

I. Call to Order

Members Present: Liz Edsell, Gerry Myers, Hussein Amuri, Doug Johnson, Sam Myers, Prashant Singh

City Staff Present: Jessie Baker (City Manager), Hal Colston (Deputy Mayor), Alex Yin (School Trustees)

Guests Present: John Odum, City Clerk, City of Montpelier, Darrell Desautels

Call to Order by: Liz at 5:31

Minutes Recorded by: Jessie Baker

II. Public Comment

No members of the public present

III. Approve Previous Meeting Minutes of 12/3/19

Decision: Approved, unanimous

Motion by: Gerry

Second: Sam

IV. Discussion of whether to include "legal" in language about all resident voting

Liz opened the discussion and reviewed data that 10% of Winooski residents are not US Citizens. City Clerk Odum provided comment on the process Montpelier went through to put their charter change language on the ballot. They had a small working group of citizens and non-citizens who recommended "legal" residents language for the ballot. In Montpelier, they did not require that people had to demonstrate that they were documented. They wanted to ensure that no unusual hurdles were put into place. A discussion ensued among all the Commissioners about allowing local voting rights for legal or documented residents. It was noted that last night Burlington approved language around "non-citizen legal residents" to take to the voters on Town Meeting Day 2020. It was discussed that during outreach the Commissioners would indicate that the Commission is considering allowing "legal residents" to vote in local elections.

Public Comment: Mr. Desautels asked questions the following questions:

- If someone is living in Winooski and here illegally, are they going to be allowed to vote?
- Are criminals going to be allowed to vote?

Clerk Odum clarified that this is VT state law.

V. Discussion of whether or how to protect voter information of non-citizen voters differently than the regular voter list

Liz opened the discussion. Clerk Odum offered that in Montpelier they had suggested that they would keep a supplement file of non-citizen voters that would be stored separately from the citizen voter checklist. However, at the Legislature, they suggested that a separate “municipal” voter list be tracked in totality and that it would continue to be a public record. Clerk Odum’s recommendation is that voter lists cannot be closed off from public inspection. Discussion ensued among all Commissioners.

The Commission asked Jessie about the local process for tracking who requests a voter list and do they have to attest to anything? Additionally, they asked for future guidance from staff about the administrative addition of maintaining a “State Voter Checklist” and a “Municipal Voter Checklist.”

Clerk Odum suggested the Commission talk with Jessie Carpenter – Clerk of Tacoma, MD – on her experience.

VI. Discussion of Fact Sheet

Discussed the content to include in the fact sheet then provide to the Communications Coordinator to draft.

Content to include:

- Census data
 - Website link
 - History included in Hal’s draft
 - Boil down process to four key votes (1) Council, (2) vote of current citizens, (3) Legislative process, and (4) governor signature.
 - Graphic on who decides who votes in Winooski.
 - Use the phrase: “All Resident Voting”
 - Site source materials
 - Email: charter@winooskivt.gov
 - Questions we are considering: What we are seeking feedback on? Should it be only legal residents. FAQs will be developed in January Charter@winooskivt.gov will be created as follows:
 - An alias of Jessie’s email
 - PDF of all Responses that are provided to the Commission at their meetings.
 - Auto response saying “thank you and this will be shared with the Commission”
- Public Comment:

Mr. Desautels asked: Should people who live in Winooski who are not Americans be allowed to vote in local elections?

VII. Commissioner’s Responses to or Posting on Front Porch Forum

Decision: Liz to draft a clarifying update for FPF

Motion by: Gerry

Second: Sam

The Commissioners discussed should the Commission be posting more regularly on FPF and are we ready to do that? Discussion that this should be part of a larger communication plan. Liz did put out a “we are listening” message. The focus of posts should be on the process when we do post in the future. Motion: Liz should post a short clarifying FPF that there is not a question on March’s ballot and outlining our process.

VIII. Discussion of Outreach Questions

Tabled to January

IX. Potential to Hold an Implicit Bias Training

Liz opened a discussion on if the Commission wants to recommend to the Council a shared Implicit bias training? Liz suggested CQ Strategies as a vendor. A discussion ensued to make this request of the Council and invite Mr. Desautels to join the training. Liz and Hal will explore options.

X. Adjourn

Motion by: Gerry

Second: Sam

Time: 7:04