

Work Session

Agenda Item #	7
Meeting Date	March 23, 2016
Prepared By	Jessie Carpenter City Clerk
Approved By	Suzanne R. Ludlow City Manager

Discussion Item	Discussion of Synchronizing Takoma Park Elections with State and Federal Elections
Background	<p>The City Council placed an advisory question on the ballot for the November 3, 2015 City election to assess voters' support for changing the date of elections from odd to even years to coincide with State and Federal elections:</p> <p><i>Beginning with the election in November 2018, and providing that voting rights can be maintained for City residents who are (1) 16-17 years old, (2) non-citizens, or (3) on parole or probation for a felony conviction, and that instant runoff voting and same day voter registration can be maintained, the City of Takoma Park municipal elections for Mayor and Councilmembers should be changed to the Tuesday following the first Monday in November in each even-numbered year in order to coincide with Maryland statewide general elections.</i></p> <p>There was strong support among Takoma Park voters: 1,944 voted in favor; 406 voted against.</p> <p>The deadline to file the request to the State Board of Elections to have a consolidated election in 2018 is August 27, 2016. As part of the request, the City must:</p> <p><i>(ii) certify as part of the request that the charter of the municipality requires, and the municipality has established, deadlines and procedures for the administration of municipal elections for the municipality that are consistent with the deadlines and procedures for State and county elections established by the State Board with regard to:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. the filing of certificates of candidacy;</i> <i>2. the filling of a vacancy in office;</i> <i>3. the filing of a petition; and</i> <i>4. the certification of a ballot question.</i> <p>The Charter Amendment process to change the date of the election takes approximately 90 days.</p> <p>Staff has been in contact with the Election Director at the Montgomery County Board of Elections and the Assistant Director at the Maryland State Board of</p>

	Elections to gather information. However, due to the work of preparing for primary elections, we do not expect to have details to discuss until June of this year at the earliest.
Policy	Assess the feasibility of moving City elections to coincide with state and federal elections.
Fiscal Impact	To be determined
Attachments	Preliminary Schedule for Consolidating City/State Elections
Recommendation	Determine whether to move forward. At each step in the process until the Charter Amendment changing the date is adopted and effective, the Council can decide to delay or discontinue.
Special Consideration	

PRELIMINARY SCHEDULE FOR CONSOLIDATING CITY ELECTIONS WITH GUBERNATORIAL AND PRESIDENTIAL GENERAL ELECTIONS

2016

Spring of 2016 – Charter Amendment to make deadlines and procedures consistent with deadlines and procedures for State and County elections.

August 27, 2016 – deadline to file with the State Board a request to include Takoma Park questions and offices on the ballot for the November 6, 2018 election. This date is 18 months before the deadline to file a certificate of candidacy for the gubernatorial primary election.

September 27, 2016 – State Board decision on request

2017

November 7, 2017 (Takoma Park election to elect Mayor and Council to one-year term)

2018

Council should determine how candidates are nominated (by petition or by nominating caucus or . . .)

August 6, 2018 – deadline to file certificate of candidacy (first Monday in August)

August 20, 2018 – certification of a local ballot question (third Monday in August)

October 30, 2018 - deadline to request mailed or faxed absentee ballot

October 25-November 1, 2018 – early voting

November 6, 2018 – election day

November 16, 2018 – verification of votes/certification of election