



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

BOARD OF ELECTION COMMISSIONERS

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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 May 10, 2023

The Chair, Commissioner Harris, called the meeting to order at 5:33 pm on May 10, 2023 via Zoom.

Roll Call:

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

Also, present were Executive Director Tanya Ford, and Assistant Director Lesley Waxman.

I. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. John Hawkinson requested a correction to the public comment he made on April 26.

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 April 26, 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 twenty-six polling location confirmation letters were sent out; 10 confirmations were received thus far.
- Commissioner King asked the Assistant Director if the use of the Putnam Upper School or the MLK use of the gym issue was resolved. The MLK and Putnam Upper School requested that we use the auditorium or hallway instead of the gyms. Ms. Waxman followed up with the school principals to find out if the auditorium or the hallway was accessible directly from outside—she's waiting to hear back from them.

3. Commissioners' Reports

Commissioner Marquardt:

- Reported that he, The Chair Commissioner Harris, Executive Director Ford, and Assistant Director Waxman attended the budget hearing at City Hall on May 9, 2023. Mr. Marquardt reported that every budget was pulled, and the Election Commission's budget was approved with a positive recommendation to the full city council. Mr. Marquardt also reported that Councilor Zondervan asked if the Commission continued review of boundary properties will have a budgetary impact on the department. There was a keen interest at the budget meeting that the boundary properties get reviewed. Furthermore, Commissioner Marquardt reported that Commissioner Harris did a great job responding to Councilor Simmons with regard to the work she has been doing with high school students.

Commissioner Harris:

- Reported that we have a few questions working with our younger voters, and will continue to work with our CRLS students. Commissioner Harris complimented Ms. Ford for her handling of the of questions surrounding special elections. Ms. Ford added that she explained to Councilor Nolan that budgeting for special elections is done through a supplementary budget request.
- Reported that she and Assistant Director Waxman met on May 1 with the folks at MIT: Charles Stewart, Samuel Baltz, and Joelle Gross from the Election Data Science Lab. Rachael Cobb from Suffolk University also attended the meeting. They looked at the data from the 2021 Municipal Election and the State and Primary elections in 2022 to see who voted early. The Chair plans to invite Joelle Gross to present at a future meeting. Ms Waxman suggested that Board officially thank MIT's Election Data Science Lab for their work on this process.

Commissioner King:

- Complimented The Chair, Commissioner Marquardt, Ms. Ford, and Ms Waxman for doing a great job at the budget hearing. Mr. King reported that he emailed the School Superintendent to let her know that next year (2024) there are three scheduled elections, March 5, September (date TBD), and November 5.

Executive Director Ford:

- Reported that Councilor Zondervan brought up the border properties, he asked if Harris St was(had?) the only border properties, or will there be others?

Commissioner Harris:

- Emailed Allen Gehant at CRLS regarding student election workers. He suggested they meet after graduation which is early June. Commissioners Harris and Ward will look at dates to schedule a meeting with Mr. Gehant.

IV. ACTION AGENDA

Old Business

2023 City Census

Commissioner Harris:

- Asked Assistant Director Waxman since the census second mailing dropped has there been a flurry of activity. Assistant Director Waxman stated that there has been increased activity with online and snail mail submissions, but it's starting to slow down.

Potential Voter Registration Challenge of Border Properties

- R2. Draft letter to voters on Harris Street (odd side)
- The Board received a late email from Councilor Nolan, it will be placed in next meeting agenda.
- Assistant Director Waxman:
 - Made a chart of the border properties that's on the odd side of Harris Street.
 - There are a total of 21 border property voters, of the 21, nine have no registered voters.
 - Stated that she can have the state flag these addresses that currently don't have anyone registered at them to mark them as "no longer in use" to prevent any new registrants from using those addresses to register in Cambridge.
 - Fifteen (15) Harris Street #2 is in VRIS in Cambridge and Somerville. There are two registered voters at this address, one is registered to vote in Cambridge and the other is registered in Somerville—and the one that is registered in Cambridge has her mailing address as Somerville.
 - 21 Harris Street was marked in VRIS in Somerville, but is currently marked "no longer in use."
 - Residents of 3, 5, and 7 Harris Street are registered in Somerville.
- Executive Director Ford:
 - Fifteen (15) Harris Street in Cambridge Assessor's database is valued at \$18k.(representing 634 sq of the property that's in Cambridge) and in Somerville there's no 15 Harris St; the address is 318 Beacon and it's assessed value for the portion that's in Somerville is \$3.7 million.
 - Thirty-seven (37) Harris St is 306 Beacon St and its assessed value in Somerville is \$1,337,000.
 - 33, 35, 37 Harris St is a three family its portion of Cambridge's assessed value is \$321k.
- Commissioner Marquardt:
 - Stated that the resident at 45 Harris St is aware that her property is not located in Cambridge, because she attended one of the Hearings that was held for Mr. Seidel.
 - Commissioner Marquardt, reference the late in the day email the Board received from Councilor Nolan urging the Board to move forward with this process.

- Commission Ward:
 - The Board is now including contributing factors that were not considered in Mr. Seidel's Hearing. Mr. Ward wants more information before he can make a decision.
- Executive Director Ford:
 - Mentioned one of Councilor's Nolan concerns regarding the border properties is the potential fallout if there's a close election.
- Draft Letter (R2) to registered voters that live on the odd side of Harris St. The Board had a lengthy discussion about the timing of the draft letter and to a lesser extent its content. Ms Waxman opened the letter discussion. She shared that the letter has no legal meaning; its purpose is to give the voters on Harris St an opportunity to register to vote in Somerville before the Board moves forward with hearings.
- Commissioner King: Asked what are the next step with respect to the letter.
 - Commissioner Harris: Stated the next step is to mail the letter to the voters on Harris St.
 - Commissioner Marquardt: Added the next step is to mail the letter and if we don't get a response the Board should move forward with the hearings.
- Commissioner Harris: Asked if we move to proceed with the proposed letter what is the timeline for the next steps.
 - Commissioner King: Stated we should use a timeline similar to the timeline we use for deficient SFIs filers.
 - Commissioner Marquardt: Stated that we need to resolve these boundary property issues before the Municipal Election. The next step is, if there's no response we should move forward with scheduling hearings, he also said this is not the fault of the voters however, we must move forward with this process.
- Assistant Director Waxman: Reminded the Board nomination papers are available beginning July 1.
- Commissioner Marquardt: Suggested that we mailed the letter in discussion out, wait three weeks, mail a certified letter, then wait four weeks and mail the summons out.
- Commissioner Harris: Suggested a shorter timeline, that we send the first letter out, wait 3 weeks send another letter, then wait 2 weeks for a total of six weeks.
- Commissioner Ward: Suggested 3 weeks and 3 weeks.
- Commissioner Harris: Asked the Executive Director how soon can we mail the letter out. Harris proposed the first mailing be May 14, three weeks later Monday, June 5 a second notice, and make June 26, the deadline before hearings are scheduled.
- Commissioner King: Cautioned with the proposed timeline we are getting close to the nomination papers being available.
- Commissioner Harris: Suggested that if we wait two weeks from May 14, and if we don't hear back, we'll wait 10 days then we schedule the hearing.

- Commissioner Harris: New wording for the letter “**we will be acting and failure to respond will result in a hearing**” by June 1, then we need to notify them 14 days prior to the hearing. She asked if we need to schedule more than one hearing per day.
- Commissioner Marquardt: Your response is required by no later than June 1, failure to respond by such date will result in you being summons to a hearing pursuant the provisions of section 47B, 48, and 49 of Chapter 51 of Mass General Laws.
- Executive Director Ford: If you believe this information is incorrect, please notice this office by July1.
- Commissioner Harris: Just add: “Your response is required by no later than June 1.”
- Commissioner Ward: Based on this conversation, we are taking other factors into consideration. We were told just do our jobs, and now we are factoring in other considerations.
- Commissioner Harris: Response is required no later than June 1, otherwise a hearing will be scheduled. The word-smithing needs to be done later but this is the gist of the letter.
- Executive Ford: If you believe this notice is incorrect, please notify this office by June 1, or you will be summoned to voter registration hearing.

Motion: Approve this letter with suggested edits to be sent to effected voters on Harris St along with relevant and discussed enclosures.

Moved: Commissioner Harris
 Seconded: Commissioner Marquardt

Roll Call:

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

New Business

Municipal Election:

- Executive Director Ford: The commissioners need to begin to think about Poll worker Training.
- Commissioner Harris: Asked that we put Poll Worker Training on the next meeting agenda.
- Executive Director Ford: Requested that the Commissioner have the Municipal Election Poll Worker list into Karen by June 15.

Next Meeting:

- May 24, 2023 at 5:30 pm via Zoom
- June 01, 2023 at 5:30 pm via Zoom

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 7:24 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