

VMA Election Committee Meeting Minutes, March 18, 2020

Meeting was held via Zoom.

Election Committee members in attendance:

Marty Langelan, Lauren Biel, Jesse Tampio, Lorie Mitchell, Halie Soifer

VMA Council representative: Susan Fattig

Resident: Scott Freling

The meeting was called to order at 8:35 pm.

The February 23 meeting minutes were approved.

Due to the current coronavirus pandemic, the primary purpose of the meeting was to develop an emergency plan to provide for the safety of all VMA residents during the upcoming 2020 VMA election.

The committee decided to cancel in-person voting at the polling table this year, due to the public-health risks. Marty will confirm that the Council will cancel the village Celebration on the Sidewalk.

Lauren presented the committee with research she conducted on the online voting site, Election Buddy. Use of an online voting system would allow all residents to vote electronically from the safety of their own homes. Earlier that day, Lauren had created an Election Buddy test that was sent electronically to each of the committee members. The system tabulated the results and the privacy of each voter was protected through a secret access key. The committee discussed the results and agreed to do additional research to make certain that use of Election Buddy would meet the committee's high standards for voting privacy, security and integrity. Lauren agreed to give an Election Buddy presentation at the village Council meeting scheduled for March 19, 2020.

As an alternative, the committee discussed the possibility of using the current absentee ballot process or developing a vote-by-mail procedure, but agreed that the resulting safety concerns of handling paper ballots would create too great a risk for this year's election. The committee agreed to recommend that the Council authorize the election committee to conduct the election by means of electronic voting.

The committee decided to request that the Council postpone the election until late June or July to allow the committee sufficient time to develop a detailed plan for online voting. The committee noted that we could only postpone the election until May 14 (per the VMA Charter) as an interim measure. Marty agreed to send a letter to the Council on Thursday prior to the Council meeting, presenting our concerns and recommendations.

The committee agreed to conduct the upcoming "Meet the Candidates" community forum remotely using Zoom, with a date to be determined.

The chair informed the committee that only one candidate had filed so far, but the committee had heard from four possible candidates, with to date three candidates verbally committing to run.

The committee reviewed the following upcoming deadlines, which are subject to change:

March 23: Candidate statements and COI forms due.

March 24: Election packet due to be assembled and sent to printer for mailing to VMA residents.

March 27: Election Committee article due for April VMA newsletter.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:47 pm.