NORTH PARK PLANNING COMMITTEE

northparkplanning.org

Ad Hoc Bylaws Subcommittee

MEETING MINUTES: Thursday, October 14, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

I. Parliamentary Items

a) Call to Order: Matt Stucky, Ginger Partyka, and Victor Torres (Kate Callen in attendance but participating as community member to maintain balance required by bylaws)
b) Adoption of the Agenda (Torres/Partyka) 3/0/0
c) Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes: May and August meeting minutes (Torres/Partyka) 3/0/0
d) Announcements: None

II. Non Agenda Public Comment: Pat Sexton commented on documents received from the city regarding last election but still reviewing, additional documents need redacting before being turned over.

III. Action and Informational Items

A. Election Procedures -

Action Item: Board consideration of election procedures framework to be considered by full NPPC board and incorporated into language for bylaw amendments

1. Public Comment on Potential Bylaw Changes:
- Pat Sexton: looked at other CPGs and noticed that many other groups still have meeting attendance requirement for voters.
- Randy Walsh: asked about possibility of pulling election procedures out of bylaws to allow flexibility each year. Wants to see formalized outreach activity to develop leadership for NPPC.
- Daniel Gebreselassie: asked about whether bylaw changes being considered would be for only next election or all future elections.
- Kate Callen: most CPG bylaws were fairly similar, thinks online voting would be unique and present a challenge.

2. Victor expressed that he sees a need for an online option, but we need to be careful about thinking about radical changes to bylaws. Victor also asked about option for 2022 election to follow 2021 city procedures allowing special elections under temporary rules not following normal election procedures in bylaws. Victor doesn't want to see constant bylaw changes. Matt presented on possible method for hybrid online election with in-person option using same software platform on electronic device.   Comments and discussion:
    a. Pat Sexton: thinks hybrid option is a great idea. Offered to host an in-person ballot box for last election, which would be another option.
    b. Daniel: Agree online election last time was caused by COVID. Next election needs thorough consideration, but no need to depart from current bylaws.
    c. Randy: thought last election worked, response to challenges was thorough.
    d. Kate: thinks selection of online vendor is critical, thought Opavote failed us and was selected without due diligence.

e. Ginger: current bylaws require in person voting and voting in pen, so any other options would require bylaw amendments. Also noted several other CPGs did not have meeting attendance requirement.

f. Randy: thinks hybrid option is more inclusive and makes it easier to vote.

g. Pat: at last election, software showed several voters who said they voted weren't counted. Has concerns with digital ballots. Requiring computers, even in person, won't work for everyone. But supports online option if wanted by voter.

h. Kate: has concerns with completely eliminating the option of paper ballots. Thinks after last election, community would not support election without paper ballots.

i. Adrian: sees benefit of paper ballots for older population.

j. Matt asked about whether there are concerns with mixing online with paper ballots and introducing counting errors.

k. Victor: with a large enough elections subcommittee, counting is not an issue. Also suggested limiting March meeting to only election.

l. Ginger: likes to see method that allows for unique identification of each voter and centralized vote counting. Hybrid option would lead to complications that need to be carefully addressed.

m. Daniel: NPPC has used paper ballots in the past and it worked.

n. Randy: thinks worth talking with online vendors to ask about concerns. Sees need for paper option, but online voting is good option.

o. Kate: doesn't think the term "hybrid" election should apply to all-electronic election without paper ballots.

p. Pat: on voting night, tally must be completed.

q. Matt: understands concerns with online option and need to maintain secret ballot.

r. Victor: not everyone has email or computer, can't be disenfranchised by eliminating paper ballot option.

s. Matt asked if anyone had problem with including an online option assuming paper ballots were another option: Daniel and Kate expressed support for online as one option.

t. Randy thought slates might have boosted turnout, expressed that California is a voter-inclusive state.

u. Matt tried to summarize comments: appeared to be consensus for in-person voting with paper ballots with an online option.. No objections to this general statement.

3. Voting Windows: Matt mentioned CP 600-24 requires in-person option, what is interest in expanding voting window?

   a. Ginger: thinks election needs to end at March meeting, any other voting options are beforehand.

   b. Kate: Thinks default voting option should be paper with online voting option. Victor phrased online voting as "enhancement."

   c. Daniel: thinks in-person option can't conflict with NPPC meeting time if meeting is on Zoom.

   d. Pat: candidates should appear at February meeting for introductions. Suggested 7-9pm election window with another Saturday voting option.

   e. Kate: supported Saturday option.

   f. Daniel and Randy expressed support for candidate introductions at February meeting.

   g. Matt summarized with comments from board: two-week online voting window, "at least" 2-hour voting window at March meeting, with "at least" 3-hour Saturday voting window to be determined by elections subcommittee and announced at February meeting.

4. Tie vote?
    a. Ginger: supports change to random selection rather than runoff
    b. Daniel: supports coin-flip
    c. Randy: asked about three-way tie
    d. Matt: noted other groups allow coin flip, drawing of straws, or other random option determined by elections subcommittee.
    e. Victor: to make running an election easier, random selection works.
5. Write-in candidates?
    a. Daniel: write-in candidates are often a protest, should be allowed.
    b. Ginger: adding write-in option adds complexity, questioned whether it was worth maintaining option instead of simplifying.
    c. Kate: write-in candidates are rarely viable, but not worth prohibiting.
    d. Victor: not a big issue, might as well allow.
    e. Matt agreed it was not a big issue.
6. Meeting attendance requirement: Matt expressed support for maintaining requirement for candidates, but eliminating for voters.
    a. Pat: thinks maintaining requirement shows commitment.
    b. Victor: requirement isn't onerous.
    c. Ginger: feels strongly that requirement should be eliminated. Votes for many offices where she hasn't personally attended meeting in person. Voting shows people care about community.
    d. Daniel supports requiring attendance.
    e. Matt noted the fundamental disagreement that won't be resolved at this meeting, suggested tabling.
    f. Randy supports raising requirement for candidates to attend more meetings.
7. Establishing eligibility to vote: should we establish eligibility beforehand or allow alternative methods? Matt mentioned option in Kensington to establish with first-class postmarked mail. Also noted problems with maintaining records of eligibility documents.
    a. Kate: concerned about using mail to establish eligibility.
    b. Randy: thinks NPPC should be as light as possible to be voter-centric.
    c. Daniel: suggested allowing people to maintain eligibility from past elections.
    d. Victor: satisfied with leaving eligibility documentation alone. Supports opening up eligibility window to three months before election.
    e. Pat: require people to vote in person if they need to establish eligibility by alternative method and allow subcommittee to verify and not retain records.
    f. Ginger: always risk of people voting if not eligible, but NPPC is not of such importance to be overly concerned about widespread voter fraud. Supports 3-month window to establish eligibility. Suggested breakout room in Zoom meeting as option for validating documents.
    g. Randy: supports self-certification.
    h. Victor: self-certification could be problematic.
    i. Matt noted that if in-person eligibility allowed, documentation would be incomplete if sought in public records act request, which would lower value.
    j. Pat: noted that eligibility documentation is only an issue with online voting option.
8. Size of election subcommittee
    a. Victor: supports 5 subcommittee members.
    b. Daniel: has served on elections subcommittee, noted that additional volunteers can assist with election even if not on subcommittee.
    c. Pat: would like to see someone new every year.
    d. Victor: supports having community members requirement.

       e.   Randy: supports idea of reporting on past meeting attendance of candidates.
9. Summary:
       a.   Victor thought we made a lot of progress and have a general outline.
       b.   Matt summarized apparent consensus: (1) paper election with an online option, (2) two-week online voting window, (3) two-hour voting window at March election (devoted only to election) and three-hour weekend voting option, (4) allow write-in candidates, (5) random means to break ties, and (6) election subcommittee of 5 (3 board members, 2 community members), (7) establish eligibility for 2-3 months before election. Need more work on meeting attendance requirement and documentation to establish eligibility. General agreement of this summary from Victor and Ginger.
       c.   Board expressed support for an in-person meeting to conduct workshop to draft bylaws.

IV. **Adjournment** (8:56 pm)