



**2023-2024 MCC Governing Board
Elections & Nominations Committee
February 12, 2024 – 5:30 p.m.**

MINUTES

Committee Members Present: *in-person:* Kristina Groennings, Chair; Katie Gorka; Eleanor Ague
Committee Members Absent: Ari Ghasemian
Other Board Members Present: None.
MCC Staff Present: Betsy May-Salazar, Executive Director; Holly Novak, Executive Assistant
Guests: None.

CONVENE MEETING

Chair Kristina Groennings convened a meeting of Elections & Nominations Committee of the Governing Board of the McLean Community Center on February 12, 2024, at 5:45 p.m. No changes were requested to the Agenda; it was adopted by acclamation. An announcement was made about the meeting being audio-recorded.

ELECTION PROGRESS UPDATE *ADULT and YOUTH candidate packets were shown to the committee.

Call for Candidates:

Packets picked up as of today: 3 adults; 3 youth from Langley High School. NO students from McLean H.S. yet.

This important opportunity will be mentioned to the Youth Ambassadors at their meeting on 2/14/23.

Petitions turned-in: 1 adult petition (it has been verified as valid for candidacy).

Candidate Packets continue to be available at Front Desk from February 7 through deadline due back - March 11.

Marketing Outreach Efforts: *a comprehensive publicity plan was distributed

Sabrina Anwah, PIO, leads the effort to communicate effectively with the public throughout the Governing Board Election process via: targeted mailings; news releases; postcards; MCC website; public notices; e-newsletters. The marketing outreach plan covers sequential phases: Call for Candidates; candidate bios & features; Absentee voting; In-person voting; election results. 2024 election has been publicly noticed (legal requirement); and we are doing social media. It is a robust communication plan.

ACTION ITEM: Please share it widely and circulate it on your own social media accounts.

Focus on the teen demographic: Kyle Corwin produced an excellent video about the opportunity to run for MCC Governing Board. The video will be sent to both high schools to be aired on their daily news shows. The video was sent to ENC members on 2/13/24 so they could see this outstanding work product from the PIO team.

ACTION ITEM: Youth board members and Youth Ambassadors are encouraged to make efforts to encourage fellow students to consider running.

Post card #1: be a candidate (will be sent to all tax district households). Postcard #2: how and when to vote. Information about 2024 election also went out to our lists of civic groups and faith organizations asking them to please share this with their networks.

CANDIDATE ORIENTATION *remarks by Executive Director May-Salazar

Saturday, March 16 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. in-person in McLean Room.

A professional photographer will be present from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. to take individual photos of candidates. ENC Chair Kristina Groennings or designee will attend the orientation meeting to assist Executive Director May-Salazar. However, no other board members will be present so as not to cause a requirement to publicly-notice it as

an official “public meeting” with members of the public involved. The orientation will be very similar to last year’s presentation.

CANDIDATE PRESENCE /GREETING EVENT: SPRING COMMUNITY PARKING LOT SALE

Saturday, April 20 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. MCC parking lot

Looking for a better fit than SpringFest (which last year had small attendance and targeted to parents with little children; people rushing by, didn’t stop to talk). The candidates did not get sufficient interaction with attendees.

New for 2024: Spring Parking Lot Sale **A concept diagram showed the dedicated area where candidates will be positioned.* This event has higher attendance and is a relaxed, conversational environment. Envisioned as a natural opportunity for adult and youth candidates to have meaningful interaction with members of the public. Candidates will be in a designated section where people can come and mingle/chat (near the coffee concession). **Candidates will remain in that section and NOT be roaming throughout the booths.**

People will be able to pick up and submit absentee ballots on the day of the parking lot sale. Spring Parking Lot Sale is outside, but the MCC building will be open and Front Desk staff will be present to hand-out Absentee ballots. This event is optional/voluntary for the candidates, but they will be encouraged to participate as an ideal opportunity to thoughtfully engage with the public.

Comments by Executive Director May-Salazar about candidate visibility at MCC events:

The one expectation we are trying to make more rigid is participation in the candidate booths at McLean Day. The language now says: you are expected to be present. Also, we are splitting it so that Friday Night candidate presence will feature the teens and Saturday will feature the adult candidates at the tables. In-person voting for both groups will be held on both days, but the separation of representation will entail less overall space dedicated to candidate tents and will focus on the primary groups in attendance. Last year, it was a long row of vacant space with empty tables. It didn’t do justice for the candidates who were there. Executive Director May-Salazar will reinforce to the candidates that they are expected to be there on McLean Day: it’s your key event. And if you will not be present, let us know in advance so that we will not create space for you. That will make it more compact (a better solution). *Comment by board member:* Good! That’s smart.

LOGISTICS UPDATE

**remarks by Holly Novak, Executive Assistant*

Ms. Novak explained that every year she writes an accountability memo outlining the detailed processes of the Governing Board election:

1. League of Women Voters will be on-site on Tuesday, May 14 in the afternoon (1:00 to 5:00 p.m.) They will take all the Absentee Ballots with Affidavits... compare it to the computer printouts from the county... annotate who voted at which address. Then they separate those ballots from the verified Affidavits; the ballots are consolidated into a pile to be counted later (on McLean Day evening). This guarantees that the Affidavits have been verified and the ballots received during Absentee Voting are accounted for in the computer printouts.
2. The Affidavits from Absentee Voting are alphabetized into a bin which is brought to McLean Day. This is a back-up to the annotated computer printouts – so that if someone shows up on McLean Day to vote we confirm they have not already voted, or are have their Affidavit to prove that they already voted during the absentee voting period. This has happened only a couple of times in years past.
3. As the League of Women Voters is validating the Affidavits against the computer printouts, Ms. Novak is also standing by to look up on the computer in Fairfax County tax records. For any address not listed, she look it up and we have all the extra portions noted within other tax districts: portions of Dranesville 1A2... Dranesville 2... certain tax ID codes that DO pay taxes to support McLean Community Center. She refers to the list of those line items as a double-check. These are two distinct methods of verifying and qualifying legitimate voters.
4. Ms. Novak takes chain-of-custody videos of each time we are moving the ballot box or emptying it or unloading it. She keeps a sequential list of those videos – because this is public information and is available if people want to know how the logistics of ballot security are handled. It is visible and accounted for at every step.
5. At the very end of the process – after McLean Day and all votes have been counted, the materials (ballots; affidavits; computer printouts) are boxed-up and delivered to Supervisor Bierman’s office for permanent storage.

6. Board member assistance requested: Board presence throughout the in-person election days – May 17 & May 18 - is essential. The entire Governing Board is requested to sign sign-up for shifts on these days to be present for oversight of the election: during Friday Night Rides (May 17) and McLean Day (May 18). ENC Chair's presence is requested on Tuesday, May 14 for validation of Absentee Ballots. We want an ENC committee member present to see that the process is running smoothly. You will walk around candidate booths, making sure the voting tent has no issues. It is light duty, but an important presence for public visibility.

ACTION ITEM: Holly will have all these dates/time noted that you can sign-up for.

Comment by Executive Director May-Salazar: High school Prom is on Saturday night; so, the division (youth presence on Friday night/adult presence on Saturday) is going to help because the teen focus can be on Friday.

7. Contract with League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area:

Question: Regarding the League of Women Voters contract: Did they charge extra for adding Friday Night Rides?

Yes – League of Women Voters has a contract. The contract increased, but it was minimal. They will have a huge team both days, so it is significant woman-hours: at least 7-8 people on the day of validating the Absentee Ballots into the computer printouts; at least 6 people at the Voting Tent on Friday night and all day long on Saturday (probably two shifts). And then a team comes in to MCC on Saturday night to count the ballots. When you add all those woman-hours, it is significant effort. They are very experienced. The same woman has been working with us for several years. She is a tax district resident and attends MCC programs. She knows us and is very conscientious.

Comment by Executive Director May-Salazar: It was a really impressive process to watch last year, especially the DAY-OF including the night after McLean Day when they were doing all the vote-counting. They are literally here for hours, carefully counting all the votes. It is very thorough. *Comment by board member*: Good! Thanks.

OLD /NEW BUSINESS

1. Security of Candidate packet process: Every day, the page with the labels of who picked up a candidate packet is removed so it not accessible to the public. That information is stored safely. We are very careful about that.

2. Social media efforts to encourage youth candidates

Eleanor Ague and Sophia Bruno will do social media outreach to get candidates. They posted "Run for the Board" and they will re-post it again. Youth Ambassadors will be really good for publicity about being a candidate.

3. Tracking the number of packets that have been picked up so that we have a sense of how many are out there. It's unusual that we already have received one completed ADULT packet back. Most often, they all come in right at the end, so we don't really have a sense of how many candidates we have. This year, since we have four adult positions open we want to make sure to have candidates.

4. Purposefully robust, thorough election process: *Chair Groennings expressed appreciation to Ms. Novak*: It's just so much work, Holly, thank you! Really, in addition to your regular assignments.

Comment by Ms. Novak: I support the importance of having a detailed process. I really believe in accountability and transparency in how we do it. In fact, two years ago, I made the League of Women Voters alphabetize all the Affidavits first – BEFORE they started annotating the computer printouts. I was concerned about the possibility of duplicates and afraid of people stuffing the ballot box or impersonating [tax district residents]. That didn't happen – they only found two dups (duplicate absentee ballots). So, we didn't have to do that alphabetizing process last year; but it was a necessary 'check-and-balance' [at the time]. The other aspect is rotation of ballots (last name A – Z; last name Z – A; last name random order). Also, it's on colored paper – so that people can't easily make a 'fake' ballot. We try to make sure people are not 'manufacturing' their own votes; which is why we annotate everything in the printouts. You MUST get into these details – because if you don't, then the whole process can be questioned. I feel like we have at every level appropriate checks-and-balances.

5. NEXT MEETING: Monday, April 8 That will be an update of where we are in the election process.

Nothing else was mentioned as a further topic for discussion.

ADJOURNMENT There being no further business, Chair Groennings adjourned the meeting at 6:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted, Holly Novak - Executive Assistant