

September 23, 2021

Mayor Jim Watson
Rick O'Connor, City Clerk
City of Ottawa
110 Laurier Avenue East, Ottawa, ON

Via Email jim.watson@ottawa.ca
rick.oconnor@ottawa.ca

Gentlemen:

The federal riding of Kanata-Carleton has a new MP in Ward 4 Councillor Jenna Sudds and you must now turn to the process of determining her replacement. Given the expiry of the current council term in November 2022, the remaining term will be particularly short and this creates an additional and important consideration for the city. The community and business associations in Kanata North have discussed the options open to our city and write to you today with our considerations and recommendation.

While a by-election may be the expected choice, we are of the opinion it is not the best choice for Ward 4 - Kanata North in this specific instance for the following reasons

- the necessary by-election preparation and campaign window of three months or more will have left Ward 4 Kanata North without dedicated representation at City Hall from August to December 2021 or beyond and, notably, during a consequential period of Official Plan consideration
- the resultant replacement term of much less than a year, would leave a novice councillor struggling to 'learn the ropes' at City Hall while also required to deep dive on a myriad of complex issues to deliver appropriate taxpayer representation. Included in these issues are the Kanata North Business Zone design development consultations, the ClubLink land development issue and 28 other development applications ongoing among many others
- the 2020 Cumberland ward by-election, held at the 2 year (half term) mark approximated \$525,000, 40% beyond initial projections, in significant part due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. In our Ward 4 situation, with less than one year (quarter term) remaining, such a by-election investment would be even less fiscally prudent
- negative voter safety perceptions of a second election within 3 months during this Covid fourth wave, further complicated by winter weather risks, may compromise voter turnout

In previous circumstances with a similarly short term, the City has chosen to manage by sharing the councillor's duties across neighbouring ward councillors. We note that Councillors Hubley, Gower and El-Chantiry all serve additionally as committee chairs and their resulting workload and calendars make it very difficult to envision effective representation on Ward 4 issues.

The third practice, a term replacement decided by Council from interested candidates is generally perceived as less than democratic and, as a result, less popular. In view of our comments above, however, we believe this option actually presents the most appropriate solution for our community for one reason. Marianne Wilkinson, our retired Councillor and the former Mayor of Kanata, has indicated that she would be willing to serve this shortened term, without extension, to ensure our residents and taxpayers receive accomplished representation until November 2022. Given Marianne's long term hands on experience in this role at City Hall and understanding of Kanata North's issues as well as the deep respect with which she is held by our community, our associations are certain and agreed that their municipal and member concerns would be best addressed with this appointment.

We write to request that the City, with an eye to ensuring dedicated representation for the residents and taxpayers of Ward 4 Kanata North while protecting public safety and exercising appropriate fiscal prudence, use the process of a nominated term replacement for the open Ward 4 council seat and fill it specifically by nominating and approving Marianne Wilkinson.

We are available to discuss this matter and thank you in advance for your good consideration.

Sincerely,

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cc: City Councillors

Marianne Wilkinson marianne@rogers.com