

Election Procedure Suggestions

Improving the integrity and transparency of the vote

Path of an Absentee Ballot

📁 ① Verifiers will remove the “sealed in a small envelope” from the original mailing envelope. {Large envelopes should be saved}

📁 ② Sealed ballots are placed in a SG or NG box. {Small envelopes should be initialized by a verifier}

Boxes of “sealed in their small envelope” ballots go to the Sign-in table.

📁 ③ Sealed ballots are checked for eligibility at the sign in table. Then they are returned, UNOPENED, to the verifiers.

At this point the sign-in table volunteers know which parcels and how many parcels, have voted. A quorum is 25% of all authorized votes from members in good standing.

The total number of votes cast by absentee ballot can be determined without opening the small envelope. The count can be based simply upon parcel numbers that the sign-in table verifies and records.

I suggest that all absentee “sealed in their envelope ballots” be placed in two clear plastic boxes, one for NG and one for SG, that are securely sealed shut with clear packing tape.

Envelopes should be bundled according to number of votes per ballot.

- One (1) vote per ballot goes in one bundle,
- Two (2) votes per ballot in another, etc.
- If two or less ballots fall into a “votes per ballot” category they may be bundled with other such ballots and marked as “Mixed”

They should be on display where all landowners can see them and guarded from tampering.

Our current procedure calls for steps 4, 5 and 6 below.

📄🕒 Secret ballots are opened by verifiers and the number of votes is written on the back of the ballot. {Small envelopes should be saved}

📄🕒 Secret ballots are opened and right hand corner box is initialized and number of votes is from the back are transferred to the front. Ballots go back into NG and SG boxes.

🕒🕒 Boxes are opened again by ballot counters while voting is still in process.

To maintain election integrity, I suggest that steps 4 through 6 should be changed and ALL vote counting only be done after all voting has ceased at 12 noon.

As I stated above, all absentee ballots should remain in their sealed envelopes until 12 noon. The number of votes for each ballot is on the sticker on the outside of the sealed envelope.

I also suggested that either the sign-in table folks or the verifiers, bundle the sealed envelope ballots according to number of votes, and whether in NG or SG. Then all the bundles should be placed in two clear plastic bins, one for NG and one for SG, which are securely taped.

At 12 noon ONE person watched by many, opens the sealed bins, one at a time, containing absentee ballots. A bundle of four (4) votes per ballot is pulled out. One person checks the small sealed envelope for the sticker, the correct number of votes (4 in this case), and the verifier's initials.

Then another person opens the envelope and tosses the ballot, unopened and unmarked, in a plastic bin. When the four vote bundle is done for NG, the ballot bin is covered and shaken. Then all of the four vote NG ballots can be opened, marked with a 4 and initialized, and paper clipped.

Then the process is continued for 3 vote ballots, etc. The bundle marked mixed could be marked one at a time. One person opens and another person writes in the number of votes on the ballot. One (1) vote per ballot will take the most time to mark, highlight and count. Five (5) and more votes per ballot can be done at the end.

If the small envelopes are saved, the sticker vote numbers can be compared against the sign-in numbers, and the actual vote total. All three numbers should match. A repeat of the miscounted recount of 2016 can easily be avoided.

Voter secrecy is enhanced because no marking is required by the person who opens the ballot envelope, and thus, sees who cast the vote, and if the ballot is not folded properly, for whom the votes were cast.

When a person initializes a ballot and puts the number of votes in the upper right hand corner, I would also like to see them highlight the voter's choices IF the votes are for FEWER THAN three (3) directors. That will make counting easier and prevent anyone from checking a box that is empty. Only red pens and highlighting pens should be seen at the ballot counter's table. Tally sheets should be written only with red pens. Mistakes can have a line drawn through them.

Ballots cast on Election Day should be deposited in one or two clear plastic boxes that are securely sealed and have a slot on the top. Since NG and SG ballots have a different color, they will be easy to separate when counting. Absentee ballots are white and can be easily disregarded. They can be sorted and counted just like absentee ballots.

Numbers from 2016:

NG Absentee votes: 64

NG Attendee votes: 36

NG Proxy Votes: 3

SG Absentee votes: 65

SG Attendee votes: 30

SG Proxy Votes: 6

The actual number of ballots will be less than the totals above, due to multi-parcel owners having multiple votes on one ballot. If every ballot had just one vote, 204 ballots would have to be counted.

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