and that the additional electors required for each polling division be drawn from the surrounding communities where a significant community of interest exists.
- that the size of the two Stratford area districts be set with a variance below the average number of electors initially to recognize that they will likely be under-represented in accordance with *Electoral Boundaries Act* by the time another Commission is appointed if they are set at the average number of electors initially.
- that the district and poll boundaries be selected to accord with the municipal and federal poll boundaries to minimize confusion among the electorate.
- that the provincial poll boundaries accord with the Town geographic boundary to minimize confusion among the electorate.
- that the district and poll boundaries and sizes take into account the projected growth patterns of the Town.

Thank you for inviting our comments on the provincial electoral boundaries. When the Commission has made some preliminary determination of what the new boundaries will be, the Town of Stratford would like to have an opportunity to review and comment on the proposed boundaries before the Commission issues its' final report.

Respectfully Submitted

Mayor Kevin Jenkins
Town of Stratford
February 12, 2004

Annex A to Town of Stratford Submission to Prince Edward Island Electoral Boundaries Commission

District 7, Glen Stewart-Bellevue Cove Elector Analysis

	1994	1996	2000	2003	past 3 elections	projected 3 elections	projected 3 elections
district 7 electors	3,497	3,848	4,040	4,658		6,204	8,264
percent change		10.0%	5.0%	15.3%	33.2%	33.2%	33.2%
average pei electors	3,413	3,482	3,485	3,599		3,795	4,002
percent change		2.0%	0.1%	3.3%	5.4%	5.4%	5.5%
variance	2.5%	10.5%	15.9%	29.4%		63.5%	106.5%
Town electors split between two districts				2,329		3,102	4,132
electors needed to make average				1,270		693	(130)