



**2025 -2026 MCC Governing Board
Elections & Nominations Committee
October 8, 2025 – 6:30 p.m.**

MINUTES

Committee Members ALL Present: *in-person:* Liz Lawson, Chair; Gloria Marrero Chambers; Venita Wang

Other Board Members Present: None.

MCC Staff Present: Betsy May-Salazar, Executive Director; Holly Novak, Executive Assistant; Jessica Wu, PIO; Jonathan Melendez, Deputy Director; Willie Montgomery, Special Events Coordinator

Guests: None.

CONVENE MEETING

Chair Liz Lawson convened a meeting of Elections & Nominations Committee of the Governing Board of the McLean Community Center on October 8, 2025, at 6:25 p.m. The meeting was open to the public attending in-person. No changes were requested to the Agenda; it was adopted by acclamation. A courtesy announcement was made about the meeting being audio-recorded for purposes of Minutes.

DISCUSS RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO ENC POLICIES & PROCEDURES

During the campaign in the Spring it was noted that some language in the ENC Policies did not appropriately allow current board members to campaign for reelection. This was addressed in the April meeting with a notation that the policy would be considered for formal change in the Fall. Following is a recommended potential change to Elections Policies & Procedures - Section G. Campaigning. The following adjusted wording is proposed:

G. Campaigning

2. Members of the Governing Board¹ are prohibited from any electioneering activities on behalf of Board candidates, **with the exception of Governing Board members running for reelection, who are permitted to campaign on their own behalf and jointly with other Board candidates.**

REASON/BACKGROUND CONTEXT: Every year we review our Election Policies & Procedures to make sure it reflects how we are actually operating and if anything should be changed or revised. There is opportunity for current Board members to run again for a new 3-year term (or 1-year term, for youth members who wish to run again). 2024-2025 Governing Board recommended to amend Election Policies & Procedures to allow for current board members running for reelection to actively campaign for themselves and to combine efforts with any current board candidates for purposes of campaigning. This new language allows current board members to run for reelection and to campaign jointly with other board candidates if they choose.

MOTION: To accept the proposed edit to the Elections & Nominations Policies & Procedures and move it forward for consideration by the full Governing Board on October 22, 2025.

Unanimously approved by a vote of three.

2026 ELECTION SEQUENCE **remarks by Holly Novak – Executive Assistant*

“Key Dates” are foundational - defining when candidates submit their signatures; how long they may campaign; when Absentee Voting opens; how long Absentee Voting continues before McLean Day in-person voting. 2025 Key Dates were efficient and thoughtful. **We recommend arranging 2026 Key Dates similarly if ENC concurs.**

**remarks by Executive Director May-Salazar* We welcome any thoughts based on your experience of running for the MCC Governing Board. It is a similar schedule to last year, with some changes:

1. Allowing a little more time between when the candidates come in for certification and then we ‘go live.’

- This facilitates PIO staff preparing the candidate materials and having all ballot materials final and ready.
2. Repeating the opportunity for candidates to meet-and-greet the public at Spring Parking Lot Sale.
 3. New for 2026: A scheduled opportunity for all ADULT candidates to attend MCC Gov. Board meeting on April 22 to formally present their candidacy (3-minutes): 1. Why they are interested in serving the community in this way? 2. Their unique capabilities and qualifications to contribute as a member of MCC Governing Board.

This would address a perceived void for the ADULT candidates to formally present who they are. Candidates typically get invited to different local groups, including MCA, or are asked to speak at various places. Presentation at the MCC Governing Board meeting provides an MCC forum that is publicly noticed, for all ADULT candidates to present.

4. How to better support YOUTH candidates?

The YOUTH candidates would not have an audience at April 22 Board meeting – youth presenting to adults doesn't make sense because adults don't vote for youth candidates. The youth vote in a different way.

***comparing two separate ideas for candidate visibility to the public**

Question from Executive Director May-Salazar: Do you think that by adding an opportunity for candidate presentations at a board meeting, the Spring Community Parking Lot Sale still useful and a good thing to have in addition to that?

Benefits of Spring Parking Lot Sale:

1. The Spring Parking Lot Sale is a 'meet-and-greet' where you can chat with people informally.
2. It's a crowd that likely doesn't come into MCC often (they are there for the Parking Lot Sale specifically).
3. Candidates have freedom to walk about and mingle with the people attending. Holly Novak pointed out that Willie Montgomery (present in tonight's meeting) initiated the vision and planning of "Candidates Café" at Spring Parking Lot Sale. Chair Liz Lawson said it was excellent last year! It was great to have facetime with people. We loosened it up and let candidates walk the crowd, which was very helpful.
4. It's very convenient because people can go immediately into the building to vote (there was a line-up of a crowd at the Front Desk to receive ballots – heavy interest). In 2026 we won't have a backlog; Holly Novak will be stationed in MCC lobby to distribute Absentee ballots to people requesting to vote on-site.
5. It was much better than SpringFest 2023 where literally no one stopped to visit the candidates in MCC lobby.

Benefits of formal candidate presentations at April 22 Governing Board meeting:

While Spring Community Parking Lot Sale is a great space to meet people and chat with them, no one lingered or spent much time in Candidates Café. The idea of formally presenting at a Governing Board meeting is smart:

1. It would allow the community to come in and meet the candidates and hear from them.
2. The potential new board members can directly observe the Governing Board in action.
3. The candidates wouldn't have to be a part of a local organization, nor chasing after civic groups for visibility.
4. The candidates' remarks will be captured in Minutes – official record of the Governing Board meeting.

Summary by Chair Liz Lawson: BOTH these options are good opportunities and smart improvements.

The Candidates Café is still a great idea and we should implement it if possible.

THOUGHTS ABOUT 2025 ELECTION EXPERIENCE; SUGGESTIONS FOR 2026 ELECTION

Executive Director May-Salazar asked the committee for any thoughts about 2025 election and recommendations for the YOUTH voting process?

***Explain relevance of showing student ID as a requirement for voting (proving tax district residency):**

Comment by Venita Wang: The process to participate at McLean day was cumbersome - to be required to list their phone number & address. Students didn't want to engage in such a long process.

If you're a teen coming here to have fun on carnival rides, spending ten extra minutes to vote is not fun.

Comment by Executive Director May-Salazar: We could perhaps reinforce that student ID's are acceptable (such as having it on your phone). Most kids at the voting table (McLean Day) don't have their driver's license with them – which is why they had to write their residence information on the Affidavit. Having a driver's license or School ID solves that. In all voting we are checking and verifying addresses. It's always a requirement to validate eligibility to vote.

***Not that many youth do Absentee Voting – most participate in-person at McLean Day festival:**

Ideas to make Absentee Voting better for youth? And simpler? Venita Wang promoted herself at the front of the school building - both before and after school to get her classmates to vote for her.

Comment by Executive Director May-Salazar: That's really the way it's supposed to work. That's the point of campaigning. You did it right and you got elected!

Thoughts about improving DAY-OF (McLean Day experience):

A. Keep candidate presence of YOUTH on Friday night; ADULT candidates on Saturday. We added the voting on Friday night (2nd year) based on recommendation from a YOUTH board member – recognizing that all the youth are there on Friday night. *Comment by Executive Director May-Salazar:* By splitting the candidate presence [YOUTH on Friday; ADULT candidates on Saturday] it is more contained– not as big a footprint. Moreover, Saturday night is also usually prom night so kids are leaving [Lewinsville Park] early anyway.

B. Some observations about youth candidates teaming up during campaigning.

Comment by YOUTH board member: It was a little bit messy because one of the McLean and Langley candidates teamed up together to pull in twice as many people voting > one from Langley; one from McLean. That was a challenge.

C. The opportunity to have Youth candidate presence in tents on Friday night was really good – I handed out snacks to promote myself. Aanya and other youth candidates did also. I feel like that was pretty good.

Generating more interest in becoming a candidate:

As a way to bring in more candidates in the past, Holly Novak had designed a 5” x 8” public interest card available at MCC Front Desk/entrance shelves – people can pick-up if they are interested in candidacy. This was used in three previous Governing Board elections – available during the candidate phase, showing information about running; important dates. The text is ready to revive this public interest card again; however, the Key Dates of 2026 Governing Board Election must be firm because the card references all that information.

ACTION: Renew this public interest card (perhaps ready for 50th Anniversary event where we anticipate large attendance).

KEY DATES: Chair Liz Lawson said these DRAFT Key Dates look solid.

1. Candidate packets /certification: *Comments by Executive Director May-Salazar:* We have one month for candidates to pick up a packet and return it. That period was shortened last year – one month is sufficient.

2. Absentee voting duration: The practical reality for candidates is that when campaigning, it's easier to be able to send someone to MCC and encourage them to vote right away – rather than having to wait until McLean Day (i.e. you are campaigning yet people can't vote for you until another month out). It removes a hindrance when Absentee Voting is already open and immediately available.

3. How Absentee voting is messaged: changing the way we talk about absentee voting – lead with: 'You can vote early at MCC' and really focus on the “in-person” aspect of voting: both here and at McLean Day. Our previous language had emphasized: 'You can vote by mail! We led with the process of calling or requesting online and we mail you the ballot and then you submit it > the result was ballooning to a very intensive, cumbersome process. All the requests come in and Holly Novak mails them out daily. It's a lot of unnecessary work to mail out ballots for a community center that is literally within a 3-mile radius of where everyone lives! (laughter!)

We plan to adjust the language, not do anything different in practice. We want people to think: “I just need to go to MCC and vote.” Maybe they will do so instead of requesting online and getting it mailed to their house.

4. Yet still facilitate people who vote absentee because of family commitments, other inconveniences or complications. *Comment by Chair Liz Lawson:* I do think a lot of people vote absentee because they have little kids, full-time jobs and it's hard to get to MCC building at all. It's not the same as being able to vote online but at least by mail allows people to participate who may find it difficult to drive the five minutes to come here. Though that may seem silly - it does allow them to have their say.

Comment by Executive Director May-Salazar: We're not changing anything about the process – we are just changing the emphasis on the way we talk about it: "Come by – we're open until 11:00 p.m. at night." And if you're not able to get here, then you can request mailing of ballots.

5. Suggestion to have an "I Voted" sticker. Maybe we can make a QB "I Voted" sticker. And for kids: "Future MCC Candidate"

ACTION: Make an MCC "I Voted" sticker.

6. Candidate Orientation is on a Wednesday evening, March 18. Then we usually have one – two full weeks before Absentee Voting opens. We have carefully steered around FCPS Spring Break.

7. Continue to reference it as "Absentee Voting":

Background: (*comment by Holly Novak*) In a past year we called it "Early Voting." But the MOU specifically references "Absentee Voting." So, that's why we must use this moniker – even though it is a period of early voting (and those words make more sense). Someone pointed out that it wasn't how we are legally supposed to refer to it. Absentee Voting literally refers to being "absent" from McLean Day – you're not going to be at McLean Day to vote in-person, therefore you are voting by absentee. Yet we truly all wish we could call it "Early Voting."

SUMMARY: In general, all ENC members agreed that everything works for these proposed Key Dates for 2026 Governing Board election.

ACTION: We will double-check all these dates and make sure everything jives.

OLD /NEW BUSINESS

Chair Liz Lawson opened the floor for any other topics to consider this evening. Nothing was mentioned as a further topic for discussion.

ADJOURNMENT

With all business matters concluded, Chair Liz Lawson thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting at 6:46 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted, Holly Novak - Executive Assistant