

Glastonbury Landowners For Positive Change

The mission of the GLFPC is to foster a landowner's association, of the people, by the people, and for the people of Glastonbury, to create a harmonious and inclusive community, and to enhance property values.

This Summary/Interpretation of the GLA's Election Committee Meeting, Sept 28, 2016

is offered as a volunteer service by the GLFPC.

Your suggestions are welcome, should there be oversights or errors.

Key Points

- Though some volunteers thought they were responding to an invitation to bring their ideas and insights regarding new ballot counting procedures implemented at the recent Special Membership Meeting, they discovered they were attending an official meeting of GLA's Election Committee, held Wednesday, September 28, 2016.
- Chair Charlene Murphy convened the Election Committee meeting without a quorum. Even though all twelve GLA directors are on this committee, only two showed up.
- Eight people comprised the audience, seven of which were landowners.

Summary and Interpretation

A rare meeting of the Election Committee occurred on Wednesday September 28, 2016 in Liberty Hall Kitchen at 6:30 pm. Committee Chair Charlene Murphy conducted the meeting, despite the fact that a quorum had not been met. GLA President Charlotte Mizzi was seated at the head table, as was the new administrative assistant. The publicized purpose of this gathering was to review the new election procedures employed at the Special Membership Meeting on August 27. Instead, it turned out to be a more of a meeting to plan for the GLA Annual Election this November. Murphy took notes as if she were also secretary, as did the administrative assistant.

At the August Special Meeting, the first significant change was that multiple teams carefully supervised voting procedures. No single person made any decision concerning on-the-spot questions about quorum, eligibility of voters, sign-in process, verifier's questions and actual ballot counting. The second, more profound change was that verifiers opened absentee ballots during the actual election. (Absentee voting is the method of choice by the majority of landowners.) For many years, the standard practice has been to open absentee ballots prior to the election, thus bringing into question whether the ballots actually remained confidential.

As this committee began discussion about the shortcomings of the election process, it was noted that the voter eligibility list used at this election, in fact, was based on an incorrect timeframe, as pointed out by a landowner. Treasurer Rudy Parker had compiled this erroneous list which was fundamentally important to this election. Murphy did not catch the error, while putting the blame on herself. Voter eligibility was decided solely on the premise that landowners were current on their assessments. The list was not corrected until *after* the election. The results showed 23 ineligible voters. Two had actually voted.

Then, a landowner raised the subject that according to the GLA Covenants, voter eligibility actually means that each landowner is required to be in compliance with all Covenants, not simply being current in the payment of dues. This issue is especially crucial when considering that landowners, who own multiple parcels, are allowed an equal amount of votes. A difference of four, five, six or even nine votes can potentially tip the scales in any vote conducted in this community. In all likelihood, maybe all previous elections have taken place with the same problematic lack of comprehension of our governing documents. Certainly, at this meeting, board members were clueless.

A measure of confidentiality was achieved for mail-in ballots at the August election. However, it was noted that when voters sent in their ballots by email or FAX, it was impossible to keep those votes completely secret. Attendees offered a variety of solutions to help solve those problems. It was also clarified that these improvements are not only about providing better service to landowners; corporate law requires that all ballots are secret. Thus, these changes in assuring confidentiality are mandatory for GLA to be in compliance with voting laws.

As this committee worked on many fine points involved in the election process, a landowner raised the fact that *all* mail deposited at the Emigrant Post Office now goes straight to Billings. Most of the audience was not aware of this new postal practice. Ballots that are mailed locally take two to three days to be delivered to the GLA's post office box. For future reference, "Voter Notes" will have to be amended to accommodate for this adjustment. Additionally, the existing voting instructions contain confusing redundancies that will also need to be simplified, as the participating landowners also brought to light.

On another note, Murphy has recently proposed that GLA's administrative assistant be in charge of the Annual Election Meeting in November. Murphy's unprecedented notion did not pass muster with those at this meeting. Volunteers insisted that it is the corporate responsibility of the board of directors to manage the Annual Election. Why would anyone consider having a non-landowner employee, supervise an event of this magnitude? Landowners reasoned that President Charlotte Mizzi and Vice-President Dennis Riley needed to conduct the Annual November Election. Mizzi finally agreed.

Noteworthy, was Murphy's comment that the \$30.00 spent to have the administrative assistant present at this committee meeting, was the best thirty dollars the GLA had ever spent. She quickly retracted her statement saying that she was "just kidding." (It was not revealed why the admin. assistant was at a

committee meeting in the first place.)

GLFPC Note: Please note that we have already exceeded the budget allotment for administrative costs. The board of directors recently approved a withdrawal of almost \$4000 from unallocated savings to cover the excess cost of Administration.

The Annual Election Meeting will be held at Emigrant Hall on Saturday, November 12, 2016. Members may arrive at 8:45 am when the process of signing in begins. Shortly thereafter, when it is officially determined that a quorum has been met, the meeting will be called to order.

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