



The Municipalities Act A Citizen's Guide to Shaping Council Decisions

August 2010

YOUR MUNICIPALITY

A municipal government has autonomy (the ability to act according to its own direction) regarding the majority of matters within its jurisdiction. Very few bylaws or policies require provincial approval. Municipalities, and individual members of council, are accountable to the people who elect them.

Through its decisions and policies, your municipal council provides services, facilities and other things that, in its opinion, are necessary or desirable for all or part of the municipality. If you feel your council should reconsider a particular policy or decision, there are steps you can take in an effort to bring about change

CITIZENS' ROLE

Encouraging municipal accountability by citizens and ratepayers falls into four categories:

- become informed;
- lobby members of council or build local political support;
- electoral change; or
- legal action.

Become Informed

- Attend council meetings to observe council in action.
- Review council's meeting minutes, bylaws, and reports.

Lobby / Build Support

- Raise issues with members of council, either individually or by attending a council meeting as a delegation.
- Discuss issues with other citizens and ratepayers to determine if they share your concerns.
- Write letters to the editor of your local newspaper.
- Organize a petition requiring council to hold a public meeting on an issue, or enabling citizens to vote on a question through a referendum.

Electoral Change

- At election time, run for office or support your preferred candidates.
- At election time, organize an all-candidates forum to help you determine your preferred candidate(s).

NOTE: This document has been prepared by Saskatchewan Ministry of Municipal Affairs for general information purposes and should not be relied upon as a substitute for specialized legal or professional advice.



The Municipalities Act

Legal Action

- Quashing (overturning) a bylaw or resolution or removing a member of council from office can only be done through the Saskatchewan Court of Queen's Bench.
- Civil actions for damages may proceed through Small Claims Court or the Saskatchewan Court of Queen's Bench.
- Contact a lawyer before initiating legal action.

MORE INFORMATION

For more information, please refer to the Ministry's publication *A Citizen's Guide to Shaping Council Decisions* at www.municipal.gov.sk.ca, or contact Municipal Affairs at:

(306) 787-2680
1010-1855 Victoria Avenue
REGINA SK S4P 3T2

NOTE: This document has been prepared by Saskatchewan Ministry of Municipal Affairs for general information purposes and should not be relied upon as a substitute for specialized legal or professional advice.