

City of Takoma Park, Maryland
Takoma Park Board of Elections
Official Meeting Minutes

Thursday, June 9, 2016
7:30pm - Third Floor Council Conference Room
Takoma Park Community Center - Sam Abbott Citizens' Center

Present: Arthur David Olson, Beatriz York, Brian Ernst, Jim Roberts, Jessie Carpenter, Ken Sigman

Minutes Taker: Brian Ernst

1. **Call to order:** 7:39pm
2. **Board Business:** The board selected Brian Ernst as minutes taker.
3. **Review and Approval of Agenda:** Arthur David Olson proposed a meeting agenda that was approved.
4. **Approval of Minutes:** Minutes from May 2016 approved as amended. The meeting date was incorrect and was changed.
5. **Summary of Recent Meetings and Information.** The board reviewed its discussions from the past two meetings, primarily the results from a call with the State board of elections (BOE) and the subsequent decisions from the city council. Key points were: the council is pushing back ballot unification until later than 2018; the state cannot incorporate IRV on its ballot at this point in time, and Takoma Park-only voters would need to vote at a separate location if ballot unification occurs.
6. **Synchronization of City election with State Elections**
 - a. *Update from City Clerk.* Jessie informed the Board that Fairvote, a nonprofit advocacy group, is working on a project to determine how to incorporate IRV into election administration.
 - b. *Review of Charter Amendments with the Assistant City Attorney.* Assistant City Attorney Ken Sigman reviewed the proposed charter amendments for synchronization, specifically sections 301 and 606. The board discussed the timeline for the nominating caucus and the certification of results. The board recommended that the city increase the time available to certify the election results to 48 hours after the polls close. The window for contesting the election results would also change to align with the certification dates. The board also recommended that the nominating caucus move earlier in the election cycle, to a date in early September that will be determined by the city clerk and city attorney and matches with the city charter.
 - c. *Synchronization Report for the City Council.* Jessie informed the Board that the City Council would like to consider a more detailed plan for 2018 and the potential

implications for holding Takoma Park's vote alongside the state and federal elections.

Key questions included:

- i. Logistics for check-in, the number of polling places to open, the early voting locations, and the types of ballots to use.
 - ii. Where Takoma Park voters would vote and how to inform them
 - iii. What is the expected scale of the effort, and how much would the board change for the 2017 election
 - iv. The materials and administration for the vote.
- d. *Board discussion and recommendations on 2017 and 2018.* The board discussed at length the structure for 2017 and 2018 city elections. In anticipation of presenting a report to the City Council, the board agreed to put together a document for the council based on the discussion.
- i. **2017:** Arthur David Olson suggested the possibility of conducting part of 2017 in a similar style to 2018 in order to practice the following year's challenges. The Board recommended to keep a similar style to 2015, but perhaps identify volunteers in 2017 that could learn how to be precinct leaders in 2018.
 - ii. **2018:** The board debated several aspects of the structure for the 2018 elections, looking for ways to make the process intuitive for the voter and within the capability of the board. The board recommended several items:
 1. The restriction of voters to a single precinct as determined by the county board of elections.
 2. The board will staff four polling locations at each of the stations in the area in which Takoma Park residents will vote for state and federal elections. Takoma Park only voters will also vote at the designated polling station.
 3. The use of e-pollbooks for check-in at each precinct.
 4. The use of a scanning machine for counting, in anticipation of more votes cast. The board noted the possibility of renting a single scanning machine and counting the ballots in batches at the end of the day in order to save on costs. Hand-counting, while possible, would require a different procedure than the 2015 election. Jessie plans to look into the costs of leasing the scanners and the pollbooks.
 5. Early voting would only occur at the Silver Spring location, in addition to a few days at the community center or elsewhere in Takoma Park.
6. **Other Business:** The board is considering sending an observer to the Ocean City elections this November and will put in a request to Ocean City. The meeting was Jim Roberts' last as a member of the board, his service on the board was much appreciated by all. Jim will move the E Pluri-bus sign to a new location if needed.
7. **Next Meeting:** The board proposed meeting on July 7 in order to discuss the report to the City Council. The meeting is pending confirmation from board members.
8. **Adjournment:** 9:39pm

