



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

BOARD OF ELECTION COMMISSIONERS

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COMMISSIONERS

Ethridge A. King, Jr.
Larry W. Ward
Charles J. Marquardt
Victoria A. Harris

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Tanya L. Ford

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
Lesley Waxman

BOARD OF ELECTION COMMISSIONERS MEETING Minutes of May 24, 2023

The Chair, Commissioner Harris, called the meeting to order at 5:31pm on May 24, 2023 via Zoom.

Roll Call:

Commissioner Victoria Harris	Present
Commissioner Larry Ward	Present
Commissioner Charles Marquardt	Present
Commissioner Ethridge King	Present

Also, present were Executive Director Tanya Ford, and Assistant Director Lesley Waxman.

I. PUBLIC COMMENT

Motion: To close Public Comment

Moved: Commissioner Harris

Seconded: Commissioner Ward

Roll Call:

Commissioner Harris	Yea
Commissioner Ward	Yea
Commissioner Marquardt	Yea
Commissioner King	Yea

Passed: 4—0

II: MINUTES

Motion: To approve the minutes of May 10, 2023, with corrections

Moved: Commissioner Harris

Seconded: Commissioner King

Roll Call:

Commissioner Harris	Yea
Commissioner Ward	Yea
Commissioner Marquardt	Yea
Commissioner King	Yea

Passed: 4—0

III: REPORTS

1. Executive Director's Report

- Executive Director Ford: Reported that the recommendation from the Board for the Early Voting schedule was approved by City Council. Councilor Nolan had questions about the Election Commission's efforts for early voting since she had noticed that not a lot of voters utilized early in person voting.
- The Executive Director asked for clarification for the June 1 meeting. Commissioner Marquardt stated the meeting was scheduled on June 1, for the purpose of scheduling hearings for the Border properties on Harris Street in the event affected residents had not responded to the letter that was sent on May 15.

2. Assistant Director's Report

- Assistant Director Waxman: Reported the Statement of Financial Interest packets were mailed to 162 officials on May 12, the due date is June 1. As of May 24, one SFI was received in the office by mail.

3. Commissioners' Reports

- **Commissioner Marquardt:**
 - Reported that there was a policy order on the City Council's Monday night agenda that would have put a question on the ballot for this November ahead of the charter review being completed. This was voted down with one vote in the affirmative, and eight votes in the negative.
 - Commissioner Marquardt also reported that there was an interesting article in the Governing Daily regarding the politicalization of election administration and how GOP led states are withdrawing from ERIC. He will send the article to everyone.
- **Commissioner King:**
 - Reported that 47 Upland Road is not a valid address.
- **Commissioner Harris:**
 - Reported she attended the Election Data Science worker group, convened by MIT. Zachary Mohr, a professor at the University of Kansas, who focuses on financing government operations presented. He was invited to discuss election administration and its cost. He had a data set from 2008 to 2016 that he shared with the group showing the cost of running elections and the general cost of election administration.
 - Commissioner Harris and Commissioner Ward are trying to meet with Allen Gehant at CRLS before graduation to discuss having students work at the polls on election day.

IV. ACTION AGENDA

Old Business

2023 City Census

Assistant Director Waxman: stated that the staff is still working on data entry.

Potential Voter Registration Challenge of Border Properties

- Commissioner Harris:
 - Stated that the Board discussed at the last meeting, the hope that voters who received the border properties letter contact our office if they want to remain voting in Cambridge by June 1. Otherwise, they should use the voter registration form we included with the letter to register to vote in Somerville.

- Assistant Director Waxman:
 - Reported the office mailed the letter to the residents in the Border Properties on May 15.
 - There are 21 voters at 12 different addresses.
 - As of May 24, she heard back from 4 addresses.
 - None of the border property residents that were sent a letter, have changed their registration from Cambridge to Somerville thus far.
 - The Assistant Director heard back from a voter at 37 Harris Street. He stated a commissioner came to his house in the 80s to check where his bedroom was
 - The voter stated that 33 and 37 Harris Street had bedrooms in the front part of the house and 35 had its bedrooms in the back.
 - Six percent (6%) of 33, 35, and 37 Harris Street buildings is in Cambridge.
 - Assistant Director Waxman looked through the minutes from the 80s, she found the meeting minutes from 1988 that pertains to the site visit that was conducted by former Commissioner, Peter Sturges.
 - Former Commissioner Sturges recommended in 1988 that 33 and 37 Harris Street were eligible to vote in Cambridge, and that 35 Harris Street is located in Somerville for voting purposes.
 - Assistant Director Waxman heard from a voter at 25 Harris Street, the voter had questions about the law and the impact this situation could have on schools.
 - Assistant Director Waxman sent the voter at 25 Harris Street literature about the law.
 - Thirty-five (35) Harris Street resident emailed to notify the election office that she is moving out of state in a month.
 - Nineteen (19) Harris Street #2 the voter called with questions about schools.
 - Assistant Director Waxman contacted Somerville’s election officials to make them aware of the situation with the border properties on Harris Street.
 - Somerville election officials will be on the lookout for registrations from the residents in question.

- Commissioner Harris:
 - Thanked Ms. Waxman and everyone in the office who got the border properties letters out.
 - Commissioner Harris reported she spoke with Peter Sturges, the former Election Commissioner who conducted the site visit at 33, 35, and 37 Harris Street back in 1988.
 - Mr. Sturges stated the commission used the same criteria back then that we used in the Seidel hearing.
 - He stated that site visits are always conducted by a Republican and Democrat.
 - Commissioner Harris raised the question of coordinating site visits for further discussion:
 - The Commissioner that normally oversees the precincts in the area will take the lead on setting up any appointments or site visits.
 - Someone from DPW or the Tax Assessor’s office should accompany commissioners on site visits.

- Commissioner King:
 - Asked if a resident does not invite us inside to view his or her residence, what steps can we take.
 - When is a decision final—since former Commissioner Sturges visited this site in 1988 and recommend that 33 and 37 Harris Street be permitted to vote in Cambridge.

- Executive Director Ford:
 - Stated if we can’t view the inside of a border property then we’ll have to address it through a hearing.
 - Executive Director Ford, and Assistant Director Waxman, advised the Board that voters must be given a minimum of two days up to a maximum of fourteen days to be notified for a hearing.

- Commissioner Harris:
 - Suggested we schedule the hearing for June 14. The Board had a discussion around scheduling one or more hearing on the same date.
- Assistant Director Waxman:
 - Referenced past practice of the Commission to schedule multiple hearings for one day. The example she gave was 19 voters were scheduled for 12 noon on Wednesday (no date was given), this took three hours (including a lunch break) because none of the voter showed up.
- Commissioner King:
 - Asked about scheduling a visit 37 Harris Street to view the property. Suggested date Wednesday, May 31.
- Commissioner Marquardt:
 - Asked about the Commission’s policy/procedures for challenges—when a commissioner brings a challenge, one of the commissioners has to present the evidence.
- Assistant Director Waxman:
 - Believes the statue doesn’t require a commissioner to bring a challenge.
 - Assistant Director Waxman will do some research and have an answer for the Board at our June 1 meeting.
- Executive Director Ford:
 - Suggested if a commissioner brings a challenge, he/she should abstain from voting out of fairness.

New Business:

Municipal Election

- Poll Worker Training
- Commissioner Harris:
 - Asked Executive Director Ford about having in-person training.
 - We should keep the online training, to cover a lot of the basic materials, and the testing feature which serves as a mechanism to assess poll workers’ knowledge.
 - And to also have an in-person session for the new workers that have been hired since 2019 in order to have hands on experience with the voting machines.
- Executive Director Ford:
 - Agreed that some workers would benefit from in-person training (or additional training to the online portion) to minimize the incomplete work being presented at the Tabulation Center, where the office staff then have to step in to finish up.
- Commissioner Harris:
 - Mentioned she received a video from Calvin Harris, from City TV that was shot circa 2006.
 - If poll workers were shown a video to augment their training that could be helpful.
 - There are a variety of tools such as some quick videos, role playing that can be helpful during an in-person training.
 - Asked the Commissioners to bring training ideas to the next meeting.

- Commissioner Ward:
 - Suggested that we look at the top issues/mistakes and make them the focus of our additional training.

Poll Worker Lists

- Commissioner Harris:
 - People have responded to my email for workers for the November election, I'm cautiously optimistic about the number of respondents.
- Commissioner Marquardt:
 - I'm getting a decent response from my poll workers—I asked them if they can work both November and March.
- Executive Director Ford:
 - The workers Commissioners provide to help in the office, it would be better if the same people that work in November also work in March since there will be no downtime between the November election and the March 2024 primary election.
 - The office is short staff. We can't fill open positions due to the current climate around election workers that has happened over the past two years, it's hard to recruit new people to work. If there are only four fulltime staff, I don't know how Early Voting is going to get done.
- Commissioner Ward:
 - Offered to help out in the office.
- Executive Director Ford:
 - The jobs we need help with have to be done every day and weekends. Fulltime temps have to be approved to have access to the state software program. We also may need help with nomination papers, etc.
- Commissioner Harris:
 - Thanked Commissioner Ward for his offer to help out in the office. She added depending on what needs to be done, she can be in the office on a daily basis.
 - If the Executive Director can provide her with the job descriptions for the open positions, she'll be happy to put them out there to reach more people.

Draft Polling Place List

- Commissioner Harris:
 - I spoke with the woman at Holy Armenian Trinity Church, and she apologized for not returning the letter. For all intents and purposes, the site is confirmed.
- Assistant Director Waxman:
 - The Polling Location List has the change in it for 9-1, the Holy Armenian Trinity Church, we should vote on this change even though we don't have written confirmation. We are still currently sending voting confirmations with the Lexington Ave. Fire House as their location.
 - We removed the year from the Polling Location List because we anticipate that we'll use the same locations for the 2024 elections.

Motion: Confirm the location for Ward 9, Precinct 1, the Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle Street, parking lot entrance on Sparks Street.

Moved: Commissioner Harris
Seconded: Commissioner Marquardt

Roll Call:

Commissioner Harris Yea
Commissioner Ward Yea
Commissioner Marquardt Yea
Commissioner King Yea

Passed: 4—0

Motion: Accept the polling locations as is outlined in R4

Moved: Commissioner Harris
Seconded: Commissioner Marquardt

Roll Call:

Commissioner Harris Yea
Commissioner Ward Yea
Commissioner Marquardt Yea
Commissioner King Yea

Passed: 4—0

- The Board held a discussion about scheduling hearing
- The Assistant Director reserved the conference room at 51 Inman Street from 3pm to 8pm, for Thursday June 15
- The Board will have a better idea in terms of the number of hearings when we meet on June 1

Next Meeting:

- June 01, 2023 at 5:30 pm via Zoom

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 6:46 pm

Moved: Commissioner Harris
Seconded: Commissioner Ward

Roll Call

Commissioner Harris Yea
Commissioner Ward Yea
Commissioner Marquardt Yea
Commissioner King Yea

Passed: 4—0

A True Record

Attested by: *Ethridge King*
Ethridge A. King, Secretary