

## **October 11, 2018 SLNC Election Committee Final Meeting Minutes**

The Election Committee held its meeting on Thursday, October 11 at 7:35 pm at the Silver Lake Recreational Center. Lee Sherman, Eric Kissack, Manuel Celedon (arrived at 7:40 pm), Katie Smith, Nicholas Fox Robbins, Daniel Berson, and Jerome Courshon attended. Christopher Garcia from the City Clerk's office attended as a guest.

### **Announcements on Non Agenda Items**

Nick mentioned that it is a big week in Silver Lake. On October 18, The Silver Lake Picture Show is holding a screening of The Artist. October 20 is Music Box Steps Day. And October 21 is Taste of the Eastside at Mac Sennett Studios. Lee recognized that the date for Music Box Steps Day was wrong on the agenda and that is an event that the SLNC has sponsored.

Jerome said on October 20, the northeast division of LAPD is holding an open house from 10 am to 2 pm.

### **Presentation from Christopher Garcia with the City Clerk's Office**

Christopher Garcia gave a presentation about the 2019 neighborhood council elections. In the past, DONE handled neighborhood council elections. However, starting with this election, most of the operations for the Election will be controlled by the City Clerk's office except for candidate filing and vote counting. The goal is to implement learned lessons from previous elections before making large changes, which may be done in the future. One such change that did not get funded was vote by mail. The Clerk's office would like to see that in the future and understands that is a preference of the SLNC.

Chris gave the schedule and timeline for all elections. SLNC's election will be held on April 6. Candidate filing starts on December 22 and ends on January 22. Candidates can register online or on a paper forum. Candidates will have to meet the stakeholder requirements.

Chris said for election day itself, the Clerk's office will be recruiting poll works and placing a heavy emphasis on training them. They want to have time before and after the pools to set-up and tear down. Lee mentioned that the Committee has booked St. Francis Assisi Church for 11 am to 7 pm on Election Day with elections to be held from 12-6. Lee asked whether that would be enough time before and after. Chris said that they may need more time, but that the City will work with our chosen location on that.

Chris said that ballots will be tallied by the first business day after election, *i.e.* the Monday afterwards. There will be a paper ballot to ensure that the process is not disrupted, as happened last time. Chris did mention that some other councils are doing online voting. They were chosen based on certain criteria. Jerome identified problems with online voting in the last SLNC election including people not getting their pin numbers to vote and e-mails from the Clerk's office going into spam. Chris said those problems have been corrected, and there will no longer be a requirement to vote with a pin number for online voting.

Chris said that according to SLNC bylaws there will be 21 seats up for election - 14 regional seats, and 7 at large. The minimum voting age is 18. Chris asked about the bylaws provision about stakeholder verification, as it has both a self-affirmation and documentation option. Lee explained the intention behind the provision is to allow stakeholders to vote on Election Day without having to provide documentation. The Committee and the Board thought that was an important change in this political environment to encourage stakeholders to vote who may be turned off by the documentation requirement. This is particularly so for undocumented immigrants, who may not vote in neighborhood council elections due to the documentation requirements, although they are allowed to do so. Instead stakeholders would have to affirm to

stakeholder status under penalty of perjury. But if stakeholders, particularly community interest stakeholders, could not provide all of the information requested in the stakeholder form, they could voluntarily provide supporting documentation instead.

Chris understood that, but said that the question is how to implement that. The bylaws may draw confusion and it may still chill people from voting if there is a suggestion that documentation is an option. Chris said that jurisdictions usually choose one option or the other.

Chris also acknowledged that many neighborhood councils have expressed the same concerns that Silver Lake has with the use of personal information provided by stakeholders through documentation verification. Chris said no personal information would be disclosed, and the Clerk's office is conveying that it does not care about someone's immigration status. Lee said that he appreciates that, but that the concern is still with the chilling effect; even if the information may not be disclosed, the asking of documentation alone may cause stakeholders not to vote. Chris agreed. For those neighborhood councils that have a documentation requirement, the city will just keep a notation that the stakeholder provided documentation, but will not maintain the substance of the documents.

Jerome clarified that candidates will have to provide some documentation. Chris said yes, but the city is scaling back the amount of information provided by candidates that is available for public disclosure.

There was also a question about the community interest stakeholder definition. Chris said that the SLNC has a very specific definition in its bylaws, but the City Council is considering a city-wide definition because the current definition is vague. Jerome said that anything that the City Council decides should not apply to this election, but just future elections. Chris said that is the standard the City Clerk will be applying.

Jerome and Lee asked Chris what SLNC needs to do. Chris said SLNC has to decide whether it is self-affirmation or not or decide whether voting for certain seats will require documentation. For example, Echo Park has self-affirmation to vote for at-large representatives, but requires documentation for voting for regional representatives. Jerome asked whether SLNC can require only community interest stakeholders to provide documentation, but not other stakeholders. Chris said that was an interesting idea that he would have to ask about. Jerome described problems in the past with members of groups who have a tenuous connection to Silver Lake that tried to influence an election, and raised concern that could happen again.

Daniel asked what is a community interest stakeholder. Jerome said SLNC has defined what a community interest stakeholder is in its bylaws. It is someone who does not live, work, or own property in Silver Lake, but has some connection to the community through an organization. A community interest stakeholder has to show that he or she is a member of that organization.

Nick raised concerns that there may be a subjective test that is used to determine which organizations are "legitimate." Jerome said that the test for a community interest stakeholder is specifically defined in the bylaws. Lee asked Chris if the city had a concern with how SLNC defined community interest stakeholder position in the bylaws. Chris said that the city does not have an issue with that definition.

Lee then proposed that since the only issue is the clarification of SLNC having self-affirmation or documentation verification, Lee proposed that the co-chairs of the Election Committee and the Bylaws Committee have a phone call with the Clerk's office to discuss how to best implementing SLNC's intent. Lee said that he understood the Bylaws provisions, which the

Elections Committee helped draft, to be intended so that no one would be required to provide documentation on Election Day. Lee said that if there is any discussion about requiring documentation to implement the Bylaws provision, that issue would be brought back to the Committee, or a joint Bylaws and Election Committee meeting to discuss the implementation of the Bylaws. Lee asked whether there was any objections to this approach.

Jerome raised concern about self-affirmation for community interest stakeholders; that there should be some evidence to show they are a stakeholder. Lee and Eric mentioned that the Elections Committee created a form that included all of the information that was required under the bylaws on the form, including a website, so there would be no need for a documentation. Chris said that he has seen the form, and there is a possible concern that the form asks for more documentation that is necessary. He would need to check on that.

Chris also said that documentation requirements do not necessarily solve the problem of the system being gamed by outside organizations. He said other neighborhood councils have seen community organizations that liberally provided letters to people to provide support for that person's stakeholder status. He said that the issue is not with the verification requirement.

Nick raised the concern with the community interest stakeholder requirement to have minutes or have a website. Groups are active in the community who may not have either. Jerome said the bylaws have closed. Jerome suggested advocating for changes to the community interest stakeholder requirement after the next election.

Lee again proposed the co-chairs of the Elections and Bylaws Committees have a meeting with the Clerk's office on the implementation of the documents. He said that any outcome that would not allow stakeholders to vote on Election Day without documentation will be brought back to the Committee. Lee asked if there was any concerns. Jerome said that it would depend on the form that the City Clerk's office approves. No other committee member had objections. Chris said he would make himself available for a call with the committee co-chairs.

Eric asked Chris about location approval. Chris said that the location would be approved in November, but said he understood that the Elections Committee had done a lot of the legwork already in booking the space and researching any possible issues, so he thought that would expedite the approval process. Lee noted that SLNC asked the city whether 2 locations were possible for Election Day. Chris said it was not feasible this year. There are challenges, particularly how to prevent stakeholders from voting twice - once at each polling place. Jerome said that he is happy that we have a place booked that is ADA complaint and is centrally located. He said there are not a lot of options.

Jerome asked whether there are going to be pop-up polls. Chris said there will not be as there is no pre-registering. Chris mentioned pre-registering as a possibility for 2021.

Eric asked Chris about Canva. He said that is through DONE, and suggesting asking them about that. Eric also asked whether the poll worker recruitment is a neighborhood council expectation. Chris said no, that goes through the clerk's office. The clerk's office will look for those who are familiar with the neighborhood council and that multi-lingual capacity is a plus. A poll worker cannot be the candidate or someone related to the candidate.

Lee asked about the possibility for an election consultant and what the costs were for doing that. Chris said the idea was for a neighborhood council to hire someone to promote elections and recruit candidates. He said some neighborhood councils found that an independent third-party is the best way to recruit candidates to run against those already on the council. The focus is on outreach. He said it may be too late to do that, and he was not sure about the costs.

## **Lessons Learned**

Eric discussed some of the lessons learned from the last election. He said last time the focus was on advertising and tabling. Based on his research talking with other neighborhood councils, the Committee decided direct mailing is the most effective thing to do so. It was a priority for the Committee to have the money to proceed with a direct mailing. He was a little skeptical of the benefit of tabling.

Lee said it may be helpful to be more selective with tabling. Last time, the Committee tabled nearly every Saturday at the Farmers' Market. It may make sense to table around important dates such as candidate filing, the candidate forum, and election day itself. Lee said that he also would like the Committee to place more focus on outreach during the candidate filing. Daniel asked whether the committee was not pleased with the number of candidates. Eric said he was pleased, but there was a question of whether the candidate field was sufficiently diverse. Lee said that there was a drop in the number of candidates between 2014 and 2016, and that generally, more candidates correlates with higher voter turnout. Chris agreed and said what the city found from its research that most candidates do not file until right before the filing deadline. He suggested that the Committee focus its outreach during that time.

Jerome said that since candidate filing begins in a little over two months, it is important to get materials together now and be delayed over the next month or so. Lee agreed and said that he wanted to make preparing outreach material a priority. Lee asked Jerome if he knew whether individual expenditures would have to go to the board. Jerome said he did not think that it did because the Election Committee's budget was already approved. But he suggested asking Terry, and building that into the timeline. Lee said that it may not matter because we likely will need to go to the board for approval on outreach materials anyway.

## **Election Location**

Lee gave an update on the location. He confirmed that St. Francis is available, and booked it from 11 am to 7 pm on April 6. He said that he went by the auditorium and he did not think that there would be any problems with religious symbols, and if there were, they could be easily taken down. Lee said there was a question of whether the neighborhood council would need to provide any expenses to cover the costs of the location. Lee said that St. Francis asked for a donation. Chris said that the city will cover any expenses, and that will be a part of the conversations that the City has with the location. Chris was also not concerned about the religious symbols.

## **Candidate Forum**

Lee said that finding a location for the candidate forum is important, and wants to get that booked soon. Lee said last time the Committee used Holy Virgin Mary Cathedral. He said that there was a fair amount of parking and was in a part of Silver Lake that did not typically have events and where it has been more difficult to get people engaged, which was a positive. Eric also liked the location. Jerome said it was a good space and centrally located.

Nick asked how many people attended. Lee said about 75. Nick said he understood wanting to have the candidate forum in a region that is less engaged to encourage turnout from that region, but he suggested having it in a location that people would stumble upon it. He suggested setting up a PA system in Sunset Triangle. We could get a screen with a live projector, and people walking by would stop and attend.

Eric and Jerome brought up having a rain plan if it is outside. Nick said we could set-up tents if that is necessary. Katie liked the idea of setting the forum in a place where people would naturally be. She suggested the Vista. However it was brought up the Vista is not in Silver Lake.

Lee asked about costs. Nick said he could look into it, but he estimated it would be \$800 with a PA system, visual, and using some sort of platform. If there is no screen, he thinks it would be \$400-\$500.

Jerome said he likes the idea of having the forum in a location where people would stumble upon it, but suggested the possibility of an indoor location. Nick mentioned the Black Cat as a possibility. Jerome said the JCC is an option. Eric said that we could get a food truck to come by. Daniel said that the JCC does not have the benefit of people stumbling upon it. Eric said, however, that it is a place that everyone in the community knows. Katie suggested Mack Sennett studios.

Lee said he liked the idea of having the forum in a place where people stumbles upon it. He asked Nick if he could look into possible locations and costs to bring to the next meeting. He said to be mindful that we have \$600 set-aside for the candidate forum. Nick said he will do that. He will come with 3 options, including benefits, potential problems, and solutions to those problems.

Lee then suggested having a meeting in two weeks to discuss the candidate forum and preparation of outreach materials. There was a consensus to have the meeting on October 25 at 7:30 pm.

#### **Adoption of July 17, 2018 Meeting Minutes**

Jerome moved to approve the July 17, 2018 minutes, and Eric seconded. The minutes were accepted without objection.

#### **Meeting Adjournment**

Lee moved to adjourn. Jerome seconded. The meeting adjourned at 9 pm.