



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

BOARD OF ELECTION COMMISSIONERS

51 Inman Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139-1732 • Telephone 617-349-4361 • TTY: 617-492-0235
Fax: 617-349-4366 • Email: Elections2@cambridgema.gov • Website: www.cambridgema.gov/election

COMMISSIONERS

Ethridge A. King, Jr.
Larry W. Ward
Charles J. Marquardt
Victoria A. Harris

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Tanya L. Ford

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
Lesley Waxman

BOARD OF ELECTION COMMISSIONERS MEETING Minutes of June 1, 2023

The Chair, Commissioner Harris, called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm on June 1, 2023 via Zoom.

Roll Call:

Commissioner Victoria Harris	Present
Commissioner Larry Ward	Present
Commissioner Charles Marquardt	Present
Commissioner Ethridge King	Present

Also, present was Assistant Director Lesley Waxman.

The Chair, Commissioner Harris, moved the Analysis of Early In-Person Voting 2021-2022 presentation—that was made by Senior Research Associate, Joelle Gross—from the MIT Election Data and Science Lab (MEDSL) to the first item on the agenda.

Joelle introduced the other members from MEDSL that were present: MIT Professor, Charles Stewart, and Research Director, Samuel Baltz. Joelle gave a 24-minute presentation followed by a Q&A session.

The presentation was based on data from the Cambridge 2021 Municipal Election, 2022 State Primary Election, and the 2022 General Election. Basically, the presentation answered the following four questions (please refer to the slide deck for more detailed observations):

When are early voting locations busy? Based on the presentation early voting sites were mostly busy from 10am to 2pm and the most frequented days were Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays.

Where do early voters live? Early in-person voters who voted at the Valente Library or the Main Library tend to live within one mile of those two locations, and the Water Department early-voters live within two miles of that location.

How are early voters voting? Most voters are choosing to vote by mail rather than in person. The bulk of in-person voters tend to vote once in person. Over the three elections that were analyzed, thirty-six hundred (3,600) voters utilized early in-person voting once, 800 utilized in-person voting twice, and 200 utilized in-person voting three times. Voters who vote early in-person tend to be older, mostly white, and live in West Cambridge. West Cambridge voters have a similar voter turnout rate for the municipal and general elections. For the rest of Cambridge, turnout for the municipal election is much lower than for the general election.

Who is voting? The most consistent early voters tend to be middle-aged voters. These voters tend to dominate voting during the day, then their numbers fall off in the evenings. Cambridge voting demographics trends are similar to voting trends in the US.

Q&A

Question: Commissioner Ward, asked about the racial breakdown in Cambridge relative to the racial breakdown in voting?

Answer: Joelle and Samuel, explained the racial data collection tool that was originally designed for public health, has recently been deployed in data science and it has some flaws with surnames and demographic locations. Both Joelle and Samuel would have to do a deeper dive into the data in order to fully answer Commissioner Ward’s question.

Question: Commissioner King, did you look at any trends based on party affiliation.

Answer: Joelle, we did not find any major trends in party affiliation since Cambridge basically has so little party registration variation.

Question: Commissioner Marquardt, I’m intrigued by the last-minute nature of our voting population, did you look at the timing of mailed ballots?

Answer: Joelle, the data that was given to us for this project has the date the ballot was received in the office, this could be used to answer your question. This would be an interesting next step.

Question: Commissioner Harris, between the two elections did you see a major change for the last days of early voting rate of participation between the municipal and the general elections?

Answer: Joelle, what we were seeing in 2022 people were waiting close to the end of early voting to vote—and in 2021 voting was a bit more dispersed.

Question: Commissioner Marquardt, early in-person voting is very location dependent?

Answer: Joelle, voters who live near the voting centers are using said locations—proximity is a huge factor but it’s not the sole reason.

Question: Commissioner King: People who vote at these locations are drawn there to vote because they see the locations in their daily travels as a constant reminder?

Answer: Joelle, yes, absolutely seeing the location and being reminded is part of the reason people vote at locations close to their homes.

I. PUBLIC COMMENT

No Public Comments given.

Motion: To close Public Comment.

Moved: Commissioner Harris

Seconded: Commissioner Ward

Roll Call:

Commissioner Harris Yea

Commissioner Ward Yea

Commissioner Marquardt Yea

Commissioner King Yea

Passed: 4—0

II: MINUTES

Motion: To approve the minutes of May 24, 2023 with corrections.

Moved: Commissioner Harris

Seconded: Commissioner King

Roll Call:

Commissioner Harris	Yea
Commissioner Ward	Yea
Commissioner Marquardt	Yea
Commissioner King	Yea
Passed:	4—0

III: REPORTS**1. Executive Director's Report**

There was no Executive Director's report.

2. Assistant Director's Report

- Reported that the SFIs are due today (June 1).
- SFI packets were mailed to 162 officials on May 12.
- As of June 1, 62 SFIs were filed, four were deficient, and 97 remain outstanding.
- Assistant Director Waxman will hold-off on sending the formal notice of "failure to file" letter for a couple of weeks to give the business reply mail a few more days to arrive.
- Assistant Director Waxman received an amendment to the SFI list today. One of the amendments was a deletion and three were additions to the list. The Assistant Director will mail the SFI packets and amend the letter that typically state return by June 1, to return ASAP.
 - Commissioner Marquardt: Do we have, or is it possible to get email addresses for all these required filers?
 - Assistant Director Waxman: We have email addresses for current filers, but not for new people, especially non-employees who sits on Boards we don't get their email until after they file the first time.
 - Commissioner Harris: Offered that perhaps the Commissioners could split the work up to reach out to the staff for the Boards or Commissions members to try to get the non-filers email addresses this way—she added if this is appropriate and allowable?
- Assistant Director Waxman: Reported that ScytI wants changes edits approximately 6 to 8 weeks prior to the election.
- Commissioner Harris: The Commissioner should begin to think about ideas for training that could be included in a video to augment the online training experience. We should look to have these ideas submitted so we can begin filming in July to meet the August due date for ScytI.

3. Commissioners' Reports

- Commissioner Marquardt:
 - Reported next Wednesday, June 7 (12 to 1) Humphrey School webinar "The local election official experience 2018 to 2022" put on by Professor Gronke, of Early Voting Information Center (EVIC).
 - Read an article in a New Bedford newspaper about their election commission conducted a mock election in an elementary school. They checked in voters, gave them ballots that were fed through a tabulator.
- Commissioner King: Likes the idea in the New Bedford mock election for CRLS.

- Commissioner Harris: Received a great response from her poll workers for the November election.
- Commissioner Harris: Requested that the commissioners send Commissioner Ward or her any ideas for the high school students for their meeting with Allen Gehant. The New Bedford example is one idea she'll bring up in the meeting.

IV. ACTION AGENDA

Old Business

Potential Voter Registration Challenge of Border Properties

- Assistant Director Waxman
 - The letters were mailed May 15 to 21 voters.
 - There are 12 voters that are still registered out of the 21, this includes someone voters that replied to May 15 letter.
 - Assistant Director Waxman, checked in with Somerville's election officials to see if they had registration forms they haven't processed yet.
 - One voter told Assistant Director Waxman he was going to registered in Somerville, but his form has not yet been received in Somerville, however his wife's has, so it's possible that his registration is in a queue waiting to be process.
 - One voter told Assistant Director Waxman she's moving out of state soon
 - The seven (7) voters that are highlighted have not called or email the election office since the May 15 letter was sent.
 - Assistant Director Waxman provided draft language for the motion.
 - The Board could appoint an independent person to present the evidence.
 - If any member of the Board does a site visit, then this member has to present the evidence and therefore cannot vote.
- Commissioner Harris: Would it be possible to have Ms. Ford sworn in to present the evidence?
- Assistant Director Waxman: Yes, we actually swore in Tanya in 2014 when we held a voter challenge hearing.
- Commissioner King: What's the presumption, are we to presume voters are properly registered until otherwise disproved?
- Assistant Director Waxman: The evidence, if there's no site visit, would be the map and assessors' information from Cambridge and Somerville.
- Commissioner Marquardt: Are the challenges based on the addresses or the voters?
- Assistant Director Waxman: The hearing is to challenge the voters so it would be one voter being challenged at a time even though the evidence will be the same if more than one voter is at the same address.
- Commissioner Harris: I don't see 33 Harris Street here.
- Assistant Director Waxman: There's no one registered at 33 Harris Street, it has been this way since 2020.
- Commissioner Harris: Does it make sense to confirm all the units (33, 35, 37 Harris Street) when we conduct a site visit.
- Assistant Director Waxman: If the commissioners conducting the site visit can view all three units that would be a great idea.
- Assistant Director Waxman: We can mark an address in VRIS no longer in use if it's vacant, but we can't delete it if someone had previously registered from there.
- Commissioner Harris: A previous Commissioner conducted a site visit in 1988 and deemed 37 and 33 eligible to vote in Cambridge but not 35 Harris Street.

- Assistant Director Waxman: Reference adding language to describe the situation with the border properties on the Cambridge/Somerville line in the cover letter.
- Commissioner Harris: Perhaps we can reference the May 15 letter in the summons' cover letter.
- Assistant Director Waxman: The Executive Director and I will draft the cover letter to include a reference to the May 15 letter.
- Commissioner Harris: Schedule the Hearing for the seven (7) voters that have not responded to the May 15 letter.
- Commissioner Marquardt: Concurred that we should start with the seven (7) voters first.
- Commissioner Harris: What time frame makes the most sense?
- Commissioner Ward: I just want to go back, are we saying we are going to hold off on sending a summons to the people that did not contact the office?
- Commissioner Ward: I'm just thinking there should be uniformity.
- Commissioner Harris: We wanted to hear from people who stated they received the May 15 letter and plan to register in Somerville.
- Commissioner Marquardt: Recommended that we start with the seven (7) voters we haven't heard from.
- Commissioner King: Agreed with Commissioner Marquardt's suggestion to start with the seven (7).
- Commissioner Harris: Agreed
- Commissioner Ward: Agreed
- Assistant Director Waxman: Asked the question if we are conducting all seven (7) hearings on June 15?
- Commissioner Marquardt: We should do all seven (7) on the same day.
- Assistant Director Waxman: Suggested we start our regular meeting at 5pm to take care of the Minutes, Public Comment, etc., prior to the 5:30 hearing time.

Motion: **To issue a summons and complaint pursuant to MGL Chapter 51, sections 47B, 48 and 49 to challenge the voter registrations of the following seven individuals on Thursday, June 15 at 5:30 PM.**

- Elizabeth Sullivan 15 Harris Street #2
- Katherine Soloway 21 Harris Street #2
- Junjie Hao 21 Harris Street #3
- James Cason 31 Harris Street #1
- Jacob Shenker 31 Harris Street #3
- Deborah Morse 45 Harris Street
- Julie Klump 45 Harris Street

Moved: Commissioner Harris
 Seconded: Commissioner Marquardt

Roll Call:

Commissioner Harris Yea
 Commissioner ward Yea
 Commissioner Marquardt Yea
 Commissioner King Yea

Passed: 4—0

- Commissioner King will stop by the office at 10am, on June 2, as secretary to sign the summons.

New Business

- The Chair, Commissioner Harris, will write a letter on behalf of the Election Commission to thank Charles Stewart, Joelle Gross, and Samuel Baltz for their presentation of Cambridge’s early voting election data.

Next Meeting:

- June 15, 2023 5:00 pm in person
- June 15, 2023 at 5:30 PM Border Property Hearings

Motion: **To adjourn the meeting at 7:15 PM**

Moved: Commissioner Harris

Seconded: Commissioner Ward

Roll Call

Commissioner Harris Yea

Commissioner Ward Yea

Commissioner Marquardt Yea

Commissioner King Yea

Passed: **4—0**

A True Record

Attested by: *Ethridge King*
Ethridge A. King, Secretary