

Online voting exceeding expectations: Clerk

By Brock Weir

Aurora residents have been able to cast their early votes online since Friday, and the number of ballots submitted is exceeding initial expectations, according to Town Clerk Mike de Rond.

As of 2 p.m. on Tuesday, October 16, 1,660 votes had been cast online, with a further 636 in-person paper ballots filled at advance polls ongoing at the Aurora Seniors' Centre.

"It couldn't be better, really," says Mr. de Rond of the process. "We're quite happy with the system. We've had more votes on it than I was imagining we'd get. There are very few problems and any problems we can usually handle over the phone in about a minute or so, so we're quite pleased with how everything is going so far."

At the outset, Mr. de Rond says he was estimating the online ballot option would attract between 1,500 and 2,000 total voters, but given that online voting is open until this Sunday, October 21, at 5 p.m., he says the final figure will likely surpass these numbers.

"I told everyone to expect a bit of a lull during the week," he says, of talks he had with the election team. "We had about 500 [voters] going into the weekend and we're still not seeing a lull. We still see about 150 that happens between when we go home and when we come back in the morning and it continues to just go up. It looks at this point we'd be much closer to 2,000, if not well beyond it by this coming Sunday at 5 p.m."

Asked to speculate on why online voting seems to have resonated with residents, Mr. de Rond is reluctant to do so, but ventures convenience might be a factor, along with a "tech savvy" workforce here in Town that are comfortable online, not only voting, but with the security elements in place as well.

Election Day is October 22 and, on the day of the vote itself, residents will be able to make their decision by casting traditional paper ballots at the polling station noted on their voter card.

For more information on the vote, visit www.aurora.ca/vote2018.