

**Minutes for VMA Election Committee
September 27, 2017, 8:00 pm**

In attendance: Marty Langelan, Jesse Tampio, Doug Snyder
Council member: Arthur Alexander

Meeting came to order at 8 pm. The Chair noted the regrettable absence of two members but confirmed that the three members in attendance constituted a quorum.

Minutes from August 22 meeting were unanimously approved.

The Committee approved by consensus the following proposals:

- Proposed Charter amendments, subject to review by the VMA attorney and approval by the Council:
 - Delete last sentence of Section 602(a) and replace with language along the lines of “Nominations must be received in writing by the deadline set by the Election Committee, which shall be no less than 30 days before the election,” in order to give discretion to the Committee to set a longer deadline, such as 45 days, but prevent the Committee from setting a deadline shorter than 30 days.
 - On the suggestion to require that the Election Committee consist of at least 5 members, the Committee agreed to refer the question to the VMA lawyer whether individuals could be assigned as temporary Election Committee members, or temporary election assistants, for a short period of time on and around Election Day. The current process for counting ballots requires at least 5 people, and the view was expressed that such individuals need to have a fiduciary responsibility, but another view was expressed that in future years, the Committee may not require (or be able to recruit) 5 members for the full year.
- Proposed amendments to VMA Election Rules and Procedures, subject to review by the VMA attorney and approval by the Council:
 - Change the beginning of the nomination period to 75 days before election, and the deadline for nominations to 45 days before election.
 - Clarify that filing a candidate statement and conflict of interest form by the deadline is a strict requirement for being a candidate (given that the current language is slightly ambiguous).
 - Require that an individual being nominated by a different VMA resident express his/her consent to be nominated, either by email or in writing.
 - Clarify that no anonymous nominations are permitted, as a clarification/implementation of the Charter requirement that nominations must come from the individual candidate or “another qualified voter.”
 - Add a requirement that, for all distributed campaign materials or “ads,” the VMA logo/letterhead cannot be used and all such materials must prominently state that they have been paid for by, or on behalf of, the

- candidate(s). Also prohibit candidates from giving away any gifts worth more than \$1 with campaign materials.
 - Amend the rules to give the Committee discretion to create a reasonable “no electioneering zone” around the voting table that is not tied to a rigid 100-ft radius, in order to keep the voting table where it was for the 2017 election (for reasons of noise/traffic flow/privacy) but allow candidates to electioneer at the south corner of the sidewalk beyond the fence.
 - Present the deadlines/milestones in the rules in a clear sequential order.
- Changes to Election Committee operational procedures:
 - Schedule the Candidate Forum at least 3 weeks after packets are sent to the post office.
 - Post signs on the sidewalk for several days beforehand to publicize the Candidate Forum.
 - Modify the ballot to make it clearer, i.e., place boxes to check to the left of the candidate names.
 - Put instructions for returning absentee ballots on the form itself.
 - Have both pens and pencils at the voting table.
 - Use signage clearly indicating which side of the table voters should start from.
 - Request the VMA Community Engagement Committee to organize and implement the social activities on Election day, e.g. hand out drinks/ice cream/raffle/etc.

The following proposals were not adopted:

- Specifying that Council members running for reelection that year should not be involved in appointing the Committee.
- Holding two Candidate Forums. Given the burden on the candidates and the Committee, we will instead encourage voters who can't make the forum to submit questions in advance and listen to the recording afterwards. We could consider two forums in future years.

The following issue was subject to further consideration:

- Although the Committee had previously voted to request to the Council that the election results be announced by email the following day, the attending Council member voiced concerns about this approach, for reasons of tradition, community spirit, and allowing the winners to celebrate in person. The Committee considered that the primary two concerns with the current approach are (1) avoiding undue time pressure on the Committee as they count the ballots and (2) avoiding awkwardness for the losing candidate(s). The Committee discussed that the first issue could be mitigated if the Committee makes it clear, including in the original election packet, that the results will be announced as soon as possible but that the new election procedures require labor-intensive due diligence. The Committee also decided that it would provide periodic updates to the waiting VMA residents to avoid “knocks on the door.” The Committee also considered that running for elected office does come with the risk of losing publicly. The Committee agreed to revisit this issue and to consider an appropriate recommendation.

Next meeting tentatively set for 8 pm on October 12, pending confirmation from the two absent members.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 pm.