

**City & County of Denver
Denver Election Commission
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Denver, CO 80204-2732
Phone: 720/913-8683 Fax: 720/913-8600**

Denver Election Commission Meeting
200 West 14th Avenue – Commission Meeting Room/2nd Flr
Wednesday, June 8, 2005

Commissioner Vaden called meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

Attendees: Commissioner Wayne Vaden, Commissioner Susan Rogers,
Commissioner Sandy Adams
Karon Hatchett, Executive Director
Bonnie Clark, League of Women Voters
Lynn Pressnall, City Council Dist. 5
Dante James, AA-VIP
Faith Gross, The Legal Center for People with Disabilities
Pete Maysmith, Colorado Common Cause
Senator Ken Gordon, Colorado State Legislature
Sean Walsh, CRL Associates
Tina Romero, DEC Staff
Matt Crane, DEC Staff
Josh Campbell, DEC Staff
Anthony Rainey, DEC Staff

I. A. Approval of Commission Meeting Minutes: May 17, 2005 and May 13, 2005.
Commissioner Rogers moved. Commissioner Adams seconded. Minutes approved.

B. May Revenue Report: ED Hatchett reported May revenue as \$344.60

II. Old Business:

A. Scientific and Cultural Facilities District –Commissioner Vaden stated that the Commission is waiting for a breakdown on Tabor costs in response to the SCFD Election Reimbursement,. ED Hatchett is waiting on council response. City Attorney Ortega said there has only been feedback from one councilperson.

B. Legal Center for Persons with Disabilities Survey Request - ED Hatchett Stated that a request was made by Faith Gross requesting copies of the ADA surveys. The cost of copies is cost prohibitive. Ms. Gross will be reviewing the copies onsite at the DEC on Thursday, June 9.

C. Denver Voters for Responsible Spending (DVRS) not present. Commissioners agreed to table until the claimants can be present.

D. Alcohol-Marijuana Equalization Initiative Update– the petitions are being circulated; Commissioner Vaden said that if this passes voter approval at the municipal level it will still be subject to federal law under the Supreme Court ruling; Commissioner Rogers said the city would be responsible for taking on this legal challenge.

III. New Business

A. Potential Vote Center Search – November 1, 2005 Election
November Election – Commissioner Vaden is receiving numerous calls related to pursuing a mail ballot form of election. A presentation on potential locations on Vote Centers was developed by Josh Campbell, Matt Crane, Kathleen Mills, Rocky Rushing, and Anthony Rainey at the direction of the ED. A map with proposed Vote Centers was posted and discussed. Matt Crane stated that polling places from the May election were reviewed, excluding schools. The team conducted phone surveys on the following criteria: availability for election day, square footage, ADA compliance; parking spaces, Internet capability; machine delivery dates, furniture situation, bathroom situation, and willingness to host a vote center. (See chart attached) Seventy-five locations were identified as willing to be Vote Centers. This is still contingent on site visits. Lynn Pressnall, Council District 5 questioned non inclusion of Big Bear Ice Arena. Those sites that were suitable for the May Expanded Early Voting sites were not included in this current analysis because they had already worked out. The map displayed included new proposed sites only. ED Hatchett stated that Council Districts 3, 8, and 11 looked sparse in terms of identified sites and that more work would be done on this. Site visits will be next on the staff agenda per Matt.

B. Vote Center Stakeholders Committee - ED Hatchett stated that

the first Stakeholder meeting is scheduled Friday, June 10, 2 p.m. This meeting will include a review of identified potential sites of Vote Centers and provide a venue for community input.

Discussion regarding Mail ballot issue - Commissioner Vaden stated that the Commission is hesitant to move on this because of election law requiring all registered elector's signatures to be scanned first. Anthony Rainey explained that DEC personnel will have to capture signatures from registration and Denver Motor Vehicle forms and once scanned, personnel has to go through individually and verify the voter. The process requires attachment of each voter signature to each voter record. He stated that there are 39,000 currently on file, 300,000 still not completed, and 61,000 signatures in boxes waiting to be scanned. He is approximating 60 days, with 25 people @ 200 forms per day. He explained further that experienced personnel process about 150 forms per day. If this was outsourced, vendor costs would double the cost. Jeffco and other surrounding counties are still determining how they will administer this process. Larimer County is currently the only compliant county. Commissioner Vaden is being approached by many electors regarding an all-mail ballot for the November Election. Rainey explained that signatures need to be scanned by the deadline of September 27, 2005. He further explained that if a voter has registered in the last eight years, we have a signature on file. He explained that if we scanned signature cards this would be a longer process because the scanning machine has to be refigured each time. SCORE, the new statewide voter registration system being implemented by the Secretary of State, will go live between January & March 2006. This requires scanning of signatures by that time. Commissioner Rogers said that if we run into problems we can recruit 40 on-calls to complete the required scanning. Anthony stated that we have approximately 200 registrants each month from the DMV. There was some discussion about the absentee ballot signature not being reliable.

Dante James, AA-VIP, stated that, comparatively, Vote Centers would not cost less than a mail ballot election. Pete Maysmith, Colorado Common Cause, said that the collective job is to do best job for all people. He stated that there is a level of uncertainty from voters, that comfort level of voters is not in place, that there is a perception of less access to the ballot, and urges Commissioners to vote for a mail ballot. Senator Ken Gordon, State Legislature, said legislation effected before November is not possible. He also stated that a lot of people won't vote if a change to Vote Centers is made this year. He agreed with Maysmith that we need to be concerned with access to voters. He considers this a very important election to Denver; that votes from every county will be critical; and that Denver had a shameful turnout in the past off-year election. Commissioner Rogers recommends a publicist in the budget for the premiering of Vote Centers in Denver. Commissioner Adams stated that if other counties were trying Vote Centers this year we could have benefited from overall publicity in the metro area counties. She is concerned that changing the election format for the November Election will create the appearance that this change is being performed based on the ballot content.

Lynn Pressnall, Council Dist. 5, recommended review of the minutes of the meeting for May 17 regarding discussion on the proposed Vote Centers for the November Election. Commissioner Vaden suggested that Ms. Pressnall review the minutes. Commissioner Rogers said that surrounding counties participating in Vote Centers is considered a portion of the basis for decision about the form of election for November. Senator Gordon wants higher turnout, regardless of the content of the ballot, and reiterated that a mail ballot is preferred. Commissioner Adams said that she speaks with many groups who prefer polling place elections. Faith Gross, the Legal Center for People with Disabilities stated that even though a voter signature has been on file for a number of years, that handwriting can change based on a disability. She asked for clarification of a plan by the DEC to address this. Commissioner Vaden said that the DEC will go to the statute and determine the best course of action. Faith also stated that when we talk about access, 50% of the Early Vote sites were not accessible; consideration of disability has to be key; mail ballot may require assistance to disabled voters, however, no stats are available. Pete Maysmith said that his advocacy is not based on the content of ballot. He believes that more people will have their voice heard in an off-year election if there is an all mail ballot and the data is very supportive of this. ED Hatchett explained that some Early Vote sites were inaccessible. She disputed that the Pecos Community Center was totally inaccessible on both sides of the building. Matt Crane verified that some centers are willing to work with the DEC to become fully accessible, if they are not now.

Commissioner Vaden requested motion to approve the signature scanning project and to approve the \$116,000 budget for on-call hires. Commissioner Rogers moved and Commissioner Adams seconded. City Attorney Ortega asked about dollars in the budget, and ED Hatchett said that a new budget analyst is on board and that further budget review is required. Quite probably Vote Centers could increase costs per ED Hatchett; and currently there is no budgeted line item for Vote Centers. CA Ortega recommended establishing a dialogue with BMO and establishing a dialogue with Council Finance Committee.

C. Proposed Charter Changes: Municipal Election Timeframes – Commissioner Rogers moved to table until next meeting.

ED Hatchett thanked staff for their work on the Stakeholders Committee. Senator Gordon thanked the Commissioners for the thankless job that they do.

Next meeting: Thursday, 6/23/05, 6 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 6:59 p.m.

THE DENVER ELECTION COMMISSION

Wayne E. Vaden, Commissioner

Sandy Adams, Commissioner

Susan Rogers, Commissioner

Attest:

Karon Majeel Hatchett, Executive Director/Date