

Meeting Date	February 25, 2025
Subject	2025 Citizen of the Year Award Working Group
Road to 2035	Support an accessible, supportive, and age-friendly community by advocating for community health & wellness through strategic partnerships: Develop a Volunteer Program to attract, retain, orient, and recognize volunteers who support Town programs, events and services; and Plan and deliver a variety of programs and initiatives that continue to make Renfrew a friendly, supportive, and engaged community.
Recommendation	That Committee of the Whole recommends that Renfrew Town Council appoint one Council Member and one Staff Member to a <i>2025 Citizen of the Year Award Working Group</i> , consisting of one Council Member, one Staff Member, two anonymous community members, and one anonymous local business owner. And further that Renfrew Town Council authorize the Council Member and Staff Member to exclusively select the three remaining committee members, who will serve as the selection committee for the 2025 Citizen of the Year Awards.
Originator	Hannah MacMillan, Communications & Engagement Coordinator
CAO Review	Reviewed report. Potential options have been laid out. Gloria Raybone, CPA, CA, Dipl.M.A. – Chief Administrative Officer.
Financial Comment	The proposed budget for this event is \$1,000 which will cover the costs of the awards themselves. Charlene Jackson – Treasurer/Director of Finance and Corporate Services.
Committee and Council Timing	To be considered on February 25, 2025 for final adoption by Council on March 11, 2025, with corresponding by-law brought forward at the same meeting.
Background	Historically, the Renfrew Chamber of Commerce has been responsible for organizing and presenting the annual community awards. However, in 2024, in support of their mandate, the Chamber made the decision to shift its focus to

more business-oriented awards. In order to ensure that community volunteers continue to receive recognition for their invaluable contributions, the Town of Renfrew has assumed responsibility for these community-based awards beginning in 2025.

The transition of the awards program to the Town ensures that the contributions of dedicated community members do not go unrecognized. By taking on this initiative, the Town aims to foster community engagement and appreciation for the hard work of volunteers who make a positive impact in our community.

The Town will present five distinct awards to recognize outstanding individuals and organizations within the community at the 2025 Canada Day celebrations at Ma-te-Way Park. The award categories include Citizen of the Year, Community Champion of the Year, Youth Volunteer of the Year, Senior Volunteer of the Year, and Non-Profit Organization of the Year. These awards will highlight a diverse range of contributions, from individual achievements to organizational efforts in supporting the Town of Renfrew and our residents.

A confidential selection panel will be responsible for reviewing nominations and selecting the winners. Historically, this panel has been composed of five community members.

The awards will be presented during the Town of Renfrew's Canada Day Celebrations. All nominees will be invited to attend a special ceremony where the winners will be officially announced and invited on stage to accept their awards. This format integrates the awards into a well-attended community event, further enhancing the visibility and recognition of the award recipients. Looking ahead to 2026, we will explore the possibility of establishing this as a standalone event and seeking sponsorship opportunities to support its development.

Options

Option 1: Council appoints a Council member and staff member to establish an anonymous *2025 Citizen of the Year Award Working Group*, consisting of two community members, and one local business owner, for a total of 5 members.

Option 2: Council directs staff to form the anonymous *2025 Citizen of the Year Award Working Group* with community

partners and may or may not include a Council Member in the group.

Option 3: Council appoints the *2025 Citizen of the Year Award Working Group* themselves.

Option 4: Council acts as the selection team for the *2025 Citizen of the Year Awards*.

Impact of Options

Option 1: This option will ensure a range of involvement and participation from Council, the Town, and community partners/individuals. This option will keep the Council member and staff member public, with the 3 community members anonymous.

Option 2: Council would have no involvement in the selection process for the Citizen of the Year Awards, which may give the impression Council lacks interest in community-related events. However, this option provides the ability to keep the entire voting committee anonymous, other than the Staff Member without Council having to appoint at a public Council meeting.

Option 3: If Council is solely responsible for assembling the entire voting group, it may create a perception of bias or a lack of interest in community and staff input. However, this does still provide community input on the awards as the Committee would be made up of community members, potentially in addition to Council members, but there would be no anonymity.

Option 4: A Council-only panel could be seen as biased, undermining the fairness and inclusivity of the selection process and diminishing the sense of community involvement that this event aims to foster. However, this would provide impression to the public that Council wants to be involved with the volunteers and thank them for their volunteerism.

The goal of the anonymous working group is to ensure diverse representation from the Town of Renfrew, Council, and local community partners, thus fostering a broad range of input when selecting the winners for the 2025 Citizen of the Year Awards.

Respectfully submitted for your consideration.