

Task Force on Elected Representation

Meeting Minutes – October 25, 2019

Agenda:

- I. General Updates
- II. Recap from 10/18 Meeting
- III. Discussion of in-Ward engagement
- IV. Facilitated discussion (time-permitting)
- V. Preliminary discussion of Commission report
- VI. New Questions/Research Requests
- VII. Conclusion

Start Time: 8:45am

Attendees:

- I. Joel
- II. Doug
- III. Beca
- IV. Jennifer
- V. Joe
- VI. Christine
- VII. Dave
- VIII. Nadine
- IX. Dan

Meeting Notes: Jumped straight into Facilitated Discussion

- I. General Updates
 - a. Research/Information requests
 - i. Some members have not had a chance to do any additional research.
- II. Recap from 10/18 Meeting
 - a. Impressions about Presentations:
 - i. Persuasive case on odd-even year presentation as well as the primary presentation.
 - ii. The argument during the Primary discussion is questioned due to low voter turnout – specifically the August election. Belief that voters are confused; there are other ways to tackle it where there are no primaries at all.
 - iii. Belief that more voters with even years. Stated that august primaries are for partisan's votes. Only other independence to vote for would be judges.
 - iv. The only that odd-year would do, would be the ability to run city issues and large state issues. Off-year, would allow the spotlight for city elections without the cloud of higher-up/state/national elections. Questioning that if this is a valid argument.
 - v. Ballot standards: cannot merge elections, there is an order to it.

- vi. Odd argument: small turn out but informed and concerned citizens. It's more representative, due to higher number representatives of minority. Millages can come anytime and can be ran on off years.
 - 1. Parks millage for example, city would pay. City issues then.
 - 2. Some millage won't have to pay, unless they want highly voted.
 - a. I.E. GRCC and The Rapid – split 50/50
 - b. I.E. Petition groups won't have to pay.
 - c. City Commission puts something on – they cover cost.
 - d. Citizens group – GR covers the cost.
 - 3. We need to think about structuring the system so that not only large budget sectors can represent the city.
 - 4. Listing reasons with concerns for each side after final consensus and create final view. Listing reconsidering and agreement reasons. It is about educating. But also, don't want to indicate that this is a situation that is "up in the air." The group can't sound like the group is split; however, opposing views are important.
 - 5. Consensus that at the end of the day, the commissioners have to make a decision. But closer to a consensus after reaching further ways to position the favorable view. Drafting this and listing opposing views/concerns.
- vii. Even year Argument: more people/more democracy the better.
 - 1. Electing Commissioners should be more that requiring 5,000 votes.
- viii. Forced General Elections:
 - 1. More Turnout
 - 2. More clear choices
 - 3. Limits the power of incumbency/incumbent effects
- ix. No Primaries
 - 1. More turnout
 - 2. More access for candidates
- x. Primary Decides:
 - 1. Limits expense for candidates
 - 2. Motivate/knowledgeable voters
- b. VALUES:
 - i. Local
 - ii. Accessible/Fair
 - iii. Representative
 - iv. Accountable
 - 1. If these are our values what do we think?
 - a. Primaries don't allow it to be as accessible/fair.
 - b. Accountable argues more for forced general elections. Whereas one nonincumbent can rise to the top. Real challenge is what causes accountable.
 - c. Questions putting two candidates as the city sample – not enough voters to guarantee this is an accurate representation.

- d. Allows equal access to get on the ballot.
- e. Too many choices hinder decision making and doesn't motivate voters.
- f. Common consensus that there aren't many (little to no) advantages to the Primary side.
- g. Beca – thinking about cost for candidates. If everyone gets onto the ballot, that's a longer time that they have to stay active. I'm thinking about fundraising and cost for candidates. People who traditional who are not on politics, fundraising will cause them to be more strategic dollar process.
 - i. Argument – what about people with a ton of money? Hard to overcome with the finances. Door-to-door can be more effective at times.
- h. Not certain about accessibility for non-traditional candidates – not a lot of money and being able to successfully run for office.
 - i. Counter: The Chamber has a pack fundraising, can campaign hard on an odd year. Can win a commission/mayor race with high-targeted mailings. Non-traditional could have a better chance due to this.
- i. Do Candidates without large budgets able to pursue people? Is there any system in which they are less disadvantage?
 - i. Argued it doesn't matter when you run an election. For example, (he) ran a campaign that started very early but had a very little money.
 - ii. When you have an election (timing), won't change the impact that money has on electability.
 - iii. Making it to the secondary will prompt citizens/people to start writing checks to fundraise.
- j. Opinion that even elections would cause this level would become even more grassroots.
 - i. Argued that they will become even more expensive for less impact/impression. Cost for vote will go up like crazy. The primary allows you to have a chance to get the message out; the only people really listening are the august.
- k. Consensus that nobody feels favorable in Primary Decides.
- l. No Primaries: same dominant group can vote for the same dominant type. Goal to increase diverse voting groups. Minority opinion.
 - i. Advantage: minority/nontraditional candidate has an opportunity to win.
 - ii. Non-partisan option is a strong counter to no primaries.

- iii. Since the commission is non-partisan, running in an even year, would it make it more partisan than what they are now.
 - 1. Trust the Voters – larger turn out. Not addressing the issue fully.
 - m. Why aren't elections annually? Because incredibly difficult to get things done, you are always campaigning.
 - c. At-large vs. single-member districts
 - i. Didn't touch on this much. Needs to be addressed further in next meeting.
 - d. Odd vs. Even-year elections
 - i. This was most of the "facilitated discussion" conversation
 - ii. Neighbors were telling us: "Does it make sense to do odd years?"
 - iii. Not confident in the response in the community. Feels they don't have enough community input.
 - 1. Put out a survey to help get community response. People who know, will be connected to the issues.
 - 2. Sour on the survey concept due to true, feedback. Need a large ongoing conversation – then warrant a survey.
 - 3. More conversations at the previous capacity, but not a huge amount o
 - e. Forces general election vs. automatic primary elections
 - f. Special Elections from vacancies vs. term appointments
- III. New Questions/Research requests
 - a. Forced General Election is of agreement, but do we have primaries or not?
 - i. This group is recommending generals.
 - b. Are there other primary models that are effective? (Ask Rich)
 - c. Which system generates more independent candidates
 - i. Probably would be structure more on views rather than independence.
- IV. Conclusion
 - a. No need to make final decision today. But what the general consensus would be Primary and Forced General (As a whole, but we should leave it open still; general feeling right now). With this being said, keep considering, questioning, and researching. Not completely made up decisions.
 - b. Next Meeting: May want to wrap up primary question. Today we focused on odd-even. Special election vacancy is a bit more discrete. Ward smaller = less expensive.
 - c. Special elections meeting next week (November 8th).
 - i. Suggesting at large conversation then too.
 - d. Concern about diversity around the table, not being addressed and sitting heavy on some members. What can be done with this issue?
 - i. Replace Elijah with someone else?
 - ii. Strategy? Commissioners recommendations. They aren't helping yet asking for our recommendation. Reaching out to commissioners for additional members? How to get them (neighbors/new comers) up to speed?
 - 1. Potential answer: bring in members that are actively in the education sessions and engagement groups.

- e. Throw in general accountability questions: need more people? Or need to be staffed differently? How does staff impact the response of the commissioners?

Meeting Adjourned: 10:10am