



NORTH PARK PLANNING COMMITTEE

northparkplanning.org

MEETING MINUTES: AUGUST 24th, 2021, 6:00 p.m.

Ad Hoc Bylaws Subcommittee

I. Parliamentary Items

- a) Call to Order (6:00 p.m.): Matt Stucky, Beau Benko, Ginger Partyka, Kate Callen, Victor Torres
- b) Modifications & Adoption of the Agenda: Agenda modified to move Item “B” from origins agenda to end of meeting. (Torres/Benko) 5/0/0
- c) Announcements: Matt mentioned citywide effort for CPG reform has still not been presented, hoping it will come soon to allow NPPC process to move in parallel.

II. Non Agenda Public Comment (2 minutes each): None

III. Action and Informational Items –

A. Review of CPG Bylaws (Information Item) -

Ad Hoc Subcommittee Members presented on their review of bylaws from other community planning groups. General impressions:

Ginger: no groups make it particularly easy to vote, Kensington allows voters to establish eligibility with first-class mail to address.

Kate: noted one CPG with two days of voting, one had mail-in plus in-person voting, noted groups with candidate forums, registration logs, candidate applications, highlighted issue of slates and lawsuit that challenged prohibition on slates.

Beau: noticed groups that designated business owner seats, established geographic districts. One group appointed seat for high school students.

Victor: noted different methods for allotting seats and that many groups do not allow write-in candidates (echoed by Kate).

Public Comment:

- Randy Walsh: asked about review of city policies, our own bylaws, and challenge to last election.

Board Comment

- Ginger: thought bylaw review was a worthwhile endeavor.
- Kate: believes we may be the first planning group to review all CPG bylaws and could set best practices. Wants to see more due diligence, more openness, more accessibility for entire public.

B. Elections Discussion -

A general discussion and open forum for public and subcommittee members to discuss potential election reforms.

Public Comment:

- Daniel Gebreselassie: should wait for city reform, shouldn't change bylaws to cover mistakes of past election, current bylaws have served the group well, many unknowns during

COVID. Recommended starting election process early, election subcommittee should hold public meeting.

- Paul Jamason: wants to see planning groups be more democratic and representative of community, believes renters should be represented.
- Randy Walsh: wants to see how other planning groups are actually operating and whether elections match bylaws, curious about scope of this subcommittee.
- Jessica Ripper: need to move toward being more democratic and inclusive. Should remove barriers to participation. Consider representation for renters and unhoused population. Supports online election given cost and difficulty of mailing ballots and staff wide voting windows.
- Vicki Granowitz: In past, NPPC made effort to bring on renters and businesses to increase diversity. Questioned whether we could study trends of NPPC board representation over time to measure success of those efforts. Recommended coin toss to resolve ties, try to make elections easier and simplify where possible. Recommended against geographic districts. If amendments stick to bylaws shell, can be approved quickly. Online elections cannot be manipulated like paper ballots, supports online elections.
- Brer Marsh: Overly programming board seats can make it difficult to fill seats. Noted that Uptown Planners had difficulty in getting bylaw amendments approved by City Attorney.
- Basil Mournian: suggested a voluntary questionnaire for meeting attendees or candidates to collect demographic data.
- Patrick Garbani: suggested logistical issues with online elections can be difficult. Generally in favor, but not positive technology is ready. Believes time period for voting should be widened. Renters may have harder time attending one-night evening voting period.

Board Comment:

- Kate Callen: Does not believe in overly programming board seats, does not think CPGs should weigh in on general land use debates, should try to be neutral, does not believe homeowners are advantaged in CPG elections and homeowners are not homogenous, designating seats for renters disadvantages others, democracy means majority of voters wins.
- Ginger: Agrees seats should not be designated, we instead need to make voting easier to ensure representation. That requires a wider voting window beyond a single evening, when many people are working. Doesn't see need to require voters to participate in meetings, they should be able to elect people to represent them so they do not have to attend. Should make it easy to vote and easy to establish eligibility. Suggested mirroring language from other bylaws that have already been approved.
- Victor: Believes current voting window on election day is too short. Questioned whether we could meet with city to get preliminary approval of potential bylaw changes. Believes election subcommittee should have minimum of five members.
- Beau: Not sure that we can achieve sufficient volunteer participation to staff elections subcommittee. Bylaws should increase participation. Noted that while last election was contested, we achieved a big turnout compared to other elections. Believes renters are less likely to be on CPGs for a variety of reasons, but don't need designated seats for renters.
- Matt: Noted that there does not seem to be interest in allocating seats or changing number of seats. Apparent agreement that we can ensure representative board by making it easier to vote. Bylaws should remove unnecessary discretionary calls that can complicate elections and introduce potential for bias. Expressed support for leaving attendance requirement to be on board, but supports removing attendance requirement for voters. Need to have in-person voting, but also offer electronic remote voting or other methods to widen voting window. Online voting removes potential for bias and complication with counting; cheaper and easier than mail-in voting. Also believes we need to focus on election subcommittee function.

- Victor: Responded with concern regarding online voting after last election. Would rather see March meeting devoted only to voting to offer longer voting period with potential additional day or drop box option.
- Kate: also concerned with online election given problems with last election. Shouldn't be the first and only CPG with online elections. Problems: ballot came from unknown sender, some ballots lost in spam, no way to confirm vote. Online is too risky.
- Ginger: supports removing attendance requirement, focus on subcommittee procedure, also wants to focus on proving residency to be inclusive of renters. In favor of expanding access, either by voting online or multiple days for voting. Online voting could remove the possibility of manual error.
- Beau: Supports online voting, noted main concern with last election was paper ballots. Would allow establishing eligibility over longer period rather than all at single election day. Noted some real elections are happening online.
- Victor: expressed concern with being first CPG to try online elections. Supports current requirement to attend one meeting to be candidate and a voter to ensure voters are invested and interested in participating.
- Matt: hopes to find consensus. Thinks a single day of voting is not enough. Suggested at next meeting to consider two proposals: an online option and an in-person option with expanded voting options with potentially multiple days.
- Victor: supports multiple days, potentially a weekend.
- Kate: supports one-meeting attendance requirement, even if it is pro forma. Kate may support online voting as one option if combined with two in-person voting days.
- Victor: willing to learn and listen to consider online plus in-person voting.
- Matt: Board needs to consider specifics to reach decision. Next meeting should be focused on more detailed proposals. Also invited public to bring amendment bylaws at next meeting.

C. North Park Community Data -

Informational Item (Presenter: Matt Stucky): A presentation on the current demographics of the North Park community as relevant to the NPPC and potential changes related to elections and board representation.

General summary from SANDAG 2019 estimates:

- 56,740 residents in North Park Community Planning Area. 25,428 households, with 7,266 single family households.
- 12.5% over the age of 65, 42.67% under 30, median age is 38.9
- Race: 49.54% white, 33.37% hispanic, 6.45% black
- A 15-member NPPC board that perfectly matches demographics: three members over the age of 60, eight under the age of 40. Two would live in single family homes, eleven would be renters.

Public Comment:

- Paul Jamason: based on earlier redlining, minorities were discriminated against to prevent single-family homeownership and intergenerational wealth. Past studies have shown CPGs overrepresent white homeowners.

Board Comment:

- Beau: Asked about source of renter data (answer: came from City CPG Audit).
- Kate: noted that when younger and renting, was less interested in community planning and other local civic affairs. Thinks it would be difficult to find 11 renters to serve on NPPC.

IV. Adjournment (8:07 p.m.)