

## Meeting Notes

### PRESENT

#### Elections BC

- Keith Archer, Chief Electoral Officer
- Anton Boegman, Deputy Chief Electoral Officer, Electoral Operations
- Nola Western, Deputy Chief Electoral Officer, Funding and Disclosure
- Stephany Laverty, Executive Coordinator (Minutes)

#### Political Parties (alphabetically by party name)

- BC NDP: Raj Sihota, Lena Shillington
- BC Vision Party: Jag Bhandari, Bintou Cisse, Alexander Moses,
- Communist Party of BC: Hassan Azimikor, Jane Bouey, George Gidora
- L.A.W. Party: Martin Hotzbauer, Merv Ritchie
- Vancouver Island Party: Barry Erikson, Robin Richardson

The meeting commenced at 1:01 p.m.

#### Welcome and Introductions

Keith welcomed attendees and described the purpose of the Political Party Information Session as a component of Elections BC's (EBC) overall outreach strategy.

Keith discussed the primary purpose of this Political Party Information Session, which is to review the amendments to the *Election Act*, which resulted from the passage of the *Election Amendment Act, 2015* in May 2015. Then he provided a brief summary of some of the activities that have occurred at Elections BC following the 2013 General Election. These activities include the following:

Close out of the General Election, an approval in principal of an initiative petition, the administration of Local Elections Campaign Financing, the provision of administrative support to the Electoral Boundaries Commission, administration of the 2015 Metro Vancouver Transit and Transportation Plebiscite and the administration of two recall petitions. Elections BC has also received the warrants for and begun preparation for two by-elections, one in Coquitlam-Burke Mountain and one in Vancouver-Mount Pleasant. Elections BC has also begun preparing to administer the 2017 General Provincial Election and then the administration of the campaign financing for the 2018 General Local Elections in October 2018.

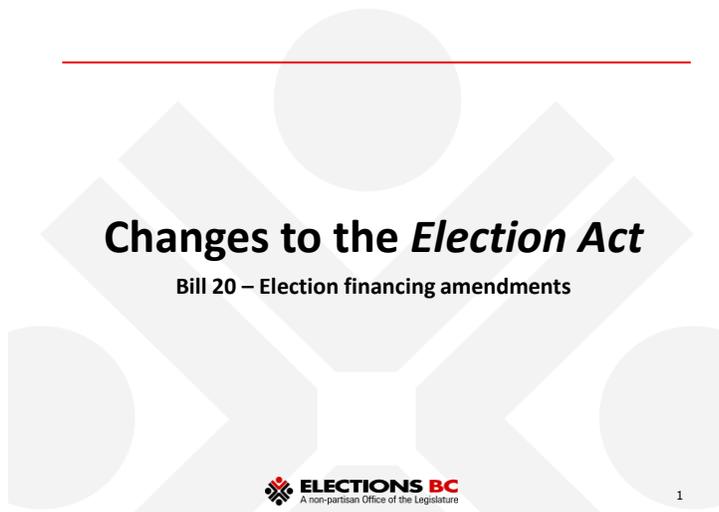
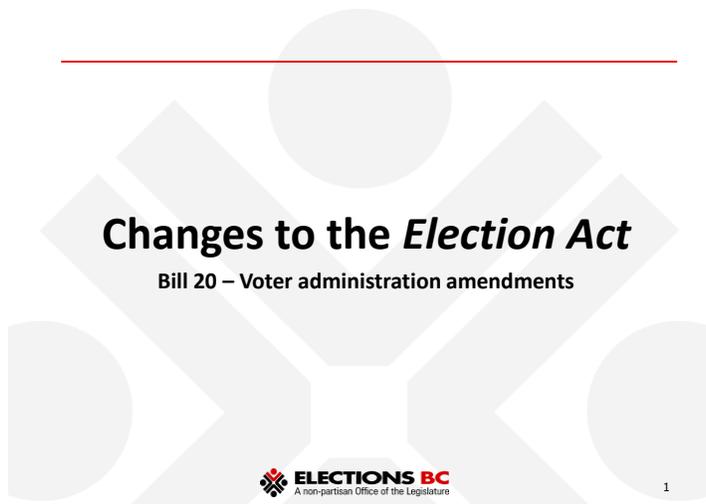
Keith advised that the 2015 Election Advisory Committee met to discuss a similar agenda that morning. He described the role of the Election Advisory Committee (EAC) as established under sections 14-16 of the *Election Act*.

#### Question from political party representative and response to question from EBC representative

No discussion questions

#### *Election Act* update

Anton and Nola provided attendees with overviews of what changes will result to Elections BC's voter administration and provincial election financing administration as a result of the amendments to the *Election Act*. The PowerPoint presentations are embedded below for reference:



### **Questions and comments from political party representatives, and responses to questions from EBC representatives**

- Can a candidate representative not take a copy of the voter turnout information provided at each voting station? Can only a photograph be taken?
  - Candidate representatives can do either but a photograph could be electronically sent to parties.
- What will the privacy policy be?
  - That will be addressed in the next discussion presentation.

- Can advance voting be held on each day of advance voting or can advance voting only be held on certain days during the advance voting period?
  - In every electoral district, at least one advance voting opportunity must be held on each day of advance voting. Some electoral districts may have advance voting at the same voting place on every day, but others may have advance polling opportunities spread to different locations in the electoral district, throughout the advance voting period. Voters can vote in any electoral district under the provincial absentee voting rules.
  
- Why were the changes made to the provision of the voters list?
  - Changes were made as a result of recommendations of the Chief Electoral Officer, and because of policy decisions made by government. The changes should provide a better opportunity for all candidates to access the voter turnout information during and after an election, and for political parties to access turnout information after an election.
  
- Does third party advertising before the election period needs to be reported?
  - Third party advertising during the campaign period has to be reported but anything prior to that time does not have to be reported.

### **Voter Registration update**

Anton provided an update on the voter registration procedures because of the amendments to the *Election Act*. The PowerPoint presentation is embedded below for reference:



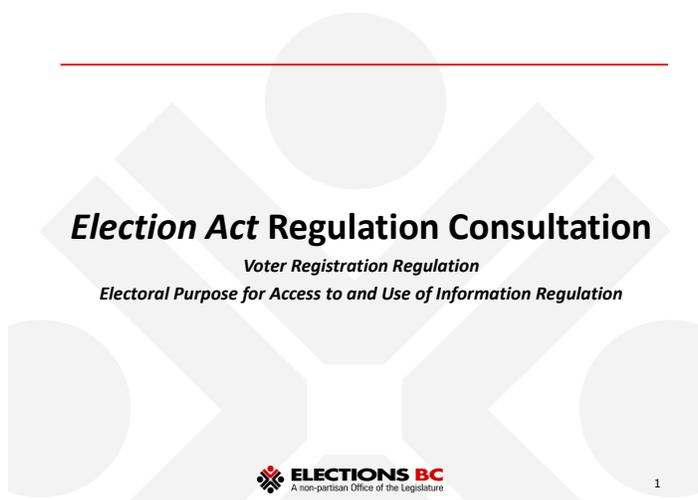
### **Questions from political party representatives, and responses to questions from EBC representatives**

No discussion questions

### **Regulations Consultation**

Anton notified the members of the Political Party Information Session that the members of the Election Advisory Committee were consulted on regulations that the Chief Electoral Officer has drafted as a

result of the amendments to the *Election Act*. The PowerPoint presentation is embedded below for reference:



### **Question from political party representative, and response to question from EBC representative**

- Federally, a Certificate of Indian Status are accepted as identification to vote. Would Elections BC consider these certificates as acceptable forms of identification to register?
  - Certificates of Indian Status as issued by the Government of Canada are accepted as identification to vote provincially.

### **Electoral Boundaries Commission update**

The Chief Electoral Officer provided members with an update on the activities of the Electoral Boundaries Commission.

Under the *Electoral Boundaries Commission Act*, a commission must be struck two years prior to a General Election and after every second General Election. The Commission formed in May 2014 was comprised of Justice Thomas Melnick, Beverly Busson, former RCMP Commissioner, and Keith Archer, Chief Electoral Officer. The Commission tabled the Preliminary Report on March 26, 2015 and a second round of public hearings followed.

The *Electoral Boundaries Commission Act* identified three regions that could not have their number of electoral districts reduced. These regions are the North region, the Cariboo-Thompson region, and the Columbia-Kootenay region. The commission's proposals reflect this requirement as the Act sets out that all electoral districts should fall within a +/- 25% permissible deviation from the average population. These three regions fall well below this range while the commission proposed redistributing other electoral districts to ensure that they did fall within the permissible range.

The Commission, under the Act, could also propose adding two new electoral districts to the current 85 to make 87 electoral districts. The commission proposed adding one new electoral district to Richmond/New Westminister and one new electoral district to Surrey. The Commission also

recommended that Elections BC, after realizing the benefits of providing administrative support to this commission, provide the administrative support to all future commissions.

With the submission of the Final Report to the Legislature on September 24, 2015, the Commission's work is now complete. The Members of the Legislative Assembly will decide whether to adopt the Commission's proposals.

### **Question from political party representative, and response to question from EBC representative**

No comments or questions

### **Electoral Finance Update**

Nola provided an update on both electoral finance departments at Elections BC – Local Elections Campaign Financing and Provincial Electoral Finance.

### **Local Elections Campaign Financing**

The *Local Election Campaign Financing Act* came into effect in May 2014 which gave Election BC responsibility for administering the local elections financing rules for local elections in British Columbia. Elections BC administered those rules and created a new working group at Elections BC as part of the new mandate.

Following the elections, 3,622 disclosure statements were filed with Elections BC. Following a review of the majority of these statements, the temporary staff have completed their work and a core group of permanent employees remain to review lessons learned and administer the campaign financing for local government by-elections and non-assent votes. There are currently more than 20 of these additional events scheduled or in progress.

The Report of the Chief Electoral Officer on the 2014 General Local Elections contains 13 recommendations for legislative change in the report as well as more in-depth statistics and detailed description of the change in mandate for Elections BC.

Bill 43 – 2015, the *Local Elections Campaign Financing (Expense Limits) Amendment Act* was introduced in the Legislature on October 22, 2015. Government has indicated that it does not expect the Bill to pass but will be used as a basis for further public consultation on spending limits for local elections.

### **Provincial Electoral Finance**

The redistribution of boundaries will occur following the decision of the Members of the Legislative Assembly on the Electoral Boundaries Commission's proposal. This process will require constituency associations to deregister in old electoral districts and to register new constituency associations in the new districts, even if no change occurs to the boundaries.

### **Question from political party representative, and response to question from EBC representative**

- Will the guides be amended to reflect the changes? Will copies be sent to the parties?

- Yes the guides are in the process of being amended and, once complete, will be sent to the registered political parties in British Columbia.
- When does Elections BC anticipate the boundaries to pass?
  - The Members of the Legislative Assembly do not consult with Elections BC. However, as the motion has been put forward in the Legislature a week prior to this meeting, a decision could come as early as during this fall sitting. A decision could also come during the spring session.
- Will Elections BC notify parties if the redistribution is taking place to register constituency associations?
  - No Elections BC will not be notifying parties but attendees can provide their information to Elections BC officials to follow up.

### **Closing Comments**

Keith thanked attendees for their participation and asked if there were any additional questions or comments.

### **Question from political party representative, and response to question from EBC representative**

- Would Elections BC reduce the voting age?
  - Elections BC, as a non-partisan Office of the Legislature, does not determine what age a voter should be but administers the age set out under the *Election Act*
- In British Columbia, as in other provinces, there are many government-established boundaries including: health authority boundaries, regional districts, electoral districts, federal ridings and others. These boundaries all cross each other and there is confusion as to who administers which boundary. Has there ever been an attempt to coordinate the boundaries to reduce confusion?
  - There are different kinds of political maps that highlight different aspects of regions. Federal electoral districts and provincial electoral districts have different requirements for being established. The Commission was mindful of the different types of boundaries in an electoral district, but the Commission could not make those other boundaries the sole deciding factor in making its proposal.
- Is the government the defining source of the legislative process or the public?
  - Election BC's role is to implement the legislation once the policy is made through legislation. The policy and subsequent legislation arise from government and its consultation with the public.

Attendees may forward any questions regarding information presented at the Political Party Information Session to Stephany Laverty, Executive Coordinator, by phone at 250-952-6226 or by email at [stephany.laverty@elections.bc.ca](mailto:stephany.laverty@elections.bc.ca)

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The meeting was adjourned at 2:55 p.m.