

OCTOBER 16, 2026

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MORE VOTES THAN OTHERS

**RENFREW'S MUNICIPAL ELECTION
DECISION 2026**

I believe I first heard it while watching a council meeting on the YouTube feed.

At the time, council was just getting into discussion on a proposed housing development by the owner of *DragonFly Golf Links*. That area is in *Admaston-Bromley Township*, and wouldn't have anything to do with Renfrew other than the developers have requested an opportunity to enter in to an agreement with the Town of Renfrew to supply the little community with water.

Before discussion, *Councillor Jason Legris* declared a conflict of interest for himself. I didn't think much about it at the time because council members declare themselves fairly regularly, since many of them own rental properties around town. Can't be seen to be benefiting from your position on council, right?

It was later that my mind wandered back to this for some reason, probably because the construction of some four-hundred homes close to Renfrew is kind of an exciting thing, or at least it is to me anyways.

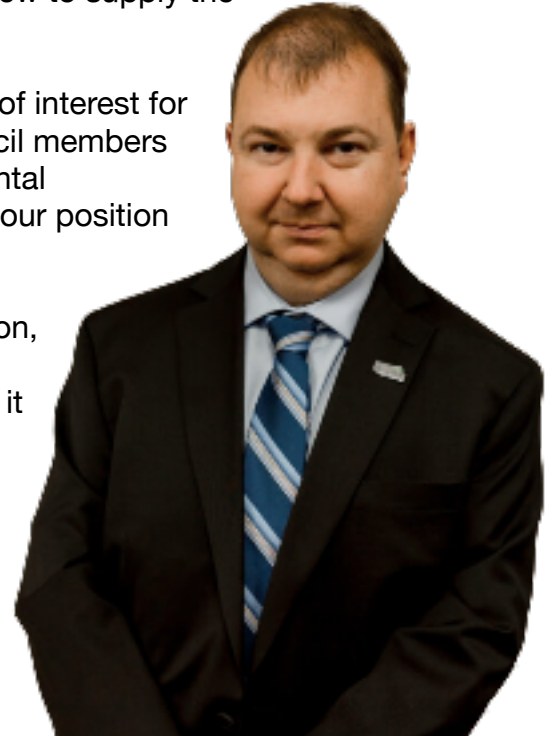
It was then that I wondered why Mr. Legris would be declaring a personal conflict for a discussion involving another township. But the thought came and went, because as I said, it's a fairly regular thing with the current council, something some former councillors from past councils might want to take note of.

I didn't get thinking about it again until I attended the All-Candidates Meeting at Ma-Te-Way. At that forum, a question came from the floor regarding the proposed housing development. Several of the candidates came to the microphone to offer commentary on the proposal, and one in particular, *Councillor Andrew Dick*, was in full-throated support for the idea, almost chastising the others for their failure to get on board with what he considers to be a fantastic idea.

And then it happened and it clicked.

Jason Legris, despite previously declaring a personal conflict, and while opening his remarks with that very same disclosure, then proceeded to offer his own commentary notwithstanding the conflict of interest.

In some degree of fairness, he didn't say much and didn't speak long. But the fact that he commented at all was troubling to me. I believe he said something like this:



"I hope/recommend the next council takes a long time to look this project over before deciding anything."

Huh?

Sounds to me that such a comment was made in an attempt to exert some influence over the discussion. Now why would he go and do that?

It's because he lives out there. I didn't know this, but the man running to be mayor of Renfrew actually lives in Admaston-Bromley.

By doing so he takes advantage of an Ontario government policy where people who own properties in different municipalities can essentially vote in all of those municipalities. So if own properties in Renfrew, Horton, Whitewater, McNab-Braeside, and Admaston-Bromley, I could vote in all five of those elections.

Apparently there are two types of voters, or electors. There are *resident electors* and there are *non-resident electors*, two terms that pretty much explain themselves. In the case of Jason Legris then, I would have to assume that he qualifies as a *non-resident elector* which allows him to not only vote in Renfrew but to also sit on its council.

So, in short, there's absolutely nothing wrong with what Legris is doing. Or I should say there's nothing illegal about what he's doing. But it's the right or the wrong of the thing that is debatable, and somewhat troubling.

Apparently we have a system where some people have more built-in political power than the rest of us simply because they have the money to purchase properties elsewhere that others among us can't manage to afford. Because of it they get more votes, and so do their spouses.

We live in a democracy where I have a single vote, but others have more than that, more than me, simply because they have more money than me.

To be honest, I think that kind of bites and I don't like it.

It's the same thing over and over again, even at the provincial government level. A bunch of rich guys passing laws that favour rich guys, and the rest of us can all go out and pound salt.

I believe that a mayor or councillor should live in the community that they represent. I'm clearly off-side on this, but I'm entitled to my thinking, and I'd like to think it's got nothing to do with internal rants about billionaires and rich people generally. I don't think anyone in this article is a billionaire by any stretch of the imagination, but I do want to say that I don't think this system is good for our democracy.

Just because it's on the provincial books we apparently take it for granted, but we have to remember that these policies came from somewhere, they were voted on by someone(s) and that they often show a shocking degree of self-interest. Provincial government members are often well-heeled and feel they're more important than the rest of us, thereby feeling more entitled than the rest of us. They seem to think that we, as in the rest of us, need to reward these types simply for existing, since their money demands that level of respect. So voting yourself additional votes that others among us can't have for ourselves is just another way of "doing business" for these types.

In their view, they deserve it. They're owed it.

For my entire life I've believed it was about *one person one vote*. I'm embarrassed to say that I was wrong.

