

Regular Meeting of Council

MOVED BY: Councillor Abbass

RESOLUTION:201-2023

SECONDED BY: Councillor Crabtree

DATE: September 19, 2023

“WHEREAS the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990 (MFIPPA) came into force and effect on January 1, 1991;

AND WHEREAS municipalities, including the Town of Bracebridge, practice and continue to promote open and transparent government operations, actively disseminate information and routinely disclose public documents upon request outside of the MFIPPA process;

AND WHEREAS government operations, public expectations, technologies, and legislation surrounding accountability and transparency have dramatically changed and MFIPPA has not advanced in line with these changes;

AND WHEREAS the creation, storage and utilization of records has changed significantly, and the Clerk of the Municipality is responsible for records and information management programs as prescribed by the Municipal Act, 2001;

AND WHEREAS regulation 823 under MFIPPA continues to reference antiquated technology and does not adequately provide for cost recovery, and these financial shortfalls are borne by the municipal taxpayer;

AND WHEREAS the threshold to establish frivolous and/or vexatious requests is unreasonably high and allows for harassment of staff and members of municipal councils, and unreasonably affects the operations of the municipality;

AND WHEREAS the MFIPPA fails to recognize how multiple requests from an individual, shortage of staff resources or the expense of producing a record due to its size, number, or physical location does not allow for time extensions to deliver requests and unreasonably affects the operations of the municipality;

AND WHEREAS the name of the requestor is not permitted to be disclosed to anyone other than the person processing the access request, and this anonymity is used by requesters to abuse the MFIPPA process and does not align with the spirit of openness and transparency embraced by municipalities;

AND WHEREAS legal professionals use MFIPPA to gain access to information to launch litigation against institutions, where other remedies exist;

AND WHEREAS there are limited resources to assist administrators or requestors to navigate the legislative process;

AND WHEREAS reform is needed to address societal and technological changes in addition to global privacy concerns and consistency across provincial legislation;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery be requested to review MFIPPA, and consider recommendations as follows:

1. That MFIPPA assign the Municipal Clerk, or their designate to be the Head under the Act;

2. That MFIPPA be updated to address current and emerging technologies;
3. That MFIPPA regulate the need for consistent routine disclosure practices across institutions;
4. That the threshold for frivolous and/or vexatious actions be reviewed, and take into consideration the community and available resources in which it is applied;
5. That the threshold for frivolous and/or vexatious also consider the anonymity of requesters, their abusive nature and language in requests to ensure protection from harassment as provided for in the Occupational Health and Safety Act;
6. That the application and scalability of fees be designed to ensure taxpayers are protected from persons abusing the access to information process;
7. That administrative practices implied or required under MFIPPA, including those of the Information and Privacy Commissioner (IPC), be reviewed and modernized;
8. That the integrity of MFIPPA be maintained to protect personal privacy and transparent governments; and
9. And that this resolution be sent to the Premier of Ontario; Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing; Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery; and Member of Provincial Parliament for Lanark, Frontenac, Kingston; and all Ontario Municipalities.”

CARRIED

DEFEATED

  
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DEPUTY REEVE