

Elections and Engagement Panel Meeting Minutes

Monday, January 29, 2018 6:30-8:00 pm

Clerk-Recorder-Elections Department

555 Escobar Street, Martinez CA

Attendees:

Dawn Morrow, Board of Supervisors District 3
Jonathan Cook, Contra Costa Democratic Party
Martha Goralka, League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley
Ariel Silva, Assembly District 11
Carol Weed, Democrats of Rossmoor
Scott Rafferty, At-large
Samantha Renaud, Assembly District 16
Madeline Kronenberg, League of Women Voters
of the Bay Area
Kurt Schultz, Contra Costa Libertarian Party
Mark VanLanduyt, At-large
Sarah Butler, Contra Costa Democratic Party
Colleen Isenberg, Board of Supervisor District 4
Jonathan Bash, Contra Costa Young Democrats
Mike Spousler, Assembly District 14
Terry Koehne, Contra Costa Office of Education
Sherry McCoy, Senate District 9
Joan Carpenter, Board of Supervisors District 1
Jim Sugiyama, ECAP Emeritus
Landry Woodwind, Indivisible East Bay
Consuelo Lara, Concilio Latino

Rita Xavier, League of Women Voters of West Contra Costa
Bob Taylor, Contra Costa Mayors Conference
Margaret Wimberly, City Clerks Association
Susanne Brown, City of Concord
Lauri Byers, Board of Supervisors District 2
Rebecca Patchen, Contra Costa Republican Party
Diddo Clark, At-large

Elections Staff:

Joe Canciamilla, County Registrar
Scott Konopasek, Assistant Registrar
Debi Cooper, Deputy Clerk-Recorder
Sara Brady, Election Services Manager
Sophie Lehman, Election Services Manager
Paul Bugarino, Civic Engagement Specialist
Karen Tedford, Civic Engagement Assistant
Eren Mendez, Elections Outreach Coordinator
Richard Woolever, Elections Specialist
Jose Gonzalez, Elections Processing Supervisor
Chuck Waters, Elections Processing Supervisor

1. The meeting started at 6:37 pm. Registrar Joe Canciamilla welcomed everyone and noted it was great to see such a large group in attendance. Attendees introduced themselves and stated which organizations they were from.

2. Comments/Questions from group members:

Scott announced that the agenda was inverted on purpose, to give the group opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback. Items listed later in the agenda may be resolved during this period.

Diddo Clark mentioned it was great to have the young voters at the last meeting. Scott K. mentioned that we had a follow-up meeting in West County and it was successful. Elections staff is currently working on a Resource Guide for those voter advocates.

Carol Weed asked about the creation of a clearing house group for voter registration groups. Scott K. said that the civic engagement team would follow up on facilitating such a meeting and contact group members.

Sarah Butler asked if the county would be hosting Regional Early Voting again in 2018. Scott K. said yes, that it is a permanent program and explained the distinction between the county's REV's and vote centers under the Voters Choice Act.

3. Assistant Registrar Update

- Chinese implementation

Sara Brady gave an update about the incorporation of Chinese into all voter information, more specifically Cantonese and Mandarin in spoken form, Cantonese for text. The Voter Information Guide will be “3 guides in one,” noting that the Elections Office took the advice the group gave at the September meeting. Scott K. added that the staff has been meeting with community groups to understand the culture and needs of the Chinese community in Contra Costa County.

- Website launch

Sophie Lehman gave an update on the relaunch of the county elections Website. She highlighted some of the new features of the site and announced that the site will go live in early February. Scott added that the group would be sent a link to the new website before it launches to test drive it and see what links don't work, etc. He added the website will have interactive maps once development is complete later this spring.

Carol Weed had a question about how the county reach out to areas with lower registration, which the group discusses. Scott K. replied that registration drives are not part of the elections office's core functions and that the Elections and Engagement Panel group plays a role in identifying areas with issues. Paul Burgarino added that the clearing house group mentioned earlier could discuss strategies for that outreach. Joe Canciamilla added that we have to be creative in how we share the message, because of budget restrictions along with the lack of local outlets to share information.

- Cities moving from at-large to district elections

Scott Konopasek provided background information about the current issues of several Contra Costa cities and school districts transitioning from at-large to district elections and the potential logjam the county Elections Division could face in implementing a bevy of changes during a short window of time. The Elections Division provided a report at the meeting that explains the situation in greater detail.

Scott K. reiterated that the county Elections Division is neutral does not have a position on the issue, and that the office's role is “purely ministerial.”

Joe Canciamilla said there is uncertainty of how the city-drawn maps will look until our office receives them.

Scott Rafferty made several comments; that 21 of the 30 largest school districts in the state are districted, with 3 of the remaining 9 at-large districts in Contra Costa County.

Scott Konopasek pointed out that the county permanently consolidated its precincts, correlated along census block lines, in 2014 to keep voters at the same precincts each election.

Bob Taylor said that districting is a complex issue and should take the time to do it right. He pointed out that as Brentwood mayor, he's concerned about the implementation cost.

Joe said that he can't guarantee that the Election's Division can do it if all the cities decide to change their type of election in complicated formats.

- March Election

Scott Konopasek announced that the elections office will be rolling out new voting machines in 2018, with March being a trial run of the proposed system. The county elections office is able to fully purchase the equipment as a result of saving money for it over the past few elections and other efficiencies. The machines feature modern technology and are more efficient. Scott invited the Elections and Engagement Panel members to see the new equipment in action this March, noting that ballot counting is always an open and transparent process.

- Candidate filing

Sara Brady announced that the filing period for candidates running in the June election starts in February 12th and ends on March 9th. Filing for Superior Court judges started this week.

- Photo Contest/Candidate Forum

Paul Bugarino gave an update on the 2018 Photo Contest, telling the group that the theme is "Service in Contra Costa County" and encouraging them to share the contest with their constituents.

Paul also shared that the Elections Office is taking a larger role in the candidate forum programming and has recruited Bay Area television news reporters Claudine Wong, Bob Butler, John Sasaki, and Laura Anthony to moderate the forums in April.

4. The meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm The next meeting date is tentatively set for April 9, 2018.