

PPCC Election Committee Report – 2018

September 13, 2018

The Committee is pleased to announce that the following are the newly elected Area and At-large Representatives to the PPCC board, beginning October 1, 2018:

Area 1: Joanna Spak

Area 6: David Kaplan

Area 2: Steve Cron

Area 7: Steve Boyers

Area 3: Haldis Toppel

Area 8: Reza Akef

Area 4: Rick Mills

At-large: Alan Goldsmith

Area 5: Sue Kohl

We had the second largest voter turnout in PPCC history, with 1034 total valid ballots. This is only 203 votes less than in the 2016 election, but still hundreds more than in the 2014 election, and many hundreds of votes more than scores of other Westside council that held elections in 2016 (except for Venice, Sunland Tujunga and Central San Pedro, all more populated than Pacific Palisades). We attribute the fewer votes cast this year to there being two contested offices (instead of four in 2016), and to the absence of the Palisades News (that would have provided election info and reporting to every home).

We commend all the candidates and thank the Palisades community for participating in this election.

With this report we are also distributing a Results data sheet, which includes the vote counts. A few words about the Committee's vote-counting process are in order: 3 of the 5 Committee members were present (Committee Chair David Card could not attend due to illness; Andy Frew could not attend due to a prior volunteer commitment at the opening of a Theatre Palisades show). In attendance were Bill Bruns, Richard Cohen, and Richard Blumenberg (a majority of Committee voting members). Non-voting attendees were PPCC Chair George Wolfberg, Committee advisor Chris Spitz, and technical advisor Heather Cohen. Each questionable ballot was inspected by every member of the Committee and discussed by the group. Every decision concerning each ballot was unanimous and decisions were based strictly on the Bylaws. After initial ballot qualification determinations were made, the entire group reviewed all decisions at least once (or more) again. The Bylaws were scrupulously followed and all decisions were entirely impartial and unanimous.

It is important to recognize that the disqualification of votes narrowed the margin of victory in all but one race, but ***did not change the outcome***. This result was fortuitous, but the Committee was fully prepared to follow the Bylaws to whatever outcome the rules dictate. The grounds for disqualification were duplication of votes (that is, a voter voting more than once), omission of required information such as full name or a valid address, and voting in the wrong Area.

Based on the experience of this election and having received several constructive suggestions for improvement, the Committee recommends for future board consideration the following possible bylaws changes or other actions:

- Conduct & Misconduct: Establish reasonable guidelines for the conduct of election campaigns by the candidates, and for dealing with misconduct.

- Online Voting:
 - Keeping online voting as the only voting method, eliminating a 3-hour in-person “help session” at the Library (no one came to ask for help). An individual voter may still request assistance voting online from a Committee member, if the voter’s friends and family can’t help.

 - Allow voters to decline to vote for Area Rep, but vote for At-Large Rep, and vice versa.

 - Strengthen voter education and instructions to put greater stress on the consequences of failure to follow those instructions, especially regarding double voting (disqualification of those double votes).

 - Shorten the online voting to 2 weeks (vs. 3) and start the voting 8 days after the Candidate Forum, to give media time to publish reports of the Forum.

- More Candidate Info for the Voter: Expand the Candidate Statements to 200-300 words, including a link to the candidate’s campaign website (if any). In addition, consider publishing separate written questions from the Committee and written answers from the candidates, to give the voters more focused answers to current issues. Encourage the continuation of a Candidate Forum, and allow a more free-flowing exchange with hand-raised questions from the audience, so long as civil and appropriate exchanges can be maintained.

Congratulations to the newly elected representatives!

PPCC ELECTION COMMITTEE: David Card, Chair; Bill Bruns; Richard Blumenberg; Richard Cohen; and Andrew Frew.

George Wolfberg, Chair of the PPCC Board, ex officio

Christina Spitz, 2016 Chair of the Election Committee, advisor