August 8, 2016 SLNC Election Committee Draft Minutes

The Election Committee held its meeting on Monday, August 8, 2016 at 7:10 pm. Benjamin Feldman, Lee Sherman, Pat Tashma, and Eric Kissack were present. Theresa from Hollywood Sunset Free Clinic was also present.

4/19/16 Meeting Minutes

Lee suggested deleting one superfluous heading from the meeting minutes to further clean up the minutes. Eric moved to accept the minutes with the proposed revision. Pat seconded. The minutes from the April 19, 2016 meeting were accepted with 4 yays, 0 nays, and 0 abstentions.

5/2/16 Meeting Minutes

Lee moved to accept the minutes. Ben seconded. The minutes from the May 2, 2016 meeting were accepted with 4 yays, 0 nays, and 0 abstentions.

Post-Election Report

Ben thanked Eric and Lee for preparing the comprehensive report. Pat said that the figures speak for themselves showing that Silver Lake's voter turnout was successful compared to other neighborhood councils. Eric mentioned that the data identified in the report came from a spreadsheet provided by DONE, which with a treasure trove of data from all of the neighborhood councils.

Lee said that while the spreadsheet showed the figures for all of the neighborhood councils, the chart in the report focuses on Silver Lake compared to its surrounding neighborhood councils in Region 7. Lee said that although Silver Lake's turnout declined from the 2014 election, which could be attributed to numerous factors including less contentious elections, Silver Lake performed well in relation both to all neighborhood councils in Los Angeles and those within its region. In particular, Lee explained that Silver Lake had the seventh highest percentage turnout out of all neighborhood councils in Los Angeles and second best in Region 7. Lee emphasized that Silver Lake accomplished that despite having the 51st largest budget out of 75 neighborhood councils, and the second smallest budget out of those in Region 7. As evidence of our success, Pat mentioned that Silver Lake achieved a significant higher voter turnout than Rampart Village despite spending over $10,000 less. Eric said that Rampart was one of the few that had street signs, which explains the large expense in its budget.

Ben suggested revising the report to show the cost per vote for each of the Region 7 neighborhood councils. Ben also suggested including a column for cost per resident. Lee said he did not think there was enough room to include that column, so Ben and Pat said cost per vote was the more important metric to capture. Ben also asked whether based on the conversations Eric had with other neighborhood councils if he was able to ascertain a consensus surrounding data-driven best practices. Eric said besides Eagle Rock, he found it hard to have a conversation about best practices with the other neighborhood councils. The people he reached out to were tired of talking about the elections.

Pat mentioned that Atwater achieved a high percentage turnout with less money. Pat said that Atwater did a good job with promoting community events surrounding the elections with free food for stakeholders. Lee mentioned that while Atwater achieved close to the same voter turnout as Silver Lake, Atwater has a significant smaller population than Silver Lake, which

explains its smaller budget. Pat said that it may be helpful to have a comparison of the neighborhood councils by geographic size as another metric to analyze success. Lee said that he was not sure if that information is available. Ben said he liked Eagle Rock's idea of creating a video of local celebrities to promote the election. Eric said that it would be a good idea for Silver Lake to do for the next election.

Lee said that the comparison of neighborhood councils shows that money was not necessarily a determinative factor in resulting in larger turnout. But there were strategies that neighborhood councils were able to employ that required more money that Silver Lake could not employ because of its limited budget. Therefore, if the Committee asks for a larger budget, the Committee should provide a justification of what it would do with more funds to improve its outreach. For example, Lee said that Eagle Rock did a direct mail campaign that cost $4,000, which it found to be an effective strategy. Ben asked whether the 110% increase in turnout from 2014 can be attributed to the use of direct mail. Eric said he was not sure, but he would ask. Eric also mentioned that the spreadsheet from DONE included a field with the number of mailers sent out, and the neighborhood councils that spent the most money, spent the most on mailers. Ben expressed some concern that, from his experience, direct mail seemed inefficient.

Ben liked the report's recommendation for the Committee to start planning earlier. He also suggested having a strong and detailed timeline for the Committee's activities. He found it unnerving to not have such a structured timeline when running the Committee for the first time. He suggested that the Committee recommend petitioning DONE for it to provide a detailed timeline. Eric was nervous about including that in the report because based on his conversations with other neighborhood councils, DONE provided some of the information that Ben mentioned in the city-wide meeting of all of the neighborhood councils. Lee said that the information was provided, but it was general in nature. Despite it being general, Lee suggested that the Committee not include that recommendation in the report because he believed the information provided by DONE at that meeting was sufficient. Ben said that was fine.

Pat was surprised and concerned with the obstruction from DONE described in the report. Eric said that was a universal theme he heard when speaking to all of the neighborhood councils. Theresa mentioned that she had heard many complaints of stakeholders who registered to vote online, but never received a code via e-mail to vote, resulting in people who were not able to vote online. Eric said that the Committee heard mixed results on that. DONE claimed that its processes had no errors. Lee mentioned that DONE claimed at a prior Committee meeting that if stakeholders did not receive a code, it was because of "user error," such as the manner in which the stakeholder's inbox was set-up that caused the e-mail from DONE with the code to go into spam. However, both Lee and Eric said they heard many anecdotal complaints form stakeholders about not receiving a code that it is difficult to believe there was not a problem with DONE's processes. Eric said that he does not believe that DONE tracks the number of instances in which people did not receive a code, particularly because DONE claims that there are no errors with its processes.

Ben suggested adding to the report a recommendation to petition DONE to extend online voting registration until the day of the election. He said this would provide more time to iron-out these problems, and a way to divert traffic on the day of the election. Eric expressed concern with the recommendation because it would encourage procrastination and DONE's systems may not be capable of handling heavy traffic on the day of the election. Ben responded that people are going to procrastinate regardless, so DONE might as well allow a later date for stakeholders to vote. He said DONE should be able to find a way for its systems to handle that traffic. Ben also

said that in some states, there is same-day registration on the day of the election, so DONE should be able to build a system that works to do that here. Ben also recommended petitioning DONE to create a user-friendly app so stakeholders can register and vote on their phones.

Pat suggested adding a recommendation to petition DONE to keep the polls open to six hours, as it was in the past, as opposed to the four hours the polls were open for this election. She said that people were coming to vote until the very end and there was pandemonium during the final hour of voting. Pat said when the polls were open for six hours in the past, there was a more constant stream of people throughout the day without the rush at the end. Theresa said that DONE representatives were not equipped for handling the large number of people at the last minute, particularly when there were technical problems at the polls as there were for this election. Lee agreed that Pat's recommendation to keep the polls open to six hours be added to the report.

Lee turned to the recommendations for the Board to revise the Bylaws. Lee said that one of the recommendations in the report was for the Election Committee to continue to function during non-election years. However, it does not appear that the Bylaws contemplate the Committee functioning during election years. Lee said that although the Election Committee is treated uniquely in the Bylaws, there are no processes specified in the Bylaws for how the Election Committee should function within those unique parameters. For instance, Lee said recently the Board said that the neighborhood council committees needed to hold elections for co-chairs. However, since the Election Committee's members are specified in the Bylaws as being appointed by the Board, Lee was not sure whether the Election Committee is capable of doing that within the current confines of the Bylaws.

Ben said this issue dovetails with the recommendation in the report regarding clarifying the composition of the Election Committee. Ben said the Committee experienced some hurdles with how to consider who is a voting member of the Election Committee because of ambiguity in the Bylaws. Lee explained that the Bylaws specify the Election Committee should consist of seven members, one from each region, but does not say that it shall only consist of seven members. Meanwhile, Lee said the Standing Rules say that any stakeholder who attends a committee meeting may vote. Lee said that if the Bylaws are interpreted as meaning that the Committee only consists of seven stakeholders, then there is tension between the Bylaws and Stakeholders.

Lee suggested that the Committee should recommend revising the Bylaws to allow for more than seven stakeholders to be on the Committee. Ben said that does not address the concern with who is a voting member. Pat also brought up the concern that there was a problem with limited members on the Committee because when some people who were appointed to the Committee were not active participants, the remaining members of the Committee had to take on a heavier load.

On the issue of Board participation, Lee said the Bylaws actually contemplate Board participation by saying only that the Committee must not consist of a majority of Board members, but does not say that Board members should not be on the Committee. Lee said that although there was an informal requirement communicated to the Committee that those running for the Board may not be on the Election Committee, that rule is not in writing. Also, Lee said that the Committee was supposed to have a Board member who served as a liaison between the Committee and the Board. However, that never happened to any effect. Theresa asked whether the Committee, then, was functioning without representation on the Board. Ben said

that a Board member said that he would be involved with the Committee, but that Board member did not actively do much with the Committee. Lee also made clear that a couple Board members, especially John Wingler, were of great help to the Committee.

Ben suggested that the Committee recommend that the Board clarify in the Bylaws who could be a voting member of the Election Committee. Lee agreed, but suggested that the Committee specify a recommended position of how to clarify the Bylaws. Ben said that is an issue for the Bylaws Committee to decide. But if the Election Committee does make a recommendation, the report should include two steps - first, ask for clarity in the Bylaws, and then recommend its position on the clarity.

Lee suggested adding a recommendation of allowing at least seven members to serve on the Election Committee. Ben suggested that could lead to overrepresentation of certain regions who may be more active on the Committee than others. Eric said that based on our experience, he did not think that would be much of a problem. Ben said he still had concern about building a Committee composition that would undermine a region's representation on the Committee just because certain regions do not show up to the Committee meetings. Lee, though, was concerned that by limiting the committee to just seven members, the Committee would be turning away potential bodies. He suggested possibly having a tiered system with seven voting stakeholders, and additional non-voting members.

Ben brought up his initial point of just asking for clarity on the issue of the Committee composition in the Bylaws, and ask the Bylaws Committee to fill in the blank. Lee suggested recommending broad strokes where the Committee recommends that the Bylaws clarity on the composition of the Election Committee and to open it up for more than seven members. Ben agreed.

Pat then again brought up the issue about filling up slots on the Election Committee that are vacant or inactive. Pat suggested that the Committee have alternate Committee members who could fill in for inactive members. Ben agreed that there should be a process to replace inactive Committee members, and suggested that it would be the Committee's obligation to fill the role from that region. Lee said that he did not think that the Committee would not have the time to look for new members while it was busy doing its outreach activities during the Election. Ben said then to put the obligation on the Board, and Pat said the Board should recommend individuals who would be interested in the Committee. Lee said he did not think the Board would agree to that. Ben suggested revising the report to recommend to specify in the Bylaws a process for replacing Committee members.

Eric asked whether it was important to specify that there be a process for replacing Committee members for other reasons than a lack of representation from one region. Ben said his specific input was intentional because it was important for the Election Committee to have at least one active Committee member per region. He said it is less important to have a second or third person for a region, so it is less important to create a process to replace those members. Eric said that was fine.

Ben and Lee said that there should be a Board advisor assigned to the Election Committee. Ben said that Board member would be the voice of the Board. Lee suggested that the Board member would participate as a non-voting member.

Ben also recommended that the Committee recommend that the Bylaws be clarified to specify in writing whether a candidate running for the Board can be a member of the Committee. Lee expressed some concern that those thinking about running for the Board might be chilled from participating on the Election Committee. Lee suggested that there be a date by which a stakeholder who is on the Committee withdraw from being a member on the Committee to allow those thinking of running for office to participate up to a certain point. Ben said that could be left up to the Bylaws Committee.

Lee asked the Committee whether it agreed with the recommendation in the report to streamline the definition of stakeholder and to change registration from documentation to self-affirmation. Ben asked why the definition of stakeholder was changed to remove those involved in a community group. Lee said that this is being recommended as necessary in order to change to self-affirmation. Lee explained the rationale is that people who live, work, own property, or go to school in Silver Lake are easier to verify by self-affirmation than those who are in a community group. Lee said that based on the input that was provided by stakeholders to the Committee about removing the documentation registration requirements, that it was more important to the community to remove those documentation requirements than it is to include within the definition of stakeholder those who have a tenuous connection to Silver Lake. Ben agreed, but suggested spelling out the rationale in the report that the reason why the stakeholder definition is being streamlined is the practicality of what can be done in order to switch Silver Lake to self-affirmation.

Theresa asked whether there was a report from DONE about the elections, and a report on the effectiveness of online voting. Eric said he did not see a report. Lee said, though, that he would be shocked if DONE did not ultimately have such a report.

Motion to Approve the Report

Lee moved for the Committee to approve the Report with the following revisions:

- Add column for dollars per voter in the chart

- Petition DONE to allow online registration up to election day; to allow stakeholders to register and vote via mobile phones; and to extend hours of voting to six hours on

- Recommend to the Board to revise bylaws accordingly

    -Clarify in the Bylaws whether a board member or someone seeking election can be a voting member or a non-voting member of the Election's Committee

    -Broadening the Election Committee to include more than just 7 voting members

    -Requiring a board member assigned by the Board to serve as a non-voting advisor to the Election Committee

    -Specify a process for replacing committee members who are no longer active on the Committee, and are the sole representative of his or her region

    -Specify a process by which the Election Committee can continue functioning in non-Election seasons, including re-appointing of co-chairs and allowing the Election Committee to vote on positions internally

- Provide rationale for why it is necessary to take out the other stakeholders in order to make it self-affirmation.

Ben seconded the motion. The motion carried with 4 yays, 0 nays, and 0 abstentions.

<u>Meeting Adjournment</u>

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.