



Ms. Madelaine Eppenstein
Chair of the 2018 Procedure Committee
P.O. Box 284
Scarsdale, NY 10583

also sent via email to: meppenstein@eppenstein.com

January 30, 2019

Dear Ms. Eppenstein,

The League of Women Voters of Scarsdale (“League”) thanks you for serving as chair of the Scarsdale Procedure Committee (“PC”) and for presenting at our general membership information meeting on December 10, 2018, concerning the 2018 CNC election and the referendum on the amendments to the Non-Partisan Resolution (“Resolution”). The League appreciates your comprehensive written report and commends you for your thorough responses to the League’s written questions as well as to those posed during the meeting.

Immediately following our information session, the League held a consensus meeting of its members. The League’s specific recommendations to the PC are set forth below.

1. OVERALL FUNCTIONING OF THE PC, COMPOSITION, AND LEADERSHIP TRANSITIONS

The League commends Madelaine Eppenstein and Eric Cheng who, upon completion of their 3-year terms as elected, voting members of the CNC, volunteered to serve as the chair and vice chair, respectively, of the 2018 PC, with Eric Cheng also serving as the treasurer. The League also commends last year’s CNC chair, ML Perlman, for soliciting volunteers specifically from within the ranks of the ten voting members of the CNC graduating class for the third consecutive year and for calling for a vote to install them as the incoming PC leadership -- a process which has now been codified by virtue of the successful amendment of the Non-Partisan Resolution.

The League congratulates all those who served on the 2018 PC for their active participation and fulfillment of the PC’s civic responsibilities despite operating with reduced staffing. By way of explanation, several individuals who had completed their service on the CNC resigned from the PC, SNAP once again refused to honor its appointment duty, and the TVCC was not able to fill all of its appointments to the PC. In spite of the vacancies on the committee, the 2018 PC was able to recruit candidates for every open position, run the CNC election, and, most notably, propose significant amendments to the Resolution that were

approved by the electorate in November.

The League further commends the PC leadership, particularly its chair, Ms. Eppenstein, for conscientious management and execution of the PC's responsibilities as set forth in the Resolution. The League notes that the PC operated without the advantage of leadership continuity as prescribed by the Resolution and without the benefit of a completed operation manual to reference as a guide. Nevertheless, through outreach to prior leaders for information and guidance and meticulous attention to the Resolution's requirements, the 2018 PC leadership shepherded the committee through an ambitious overhaul of the Resolution, met Resolution deadlines and requirements, communicated timely information to the public, and supervised the activities of all members of the PC. The League further commends Ms. Eppenstein for undertaking the task of creating an operation manual among several other record-keeping initiatives, and for implementing so many of the practices for which the League has been advocating in its prior consensus statements to ensure smooth leadership transition and to preserve institutional memory.

The 2018 PC executed most of the League's past suggestions of how to promote systematic, comprehensive transfer of knowledge, experience, and documentation from one year to the next. Among other things, the PC created an FAQ sheet for the public and uploaded numerous documents to the website for public viewing, such as candidate forms, election brochures, and mail-in ballots. The PC also updated the website with the names of committee members and the relevant contact information for the CNC and PC officers, regularly posted press releases and other announcements, and listed calendar information on the website about meeting and election dates. As the PC met in person regularly as a whole and in subcommittees throughout the season, it also generated written agendas and meeting minutes from its meetings, created a comprehensive timeline, memorialized the election day punch list, compiled lists of past CNC and PC members for reference, and planned for a separate electronic private repository for the retention of internal templates and documentation for use by future PC members. The League encourages the PC to keep the positive momentum going in its documentation efforts. In addition, in recognition of the extreme importance of the PC website as the primary source of public information about the Village's non-partisan system, the League reiterates its request that the PC explore visual layout improvements to the PC website so that new information as well as previously uploaded files are organized in a more user-friendly and intuitive manner. The League also suggests that the PC and CNC consider creating dedicated e-mail addresses that pass from chair to chair for the sake of contact information continuity.

The League commends the PC for drafting and for posting publicly its written suggestions to the CNC concerning rules of procedure. The League also thanks the CNC for once again taping and making available for viewing the public portion of the organizational meeting where such suggestions were discussed. The PC's suggestions derived not only from the experience of the CNC graduates serving on the 2018 but also from the 2017 PC's annual report, ensuring that unresolved topics were not inadvertently omitted from consideration. The League notes that conflicts of interest and confidentiality, two issues that have arisen in past League information sessions and consensus meetings, were among the topics addressed. As indicated at the information session, the PC also considered but was divided on the issue of the appropriate role of non-citizen residents in the non-partisan system. The League encourages

further thoughtful deliberation on all those issues.

2. RECRUITING OF POTENTIAL CNC CANDIDATES

The League commends the PC for having the foresight to begin recruitment efforts earlier than in past years, for recognizing the need for in-person or telephonic conversations as the most effective recruitment tool, and for extensive outreach to so many different members of the community. Nevertheless, only one neighborhood district this year had a fully-contested slate (i.e., at least two candidates for each open position) while three neighborhoods had uncontested elections.¹

The League appreciates the difficulty the PC has faced in recent years in recruiting candidates for CNC. As reported at the information session, the primary excuse proffered by individuals solicited by the PC was not the time commitment but rather the aversion to running in a contested election against others in their neighborhood. To counteract that fear, the League encourages the PC to continue its efforts to educate and engage the public about the non-partisan system in a manner that conveys and explains the importance of having contested CNC elections. Having a choice at the CNC polls has shown to increase voter turnout and engagement and helps ensure that special interest groups do not hijack or manipulate the system. In short, contested CNC elections are essential components of the democratic process envisioned by the Resolution.

The League also encourages the PC to reach out to all segments of the community as it selects members to serve on the PC and recruits individuals to run for CNC. As stated in its November consensus statement approving the proposed amendments to the Resolution, “the League encourages the PC to continue to include both the TVCC and SNAP, among many other civic and volunteer organizations, in its outreach for recruitment of PC members, CNC candidates, and publicity efforts.” The League supports PC efforts to strive for a membership that is well-rounded and diverse in demographics and civic affiliations among Scarsdale residents. To that end, the League suggests that the PC use a multi-pronged approach and explore new methods of outreach that include social media and video clips.

3. CNC ELECTION

a. Pre-election Publicity, Brochure and Mail-in Ballots, Polling

The League commends the PC for adding names and term expirations to the grid on the front of the election brochure. The League also commends the PC for the publicity and voter education efforts surrounding the election, and for all the staffing and furniture arrangements at Village Hall that facilitated voters’ ability to read and vote on the many amendments that appeared on this year’s ballot.

With respect to the mail-in ballot, the League notes that the inclusion of so many amendments resulted in a longer than typical ballot this year. In the future, should the need arise

¹ Two of the neighborhood districts had extra vacancies to fill such that the election results did impact term length even though all candidates running were guaranteed to win.

for another multi-page ballot, voters may appreciate the inclusion of additional instructions concerning estimated postage as well as explicit language concerning hand-delivery options, if any.

b. Voter Turnout

The following tables are included as a means of tracking voter turnout trends. The League commends the PC for its tabulation efforts and for providing the requested data for League study.

- CNC election voter turnout

	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009
Edgewood	65 (18)*	66 (3)	37 (?)*	24*	21 (3)*	62 (3)+	76 (28)	64 (2)	65 (4)	73 (2)
Fox Meadow	113 (2)+	54 (4)*	168 (?)	84	106 (28)	107 (?)	153 (67)	162 (5)	133 (10)	187 (43)
Greenacres	57 (7)*	141 (24)	68 (?)+	66+	54 (17)	103 (?)	115 (54)	106 (12)	89 (13)	101 (15)
Heathcote	44 (3)*	136 (6)	24 (?)*	34*	34 (7)*	59 (?)	106 (40)	134 (25)	129 (64)	187 (92)
Quaker Ridge	70 (4)	42 (2)+	24 (?)*	16*	24 (10)*	24 (2)*	103 (45)	67 (12)	100 (47)	116 (30)
TOTAL (mail-in)	349 (34)	439 (37)	321 (≈106)	224 (25)	239 (65)	355 (163)	553 (234)	533 (56)	516 (138)	664 (182)

Data in parentheses () indicate the number of mail-in ballots

* indicates uncontested election

+ indicates fewer than twice the number of candidates for each open slot

- NPR amendment election results

	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9	#10	#11	#12
TOTAL	261/23	257/17	260/13	258/14	243/27	263/11	260/14	260/13	254/17	260/12	260/11	254/14
Y/N (mail-in)	(24/9)	(25/4)	(25/3)	(25/3)	(23/5)	(25/3)	(25/3)	(25/3)	(24/2)	(24/2)	(24/2)	(23/3)

** 211 (19) of the aggregate 290 (34) ballots cast had across the board yes votes for all 12 amendments

c. Fundraising, Expenses, and Finances

The League commends the PC for keeping good financial records this year and for its efforts to ensure that it had raised adequate funds to cover all annual expenses. Although the costs associated with printing the election brochure represent a significant percentage of the PC’s budget, the League continues to support the PC’s practice of mailing the brochure to ensure it reaches the households of all qualified voters and serves to educate them about the election and the non-partisan system.

For convenience, below is a chart identifying the PC’s expense breakdown, as reported to the League by the PC, for the past five years:

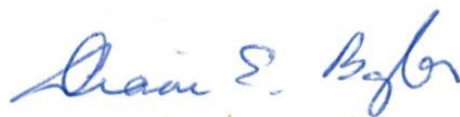
<u>TYPE OF EXPENSE</u>	<u>YEAR: 2018</u>	<u>YEAR: 2017</u>	<u>YEAR 2016</u>	<u>YEAR: 2015</u>	<u>YEAR: 2014</u>
Postage deposit	\$1,269.39	\$? \$1,300.00	\$1,267.00	\$1,267.04	\$1,274.28
Printing (brochure/ mailing)	\$1,989.77 \$2,036.52	≈\$1,700.00 \$1,717.28	\$1,768.00	\$1,715.49	\$2,670.79
Ballot printing	\$184.24	\$? in-kind donation?	\$--- \$45.00	\$----	\$83.75
Additional postage (fundraising solicitation)	\$175.00 \$180.00	\$?	\$?	\$39.20	\$31.96
VH Meeting Room and Lobby Rental Fees	\$240.00	≈\$150.00			
Fundraiser printing (stationery, flyer)	\$370.44	≈\$159.77			
P.O. Box Rental	\$132.00	\$? \$130.00	\$126.00	\$126.00	\$----
TOTAL	\$4,120.84 \$4,412.59	≈\$3,300.00 ≈\$3,457.05	\$3,155.00 \$3,206.00	\$3,147.73	\$4,060.78

*Strikeout and red text indicates data/corrections provided by the PC subsequent to the consensus meeting.

4. CONCLUSION

The League appreciates the PC's dedication to a non-partisan process and desire to improve the CNC election system. The League hopes the PC will view this letter as a tool to facilitate discussion on strategies for continuing to improve the system.

Sincerely,



Diane E. Baylor
Chair, Village Election System
League of Women Voters of Scarsdale




Linda Doucette-Ashman and Janice Starr
Co-Presidents
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cc: Mr. Eric Cheng
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