

Board of Election Commissioners Meeting

Monday, March 30, 2015

6:00 p.m.

Esther Howland Chamber, City Hall

Call to Order by the Chairperson

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

Approval of the Minutes of the February 23, 2015 Meeting

- 1. Discussion concerning sites flagged in the Institute for Human Centered Design report and what possible alternatives are available.**
- 2. Discussion concerning proposed change of polling location within Lincoln Village for Ward 2, Precinct 4.**
- 3. Discussion concerning proposed change of polling location for Ward 6, Precinct 4.**
- 4. Update concerning 2015 Street Listing.**
- 5. Discussion concerning acquisition of new voting machines.**
- 6. Poll worker rates of pay.**

6:15 p.m. – Hearing: change of Polling Location for Ward Six, Precinct Five

Adjournment:

Next Meeting Date:

Minutes of Worcester Board of Election Commissioners Meeting, March 30, 2015

Call to order by Chairman Winant at 6:00 PM

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

Commissioners present:

Commissioner Joseph Carlson

Commissioner Richard Duffy

Commissioner Diane Mohieldin

Chairman Robert Winant

Commissioners absent:

None

The first order of business was the acceptance of the minutes from the February 23, 2015 meeting. The minutes were unanimously accepted.

Discussion concerning polling locations flagged in the Institute for Human Centered Design Report – City Clerk Rushford informed the commissioners that the report identified 4 locations that should be replaced.

- 1 – Lincoln Village Pool Center (Ward 2, Precinct 4)
- 2 – Our Lady of Mount Carmel Recreation Center (Ward 4, Precincts 1 & 2)
- 3 – Quinsigamond Village Community Center (Ward 6, Precinct 4)
- 4 – South Worcester Neighborhood Center (Ward 8, Precinct 5)

The City Clerk informed the commissioners that there was already a replacement location available for 2-4 – at the Tenant's Association Building in the same housing community. There would be further discussion about this location scheduled for a hearing for the next Election Commission meeting.

The City Clerk expressed his surprise that the Report cited Our Lady of Mount Carmel Recreation Center as it has been a polling location for approximately 50 years and he had never received a complaint about it. In addition, Gary Vecchio, the Warden at this location, called the City Clerk after seeing the news article about the report and he said he has never received a complaint about the location either and further, one of the poll workers at the location uses a wheelchair and has never had any issues accessing the location.

The City Clerk reported that some improvements could be made to the Quinsigamond Village Community Center with the assistance of City Councilor Russell and the Carpenters Union that would make the location acceptable until the new Blackstone Valley Visitors Center is constructed and ready for use some time in 2017.

Public Hearing – Change of location for Ward 6, Precinct 5 Greenwood Gardens, 327 Greenwood Street to the Bethlehem Covenant Church, 46 Greenwood Street – The regular meeting was suspended in order to hold the scheduled public hearing at 6:15 to discuss this change. No members of the public

were present. The City Clerk and Director of Elections presented information, photographs and data regarding the proposed new polling location. City Councilor George Russell commented that he had not received any objections from constituents regarding the change, nor had he received any favorable comments regarding the change, and further, that he had never received any complaints about the current polling location at Greenwood Gardens. He deferred to the recommendations of the City Clerk and the commissioners.

Commissioner Duffy was concerned voters might be confused by the move and that they would complain after the fact, or perhaps show up at the old polling location. The City Clerk reviewed the procedures put in place to communicate the polling location change to the public to assure the commissioners that every effort would be made to sign the neighborhood and send multiple mailings to households and to sign the old location just in case voters arrived there on Election Day.

Commissioner Mohieldin motioned to change Ward 6, Precinct 5 to Bethlehem Covenant Church, 46 Greenwood Street, it was seconded by Commissioner Duffy and all voted in favor. The public hearing portion of the meeting was closed and the regular meeting resumed.

Discussion Concerning Ward 6, Precinct 4 (Quinsigamond Village Community Center, 16 Greenwood Street) – City Councilor George Russell said he thought some easy improvements could be made to this location to make it usable until the Blackstone Valley Visitors Center was built. Commissioner Carlson asked the City Clerk if it was possible to move this location to Bethlehem Covenant Church as well and have a dual polling location there. Further discussion ensued and it appeared that a dual location would not be optimal. Commissioner Carlson motioned to request the City Clerk work with Councilor Russell and the Carpenters Union to make necessary affordable changes to this polling location.

However, prior to the motion be seconded Commissioner Duffy asked the City Clerk if the Election Commission was required to make the changes recommended in the Institute for Human Centered Design report. The City Clerk said the Election Commission was not required to do so but that the report provided valuable information and should be used to guide the Election Commission to strive to have more accessible locations wherever possible.

Commissioner Mohieldin then addressed City Councilor Russell asking if it was possible to get building permit fees waived for property owners of polling locations who were willing to invest in more expensive improvements to comply with the recommendations of the report. The Councilor said it would be up to the City Manager but that the City Council could recommend it.

Commissioner Carlson's motion was taken up again and seconded by Commissioner Duffy and voted for unanimously.

Update Concerning 2015 Street Listing/Census – The Director of Elections reported that about 24,000 responses had been received as of close of business that day and that 63,965 forms had been mailed to residents. He reported that there was no backlog and that all responses were being processed as they arrived.

Review of RFP for New Voting Equipment – The City Clerk reported that the bids had been received March 25th and opened and that he and the Director of Elections were working with the purchasing department to develop questions for the bidders based on their response to the RFP. The pricing documents will remain sealed until all of their questions have been answered/addressed.

Poll worker rates of pay – The City Clerk said the City Manager informed him that the request for the pay raises of \$30 per day would be submitted in the budget but that we would not have confirmation or final approval until the entire budget process was completed.

Next Meeting Date: April 22, 2015 6:00 PM.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:59 PM.