



MINUTES

A TASK FORCE TO STUDY THE CITY MUNICIPAL ELECTION LAWS

VIRTUAL MEETING

Wednesday, September 6, 2023 6:00 PM

Task Force Members Present: Faye Gaskin, Scott Gibson, John Michael Gudger, and Andrew Miller. Eileen Leahy, an *ex officio* member, was also present.

A quorum being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Given the purpose of the meeting (i.e., soliciting public feedback), the Chair started the meeting by providing background on why the Task Force was formed and its aims. He then had each member introduce themselves.

Mr. Miller then provided a summary of the findings of the recent non-scientific survey as well as the methodology behind the survey. Key points discussed:

- 661 responses were received;
- Higher proportion of respondents came from Wards 1, 2 and 8;
- 50% of respondents were Democrats; 29% were Republicans; 18% were Unaffiliated; 2% belonged to other parties;
- Respondents supported a wide range of voting methods but there was clear support for maintaining an in-person option;
- A majority favored moving away from a closed-primary system (46.4% favoring blanket primaries and 16.5% favoring semi-closed primaries);
- Respondents were more evenly divided on when elections should be held;
- Respondents overwhelmingly opposed non-citizen voting;
- Respondents were fairly divided on same-day registration;
- Respondents overwhelmingly opposed lowering the voting age; and,
- Respondents strongly favored term limits.

The Task Force then opened the meeting for public comment.



George Gallagher (1212 Barbud Lane) spoke about his concerns regarding universal mailed out ballots and the accuracy of the voter rolls citing examples from when he was canvassing as a candidate. He also offered support for signature verification on mailed ballots.

Janet Katz (143 Spa Drive) asked about the timing of when elections should be held noting that it may be fair to have the next election run on the normal cycle. She echoed Mr. Gallagher's concerns about universal mailed-out ballots and the accuracy of the voter rolls, and offered support for voter ID.

In response to her question, the Chair offered that he believes we are talking a cycle or two down the road or that the Council would have to act before next August.

The Chair then reminded everyone of the other ways people could offer public comment, and then closed the public hearing.

The Task Force conducted its raffle drawing. Winners were the e-mail addresses starting: SEBrown, WhineyWhites, and ETopnel.

There being no further business, the Task Force adjourned at 6:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Scott T. Gibson, Secretary