

Takoma Park's board of elections met on 3/4/2019 at 7500 Maple Avenue in Takoma Park, Maryland. Present: Brian Ernst (board chair); Arthur David Olson (board vice chair); Greg Lebel (board member); Curtis Antonucci (board member); Jennifer Domagal-Goldman (board member); Jessie Carpenter (city clerk); Irma Nalvarte (deputy city clerk). Arrived during course of meeting: Lori Grazio (board member).

Brian called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

We approved the meeting agenda.

We improved and approved the minutes of our 2/4/2019 meeting.

We approved a response to correspondence regarding Tideman's Alternative methodology; the response is attached. Brian undertook to send the response.

We reviewed a cover letter prepared by Brian for our recommended charter and code changes. Jessie believed the letter was in a format the council would like. Jen suggested including a cover memo; Jen undertook to revise the document. Brian undertook to circulate the final version of the recommended charter and code changes as a single document. We agreed to review the documents and approve them using electronic mail.

Jessie noted that it is a staff responsibility to provide racial equity considerations that accompany items brought before the city council. Jen undertook to include some equity considerations in the document to accompany the recommend charter and code changes.

Jessie indicated that there's no problem with sharing documents once they've been sent to the council; it may make sense to share them with interested parties.

Jessie undertook to send the final version of recommended charter and code changes to the city attorney once it is available.

Jessie reported having spoken with a county election board staffer today. The memorandum of understanding is to be considered by the county board in April at the earliest. Jessie asked the county staffer to let us know if there are any blocks to co-location, sooner rather than later; the county staffer seemed to understand the city's desire for certainty. Jessie offered to take part in a joint visit with county staff to Don Bosco School (where only one room will be available, so city and county elections can't be in separate rooms).

We considered scheduling of our work for the 2020 election. Brian suggested making decisions on recruitment next month and beginning recruitment efforts soon; making decisions about election worker compensation, shift lengths, and residency requirements will help in developing recruitment materials. Brian undertook to send 2017 recruitment materials to board members. We heard a concern about international student participation in city elections (voting or working) given limits on their political activity; we heard that the students' schools are the best source of information about what international students are allowed to do.

Jen noted the need to publicize the fact that we're not having a city election this year; this can be done at city events and through the city's newsletter.

Brian noted that we can begin work on publicity material this year. Jessie noted that the city plans to conduct non-election-related bus stop sign campaigns this year; this will give us an indication of whether to expect difficulty with election bus stop sign campaigns next year.

Brian noted that we can do some work on election worker training material this year; finalization will need to wait until county agreements and other matters are finalized.

Greg reported on research on available materials on running for office; Greg has found more informational material than motivational material; Greg is continuing the work.

We considered working on or observing 2019 elections in other cities; mutual aid arrangements are a possibility. Jessie noted a 3/21/2019 Maryland city clerks' meeting where the matter might be broached. Jessie and Brian are interested in observing (though not all day); Arthur David is willing to work on another city's election.

Brian noted an Open Elections data project to gather precinct-level, machine-readable election results for all of the United States. The project can use volunteers; it is also trying to determine how to represent Maine's ranked-choice voting results.

We adjourned at 8:23 p.m., to meet next on 5/6/2019 at 7:00 p.m. at 7500 Maple Avenue.

Brian Ernst, presiding

Arthur David Olson, recording

Date: 3/4/2019

From: Takoma Park Board of Elections

7500 Maple Avenue

Takoma Park, MD 20912

To: John R. Moser, john.r.moser@gmail.com

Re: Tideman's Alternative Smith

We have received your suggestion regarding use of Tideman's Alternative Smith; we have decided against recommending the method to the city council. We note that:

- According to one source, the method is not currently used by any government.
- According to one source, "Some Condorcet elections permit write-in candidates but, because this can be difficult to implement, software designed for conducting Condorcet elections often does not allow this option." Takoma Park does allow write-ins in its elections; we do not want to preclude the possibility of conducting a machine-counted election.
- Takoma Park has counted ballots by hand in recent years; using Tideman's Alternative Smith would require substantially more work to do so.
- Legislation that has been introduced in the state legislature would allow Montgomery County to use ranked-choice voting.
- In the only Takoma Park election where we have sufficient information about the ballots to make a determination, the city's current method and Tideman's Alternative Smith produce the same result (as does plurality voting).
- The city already has conducted substantial voter education to help voters understand the ranked choice voting system, but nonetheless still has some challenges with voters unfamiliar with the process. Tideman's Alternative Smith would be more difficult to explain and would add a layer of complexity for voters who have never seen this system in another use case.

Brian P. Ernst, Chair, for the Takoma Park Board of Elections