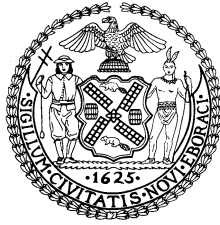


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The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan
Voting Reform Task Force
Community Board 8 Office
505 Park Avenue, Suite 620
Thursday, March 7, 2019—6:30PM

MINUTES

Community Board Members Present: Shari Weiner, Anthony Cohn, Craig Lader, Rita Popper, Billy Freeland, Greg Kirschenbaum.

Other Attendees: Abby Damsky, Council Member Kallos' Office; Columbia graduate student.

The meeting was call to order at 6:30 pm

1. Introduction

This was the first meeting of the resurrected Working Reform Working Group which held its last meeting on March 27, 2017

2. Recap of Past Activities:

Craig Lader, Chair of the original Voting Reform Working Group, provided an overview of the activities of the Reform Working Group. The Group was established to address the problems that occurred during the 2016 election, i.e. breakdown of voting machines and to address the inefficiencies of voting in the District. At one meeting, the Group was addressed by Mike Ryan, Executive Director of the Board of Elections. The Group voted to not to address voting right reform issues but to focus on locating new voting locations and increasing voter participation in the District.

3. Voting Reform Legislation:

The new Co-Chair, Shari Weiner, informed the Group that her interest in revitalizing the Voting Reform Group was to focus on voting reform issues. But, this was before the New York State Legislature had passed a series of voting reform bills. She is now looking for input on future activities.

4. Update on Recently Past State Legislation:

The Group discussed the recent legislation which has now been signed into law.

- Implementation of same day registration for first time in State history – this would require a constitutional amendment.
- Establishment of an early-voting system for eligible voters.
- Allowing absentee by mail voting for any voter without requiring a declared reason to do so – would require a constitutional amendment.

- Requiring the Board of Elections to transfer the registration enrollment of any voter who moves within New York State.
- Enabling 16 and 17 year olds to pre-register to vote in advance of their 18th birthday, upon which date they will be registered automatically.
- Closing the “LLC LOOPHOLE” and holding LLCs to the same aggregate contribution of \$5,000.00 which currently applies to corporations.
- Consolidating Federal and State primaries, which now will be held on the same day.

It was pointed out that New York consistently ranks as one of the worst voter turnout states in the nation. During 2014 mid-terms, only 34 percent of New York voters cast a ballot, a lower turnout than all but two other states. In 2016 New York’s turnout was lower than all but seven other states.

5. Moving Forward:

The Group then had a free-ranging discussion on activities for the Group to pursue. One well-supported idea was that we work to establish more voting places in order to reduce the long lines people encounter when trying to vote. A very major concern in the last elections has been the breakdown of scanning machines. It was recommended that more technicians be available to address malfunctions of the scanning machines. Another recommendation is that signs should be posted that if you know your election district, you should not have to wait on a line to confirm that information and you should be able to go directly to your voting district.

- There was another suggestion that there should be a combined website as to where to vote and to confirm if you are registered to vote. The Group felt the electronic pollbooks would speed up the voting process.
- There was support for making an existing holiday an election day to encourage voting.
- There were discussions about felons being allowed to vote.
- The representative from Councilman Kallos’ office indicated that the Councilman was very interested in securing additional voting site locations and the Committee Members indicated an interest in joining with Councilman Kallos in his effort.

6. Future Activities:

At the next meeting, the Group will prepare resolutions to be voted on by the full Board to support:

- Improve signage at each voting location.
- Additional technical support available to ensure scanning machines are functioning.
- Early voting efforts.

The Group is very enthusiastic and wants to continue to meet. The next meeting will be held in April.

Note: that audio recordings of all Committee meetings are maintained in the Office of the Community Board 8 Manhattan and may be listed to by appointment.

The meeting was adjourned at 8 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Shari Weiner and Anthony Cohn, Co-Chairs