



# Planning Elections and Engagement Panel

Monday, September 16, 2019

## MINUTES

### **Attendees:**

Assembly 14 – Jeff Koertzen

Concilio Latino – Consuelo Lara

Contra Costa Democrats - Renee Zeimer

County District I Office - Joan Carpenter

County District II Office - Lauri Byers

County District IV Office - Colleen Isenberg

County Census – Teresa Gerringer

Democrats of Rossmoor - Carol Weed

Richmond NAACP – Willie Robinson

League of Women Voters DV – Martha Goralka

League of Women Voters DV – Suzan Requa

RYSE Center – Maria Hoang

General Public – Diddo Clark

General Public – Jake Sloan

General Public – Joe Fisher

General Public – Lloyd Madden

### **Staff:**

Registrar of Voters – Joe Canciamilla

Assistant Registrar - Scott Konopasek

Elections Services Manager - Sophie Lehman

Elections Processing Supervisor – Rosa Mena

Elections Outreach Coordinator – Eren Mendez

Fiscal and Administrative Assistant – Alicia Little

Civic Engagement Specialist - Paul Burgarino

Civic Engagement Assistant – Karen Tedford

### **Census Presentation**

Once introductions were completed, Teresa Gerringer was introduced to discuss the work Contra Costa County is doing to encourage all Contra Costa residents to complete the Census. She gave an in-depth report about efforts the county is undertaking to make sure that everyone participates, along with inviting PEEP members to apply for a grant that is being offered to community groups to help with census outreach. More information on Census 2020 is available [here](#).

Gerringer also discussed the hard to count population including people of color and those who distrust the government. She said it is necessary to hire people who everyone trusts, who are dependable, safe, and are aware of Title 13. There will be \$675 Million distributed by the feds, but the county could lose upwards of \$1.2 million if Contra Costa residents are not counted properly.

Following her presentation, Diddo Clark asked if the Census organizers are working with the League of Women Voters. Gerringer said yes. Martha Goralka asked who would be counting the homeless population. Gerringer said the county would work with those who work with homeless to ensure they participate. Willie Robinson asked if the Census organizers would meet with the Richmond NAACP. Renee Zeimer asked if Census information was online and if there were plans to partner with the county libraries. Gerringer said the Census already had messaging in place at the libraries and is in close contact with their staff.

## **General questions/comments**

Following the Census presentation, the meeting shifted to general election comments and questions. Carol Weed asked about what happens to voter correspondence once someone moves out of state. Scott Konopasek explained that our office is notified when someone moves by other states and/or by the individual voters once they move. Renee Zeimer asked about the county “purges” voters. Scott Konopasek clarified that voters are not purged, but are classified as “active” or “inactive” and that any switch from inactive to cancelled due to moving out of state or passing away is “the purge.”

Suzan Requa asked about the use of the Election Division’s Website as a way to assist voters in changing their voting information, citing how organizations use the Website to help voters look up their registration status. Scott Konopasek clarified that voters cannot make changes on our website. They must re-register to vote if they have moved, changed their name, or wish to change their political party. Any changes to a person’s voter registration can be done on the SOS website, in the Election office, or by calling the election office. Once the information has been changed and recorded, the voter will receive a letter in the mail and is asked to confirm the changes. If a voter wishes to switch to getting their ballot by mail, they can either call our office, email us or text COCOBALLOT to 28683 to complete that request.

As the conversation continued, Sophie Lehman shared that as the result of new state legislation, people will be able to register to vote at their neighborhood polling place. This new law (SB72) takes effect on January 1, 2020,

## **March 2020 Presidential Primary/NPP voters**

Rosa Mena mentioned that the signatures-in-lieu process was underway for the March 2020 Presidential Primary Election. This is where local candidates can get signatures from registered voters in their desired district to offset filing fees. Mena said eight people had pulled papers for various offices.

Renee Zeimer asked how it is decided whose names appear on the presidential primary ballot. Scott Konopasek said that is determined by the Secretary of State. Joe Canciamilla added that the primary just gauges who voters prefer for the office.

Later in the meeting, Mena mentioned that the March 2020 candidate nomination period for party central committees starts on September 27 and ends on December 6<sup>th</sup>.

## **Security/Cybersecurity**

In response to a question about elections security, Scott Konopasek said that the Elections Division has been on top of ways to ensure systems are secure. He said that there had been recent meetings with the ISP and staff trainings on identifying phishing and other external threats to cybersecurity. He said that the main threat to compromising an election is attacks that disseminate false information that damages public trust.

## **My Ballot, My Way Campaign**

Paul Burgarino showed the group the English, Spanish and Cantonese versions of a 30-second commercial created by the office. This commercial is aimed at niche audiences of Contra Costa voters who vote in-person on Election Day. The commercial touts the cultural benefits of getting a ballot at home.

## **Permanent Drop Off Boxes**

Paul Burgarino shared that the office recently received the 24/7 boxes that will be installed outside of El Cerrito and Brentwood city halls before November's special election. Plans call for boxes to be installed in nine other Contra Costa County locations before the March 2020 election. The goal of the 24/7 boxes is to give Vote By Mail voters another safe and convenient way to drop off the ballot envelopes that fits their busy lifestyle.

## **Polling Places**

Eren Mendez discussed how the Elections Office has been taking a comprehensive look at how it chooses polling places. One thing that the office has been particularly looking at is limiting the use of school campuses. Mendez said that there has been increased resistance from schools over the years from school district officials and a lack of space on the campuses. The Elections Division is making sure that the sites it chooses are accessible to all voters and are well-known, easy-to-find locations in the community.

## **Poll Worker Training - APPLE 2.0**

Sophie Lehman announced that APPLE 2.0 classes started in August, with 160 poll workers attending the first two weeks of the new class. She announced that an additional 160 poll workers were signed up for the next two weeks of classes. This iteration of APPLE builds upon the first version of the award-winning class, with a greater focus on the experience of the individual voter, not just the accessibility of the physical location.

## **National Voter Registration Day 2019**

Alicia Little invited PEEP members to participate or encourage their friends to participate in National Voter Registration Day on Tuesday, Sept. 24<sup>th</sup>. She invited group members to take one of the kits assembled by Elections staff to host a voter registration drive.

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## **Future Agenda Items**

No specific requests.

## **Next Meeting Date/Location**

Monday, December 9, 2019. 6:30 to 8:00 pm, at the Clerk-Recorder-Elections Department, 555 Escobar St., Martinez

## **Attachments:**

My Ballot, My Way "Make Your Home Your Polling Place" flyer in English and Spanish