

KING COUNTY INDEPENDENT TASK FORCE ON ELECTIONS

THE TASK FORCE'S 1ST MEETING

Monday, May 16th, 2005 2:00-5:00 p.m.

Seattle University Law School, Room 110

900 Broadway Avenue, Seattle (the Law School Building is on 12th Avenue)

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The Meeting's Goals

1. Reach agreement on the Task Force's purpose and goals, and the ground rules to guide the process by which the Task Force will make decisions.
2. Review and discuss a work plan that will enable the Task Force to achieve its purpose and goals by July 31st, 2005.
3. Allow Task Force members and others in attendance to get to know the Task Force members better.

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| I. | 2:00 | Welcome; Review Today's Goals and Agenda | Cheryl Scott, Chair |
| II. | 2:10 | Task Force Members Introduce Themselves | Task Force Members |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ <i>Why am I interested in serving on this Task Force?</i>▪ <i>What are the principal interests that the Task Force should achieve on behalf of King County's citizens?</i> | |
| III. | 2:35 | Discuss and Adopt Purpose, Goals and Ground Rules | Task Force Members |
| IV. | 3:30 | Review and Discuss Work Plan and Agree on Administrative Issues | Task Force/Staff |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ <i>Understand current state of elections administration</i>▪ <i>Select Vice Chair</i>▪ <i>Select subcommittees' membership</i>▪ <i>Discuss public outreach strategies</i>▪ <i>Suggest key stakeholders to be interviewed</i> | |
| V. | 4:00 | Break | |

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| VI. | 4:10 | Executive Session
(Review the performance of public official(s)) | Task Force/Staff |
| VII. | 4:55 | End Executive Session; Preview Next Meeting | Cheryl Scott/Chair |
| VIII. | 5:00 | Adjourn | |

THE TASK FORCE'S NEXT MEETING:

Friday, June 3rd 2:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Seattle University Law School, Room 110

KING COUNTY INDEPENDENT TASK FORCE ON ELECTIONS

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FINAL SUMMARY

of the Meeting's Key Discussions, Decisions and Agreements

Task Force members present: Patricia Aitken, David Boerner, Nick Handy, Susan Hutchison, Joe Knight, John Lindback, Cheryl Scott, Suzanne Sinclair and Father Stephen Sundborg

Task Force member absent: Philip Eaton

Staff members present: Rita Brogan, John Gerberding, Brian Malarky and Jim Reid

TASK FORCE APPROVES GROUND RULES AND WORK PLAN

After brief discussions of the proposed ground rules and work plan, Task Force members approved them by consensus.

One minor change was made to purpose #3 in the "Task Force's Purposes" that appears as the introduction to both documents. Task Force members also revised ground rules 27 and 28 to reflect their interests in: 1) keeping each other informed if and when any of them speaks to the media; and 2) maintaining the transparency of this process.

The adopted ground rules and work plan are attached to this summary. The revised wording of purpose #3 and ground rules 27 and 28 is printed in boldface.

Themes that emerged from the discussion of the work plan were:

- Much work has already been done to assess the problems with the 2004 elections in both King County and across the State of Washington, and to propose solutions to those problems. An understanding of this information will enable the Task Force to "springboard" to solutions that are oriented to the short- and long-term future.
- The Task Force also needs an understanding of the issues the King County Council-commissioned Citizens' Elections Oversight Committee (CEOC) and audit will address. The Task Force is interested in coordinating with those two endeavors, avoiding too much duplication of effort, and "teeing up" some issues for the company that conducts the audit given that their recommendations are due after those of the Task Force.
- The Task Force is interested in diving deeply into a few crucial issues where its recommendations can make the difference and have a long-term impact.

- Fact-finding will continue beyond the June 3rd meeting and is likely to continue right up to the end of the Task Force's process in late July. This indicates a need for the flexibility to enable the Task Force to address and respond to information obtained late in the process.

Three decisions resulted from the review and discussion of the work plan:

1. To help ensure coordination with the efforts of the CEOC and audit, a standard item on the Task Force meeting agendas will be updates on their progress.
2. We will invite the chair of the CEOC and a representative of the company conducting the audit to at least one of our meetings.
3. Dean Logan, Director of King County's Records, Elections and Licensing Services Division will be invited to the Task Force's next meeting on Friday, 3 June to provide his perspective on the key issues that resulted in problems in 2004, and what solutions he has begun implementing and is proposing to address them.

As part of organizing the work of the Task Force and the structure for making decisions, Task Force members approved by consensus the selection of Suzanne Sinclair, Island County's Auditor, as the Task Force Vice Chair.

BRIEFING ON STATE LEGISLATION IDENTIFIES ADDITIONAL ISSUES AND INTERESTS

Brian Malarky, the Task Force's Chief Reviewing Officer, briefed the Task Force on new laws the State Legislature passed in its recently completed session to address problems identified from the 2004 elections, and a proposal by Dean Logan to address issues and concerns in King County. The briefing paper is attached as part of this summary.

Task Force discussion of those items highlighted the following facts, issues and interests:

- In our State six counties currently conduct elections by mail. By next year 23 counties will do so. King County, with nearly one million voters, is not seriously considering this option.
- Oregon has a simpler system for reestablishing the voting rights of ex-felons than Washington. Staff will work with Task Force member John Lindback to provide the other members with Oregon's legislation and/or a memo John authored summarizing it.
- The lawsuit over the gubernatorial election will commence in Chelan County Superior Court next Monday, 23 May. Some believe it will conclude by the time of the Task Force's next meeting on 3 June. In briefly discussing this issue, Task Force members acknowledged that it is not part of this group's mandate to comment on the outcome of the election.
- The most significant proposal not enacted into law by the Legislature was the one that would have moved the primary election date to either August or June, thus creating more time between the primary and general elections. A leading argument for the proposal was that it would provide sufficient time to mail, receive and count absentee ballots, particularly for Washington State residents living and/or serving abroad.

- Other proposals that failed to be enacted by the State Legislature: a) funding a voters pamphlet for primary elections; and b) increasing the State's financial support of elections so that in addition to helping pay the costs of elections in odd-numbered years, the State would join with counties in helping pay for elections in even-numbered years (the years in which there are statewide races such as those for Governor, Attorney General, Secretary of State and U.S. Senator).
- Another issue of interest appeared to be the number of voters per precinct. The law states that a precinct may have up to nine hundred voters; King County's precincts average about three hundred voters.

TASK FORCE AGREES ON PUBLIC OUTREACH STRATEGIES

As a result of a discussion about strategies for engaging the public in the work of the Task Force, members agreed on these approaches:

1. The Task Force is interested in hearing from key public officials who have commented publicly on the State's and/or County's elections systems and from other key opinion-shapers and decision-makers. Task Force Chair Cheryl Scott will work with the staff to develop a list of people to be interviewed by various Task Force members, and submit that list to the Task Force for review and approval.
2. To ensure that the Task Force hears from a diverse group of citizens, the Task Force is also interested in reviewing and incorporating into its process the public comments provided to other bodies that have recently examined elections processes. For example, the staff will work with Task Force member Nick Handy to secure the transcripts of public comments received by the State's Elections Reform Task Force, which operated earlier this year and provided recommendations to the Governor and State Legislature.
3. The Task Force will provide the opportunity for the public to comment on its draft report and recommendations before they are finalized and submitted to the King County Executive. The specific means of providing this opportunity will be determined as the Task Force's work progresses.

TASK FORCE'S NEXT MEETING IS FRIDAY, 3 JUNE 2-5 P.M.

The Task Force meeting adjourned at 5 o'clock. The next meeting will be at the Seattle University Law School on Friday, 3 June from 2-5 p.m. Parking passes will be provided to all members and staff.