



Mr. Maxim Grudin
Chair of the Procedure Committee
P.O. Box 284
Scarsdale, NY 10583

also sent via email to: mgrudin@gmail.com

February 6, 2017

Dear Mr. Grudin,

The League of Women Voters of Scarsdale (“League”) thanks you for your voluntary service as Chair and Daniel Finger for his voluntary service as Vice Chair of the Scarsdale Procedure Committee (“PC”). We further thank David Irwin, member of the PC, and Lena Crandall, Chair of the Citizens Nominating Committee (“CNC”), for attending our general membership information meeting on December 19, 2016, on behalf of the PC Chair and Vice Chair who were unable to attend, to review the CNC election that took place on November 16, 2016.

Immediately following our information session, the League held a consensus meeting of its members to discuss the 2016 CNC election and to review its prior positions pertaining to the Village Election System. The League’s specific recommendations to the PC are set forth below.

1. NOMENCLATURE AND CLARIFICATION OF ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES

The League notes that the similar nomenclature and overlapping functions of certain organizations and their leadership have contributed to confusion in the community. Clarification may enhance community awareness and interest in participation in the Village Election System. The League encourages the use of flowcharts or other visual aids to educate the community on the separate roles and responsibilities of the PC, the CNC, the Town and Village Civic Club (“TVCC”), the Scarsdale Citizens’ Non-Partisan Party, the Scarsdale Forum (the “Forum”), and the Forum’s Non-Partisan Procedure Committee.

The League thanks David Irwin for providing useful history at the information session about the distinction between the TVCC, a 501(c)(4) nonprofit organized to promote civic, educational, and political activities, and the Forum, a 501(c)(3) non-partisan advocacy nonprofit organization. The League further commends the TVCC for holding meetings separate from the

Forum this year and for being mindful of the different activities in which each organization may legally engage. The League encourages vigilance in using the correct name when referring to either organization.

The League further recommends that the Scarsdale Citizens' Non-Partisan Party, the organization that manages the election campaign for the Non-Partisan Party Slate and, as reported at the information session, is traditionally chaired by the First Vice President of the TVCC:

- (1) clarify how its leadership is selected each year
- (2) memorialize in writing the specific roles and responsibilities of those who serve as officers of that party to ensure transfer of knowledge from one year to the next, and
- (3) make its structure and composition more transparent to the community by, for example, posting such information on its website.

2. OVERALL FUNCTIONING OF THE PC

a. PC Chair Selection

The League commends Maxim Grudin and Daniel Finger, who, upon completion of their 3-year terms as elected, voting members of the CNC, accepted the TVCC appointments to serve as the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson, respectively, of the 2016 PC. The League also commends the TVCC for recruiting PC leadership specifically from the ranks of the ten voting members of the CNC graduating class and for already beginning the process of recruiting leadership for next year's PC by approaching current third-year CNC members as well as those who served on the 2016 PC.

The League notes that it had previously advocated for a change in the Resolution to make the process for selecting the leadership of the PC mirror the process for the selection of leadership of its counterpart in the school board election system, the Administrative Committee, whose functions and composition are similar but not identical to that of the PC. The League is sensitive to the concerns raised that such a change would necessarily limit the number of individuals eligible for leadership positions in the PC. Nonetheless, the League encourages the PC to further investigate changing the mechanism for leadership succession as set forth in the League's previously-issued position statements. The League recommends finding a way of selecting or electing the chair and vice chair of the Procedure Committee that provides for continuity and smooth leadership transition by seeking those with recent experience on the CNC or PC while at the same time moving away from appointment by the TVCC. The League continues to encourage the PC to look to the graduating CNC class as the preferred source for incoming PC leadership, to adopt a more democratic process of selecting the PC leadership, and to amend the Resolution accordingly, if appropriate.

b. Leadership Transition and Retention of Institutional Memory

As reported at the information session, the Chair felt well prepared by a member of the previous year's PC with the transmission of files, information, and some additional material stored on a Google Drive, though not all such materials were widely shared with the other members of the PC. The League recommends formalizing the transfer of knowledge and documents so that it is more systematic and comprehensive, to help ensure smooth leadership transition, the retention of institutional memory and experience, and effective functioning of the PC in future years. The League refers the PC again to our position statement dated 2/11/15 concerning the 2014 CNC election for a sample list of items suggested for inclusion in a central repository such as Google Drive as well as items suggested for inclusion on the PC website for viewing by the general public.¹

c. Composition of PC, Communications, and Division of Labor

The League commends the TVCC for the care exercised in choosing the appointees to the PC. Specifically, as reported at the information session, the TVCC paid particular attention to finding individuals from all five elementary school neighborhoods in order to form a balanced committee with connections to many different segments of the community. The League further commends the PC for the involvement of each of its members who shared in the responsibility for performing all critical functions, for its early solicitation of community input through the local print and online media, and for the breadth of its efforts to gather public feedback concerning changes to the nominating process and other proposals.

As reported at the information session, the PC held six official meetings beginning in May, the first two of which were documented with minutes posted on the PC website, and the PC members also communicated with each other through frequent emails. If PC meetings are open to the public, the League recommends that the PC publicize the dates, times, and locations of such meetings in a timely fashion on its website and through local media. The League further encourages the PC to formalize and publish its meeting minutes in a timely fashion.

¹ The following items were listed as examples of materials that should be maintained, updated, and made readily accessible to all PC members:

- A comprehensive report from the PC Chairperson that contains a description of the roles and responsibilities of PC members, a summary of actions taken, best practices, issues and concerns including those derived from current and past years' experiences, and a summary of election results by neighborhood area, including mail-in ballots
- The Non-Partisan Resolution
- A timeline setting forth deadlines
- A procedural checklist of tasks to be completed
- A list of prospective candidates, current and historical, who have been or may be approached to run
- A list of frequently asked questions and corresponding answers
- A script that may be utilized by PC members and others involved in recruiting candidates to explain the Village Non-Partisan Election System and the process of running in the CNC election
- A job description for PC and CNC members

3. PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE RESOLUTION AND RECOMMENDATIONS MADE TO THE CNC

The League commends the PC for soliciting community feedback on the Non-Partisan Election System through press releases to the local print and online newspapers beginning in the spring. The League notes that the guidelines and recommendations proposed by the PC were publicized in local news media, on the Scarsdale Forum's website, and presented at the Scarsdale Forum's public meeting in November. The League commends the PC for its transparency in disclosing the many issues considered, including the rationales for the PC's decisions to defer, table, or reject various suggestions, and encourages the PC to also utilize its own website for posting such reports and to consider disseminating such materials through additional avenues of community outreach, such as by asking the leaders of other community-based groups to distribute information through their social media and eblasts.

The League commends the PC for considering Resolution changes to the governance of the CNC although the PC ultimately decided against proposing a specific amendment this season. The League continues to reaffirm its position that was first set forth in its 2012 "Statement Concerning Scarsdale's Nonpartisan System for the Selection of Candidates for Village Office" and repeated in each of its subsequent CNC consensus statements:

The League recommends that the PC propose an amendment to the Non-Partisan Resolution providing that the CNC elect the chair and vice chair [sic]² of the following year's CNC from the outgoing class of voting members.

Currently, the Non-Partisan Resolution provides that the President (or the First Vice President of the TVCC in the President's absence) serve as chairperson of the CNC. The League notes that the TVCC is a separate civic organization; neither its membership nor its leadership is chosen by the Scarsdale electorate. Although the chairperson is a nonvoting member of the CNC, he or she is nonetheless in a leadership position and can influence the committee on its operations and selection of candidates. The League also notes that the President and First Vice President of the TVCC, who simultaneously serve as President and First Vice President of the Forum, do not necessarily possess any CNC experience. In addition, as reported at the information session, the responsibilities of the person holding the simultaneous titles of TVCC President and Forum President has increased over time, potentially creating time constraints for taking on the added responsibilities of serving as CNC Chair. The selection of chairs by the CNC from among those who have just completed their service on the CNC, comparable to the process set forth in the School Board Nominating Committee Resolution for selecting the leadership of the SBNC, promotes greater continuity and smoother transfer of procedural and historical knowledge, ensures that the CNC leadership possesses recent CNC experience, preserves the appearance of impartiality, integrity, and neutrality in the process, and makes certain that the incoming

² The Resolution does not currently make any provisions for a "vice chair" position.

leadership will bear the indicia of approval of their CNC peers.

The League commends you for your press release concerning the PC's proposals, your presentation to the Forum, and for providing the text of such presentation to the League. The League recommends that all such written materials and links to any videotaped presentations be posted on the PC website.

The League also commends the CNC for taping and making available for viewing the public portion of the organizational meeting which included presentations by all trustees who are not currently eligible for renomination. The League recommends that a link to video of the CNC meeting and all public written materials circulated also be posted on the PC website.

The League further commends the CNC for the open debate on the PC's two proposals submitted for consideration by the CNC. The League suggests that the PC transmit background, rationales, and proposed language or implementation recommendations for any future proposals to the CNC in advance of its first meeting.

4. RECRUITING OF POTENTIAL CNC CANDIDATES

a. Timing of Recruitment

The League recognizes the difficulty in recruiting people to run in the CNC election. The League commends the PC for the testimonials of former CNC members, letters to the editor, and the calls for candidates that appeared in the local print and online newspapers at the end of the summer and reiterates its suggestion that recruitment efforts commence even earlier next season, before the SBNC has begun its recruiting, and through additional means such as by asking the leaders of other community-based groups to disseminate information through their social media and eblasts.

b. Formalized Records of Past, Present, and Future Recruitment Efforts

The League continues to strongly suggest that the PC create and maintain a centralized, chronological list of individuals who should be or have been solicited to run for CNC, to coordinate recruiting efforts among all members of the PC to ensure that the PC contacts and solicits individuals personally, regardless of whether such individuals are known by the PC member making such contact, and to formalize a system of compiling names of potential CNC candidates for transmittal to future PC members from year to year.

\\

\\

5. CNC ELECTION

a. Pre-election Publicity, Brochure and Mail-in Ballots, Polling

The League encourages the PC to continue to explore ways to make greater use of its website and social media as a means to communicate relevant information in a timely fashion. The League also reiterates its suggestion that the printed brochure also include the names, terms, and election districts of all continuing CNC members and that the brochure and all information concerning the election be featured in a prominent location on the website.

The League notes inconsistencies between the morning polling times listed in the printed brochure, the PC website, the PTC Community Calendar, and the Resolution's requirements. The League recommends checking for compliance with the Resolution when scheduling and publicizing the election.

b. Voter Turnout

For convenience, the following table is included as a means of tracking voter turnout trends. Voter turnout was greatest this year in the unit that had five individuals running for two open seats. The breakdown of mail-in ballot by neighborhood was not available at the time of the information session but was estimated to be proportionate to the number of in-person ballots.

	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009
Edgewood	37 (?)*	24*	21 (3)*	62 (3)+	76 (28)	64 (2)	65 (4)	73 (2)
Fox Meadow	168 (?)	84	106 (28)	107 (?)	153 (67)	162 (5)	133 (10)	187 (43)
Greenacres	68 (?)+	66+	54 (17)	103 (?)	115 (54)	106 (12)	89 (13)	101 (15)
Heathcote	24 (?)*	34*	34 (7)*	59 (?)	106 (40)	134 (25)	129 (64)	187 (92)
Quaker Ridge	24 (?)*	16*	24 (10)*	24 (2)*	103 (45)	67 (12)	100 (47)	116 (30)
TOTAL (mail-in)	321 (1 106)	224 (25)	239 (65)	355 (163)	553 (234)	533 (56)	516 (138)	664 (182)

Data in parentheses () indicate the number of mail-in ballots

* indicates uncontested election

+ indicates fewer than twice the number of candidates for each open slot

c. Fundraising, Expenses, and Finances

The League commends the PC for being cost-conscious, for remaining financially self-sufficient, for covering all its annual expenses (see chart below), and for applying lessons learned to decide upon timing strategies for the next appeal.

\\

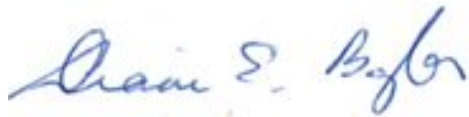
For convenience, below is a chart identifying the PC's expense breakdown, as reported to the League by the PC, for the past three years:

<u>TYPE OF EXPENSE</u>	<u>YEAR 2016</u>	<u>YEAR: 2015</u>	<u>YEAR: 2014</u>
Postage deposit	\$1,267.00	\$1,267.04	\$1,274.28
Printing (brochure/mailling)	\$1,768.00	\$1,715.49	\$2,670.79
Ballot printing	\$----	\$----	\$83.75
Additional postage (fundraising solicitation)	TBD in Jan.	\$39.20	\$31.96
P.O. Box Rental	\$126.00	\$126.00	\$----
<hr/>			
TOTAL	\$3,155.00	\$3,147.73	4,060.78

6. CONCLUSION

The League appreciates the PC's dedication to a non-partisan process and desire to improve the CNC election system. The League hopes the PC will view this letter as a tool to facilitate discussion on strategies for continuing to improve the system.

Sincerely,



Diane E. Baylor
Chair, Village Election System
League of Women Voters of Scarsdale



Deb Morel
President
League of Women Voters of Scarsdale

cc: Mr. Daniel S. Finger
Vice Chair of the Procedure Committee
daniel@fingerandfinger.com

Mr. David Irwin
Member of the Procedure Committee
dirwin0513@gmail.com

Ms. Lena Crandall
Chair of the Citizens Nominating Committee
lena.crandall@verizon.net