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The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan
Voting Reform Task Force
Monday April 12, 2021 - 6:30PM
This meeting was conducted remotely via Zoom

MINUTES:

Present: Anthony Cohn, Shari Weiner, Elaine Walsh, Barbara Rudder, Russell Squire, Michele Birnbaum, Rami Sigal, Lori Bores, Rita Popper, Valerie Mason, Craig Lader, Alida Camp, Marco Tamayo

Absent (Excused): Ed Hartzog

The meeting was called to order at 6:30.

The meeting was called to order at 6:30. Co-chair Shari Weiner introduced State Senator Liz Krueger, who spoke about reforming the Board of Elections.

After a brief recap of the composition of the BOE and its general lack of accountability, Senator Krueger pointed out many of the existing dysfunctions and the barriers to improvement. She noted that there were two basic types of problems; one is that New York has relatively restrictive voting laws, and the Board of Elections, as a political body, needs reform in its operations that may go beyond the limits of legislation. At the least, the Senator wants to make it easier to vote, and to professionalize the BOE, and try to make its operations more efficient and fair. The political nature of the Board will remain a barrier to total professionalization. Because the basic structure of the Board of Elections is set forth in the state constitution, any major restructuring would require amending the constitution.

A lively discussion followed. Many spoke to the issues associated with poll workers and their training, largely from personal experience.

A suggestion was made again for a professional PSA about ranked choice voting. As the ballot will not be certified until the end of April, time will be of the essence.

The next meeting of the Task Force will focus on the mechanics of Ranked Choice Voting, and the creation of the PSA. Susan Lerner will be the speaker.

Anthony Cohn and Shari Weiner, Co-Chairs