



# CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

## BOARD OF ELECTION COMMISSIONERS

51 Inman Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139-1732 • Telephone: 617-349-4361 • TTY: 617-492-0235  
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### COMMISSIONERS

Artis B. Spears  
Darleen G. Bonislawski  
Edhrige A. King, Jr.  
Polyxane S. Cobb

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Marsha Weinerman

## Minutes of the Board of Election Commissioners Meeting Wednesday, February 4, 2009

A regular meeting of the Cambridge Election Commission was held at the Election Commission Office on Wednesday, February 4, 2009. The meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m. Commissioners King, Spears, Bonislawski, and Cobb, the Executive Director, and Karen Francis, Commission staff were present.

I: Minutes - The minutes of the January 29, 2009 meeting was reviewed. Commissioner Bonislawski moved and Commissioner Spears seconded that they be accepted with edits. The motion passed 4-0.

### II: Reports

- 1: Executive Director Report - [see attached]
- 2: Commissioners Reports

a: Commissioner Bonislawski reported that on January 14, 2009 she, Commissioner Cobb, Executive Director Weinermann, Karen Francis, Susan Maycock of the Cambridge Historical Commission, and Mark Freed of the Cambridge Public Library met and inspected the contents of the Election Commission vault at the former police station. Also, present were Sgt. Frank Pasquarello of the Cambridge Police, and Manny Martins of the DPW. The contents of the vault were determined to be in good shape, and the building is heated. A recent pipe burst on an upper floor did not touch the vault contents, and reports of squirrels in the building were noted. The Election Commission will continue follow-up of the future placement of the vault materials at the Cambridge Public Library, and their current maintenance in the building. At the visit it was also learned that the City's Archives Committee, which the Election Commission used to participate in, has been reactivated. Commissioner Bonislawski contacted Kit Rawlins of the Cambridge Historical Committee after being told she was the person to contact for information about the Archives Committee. Commissioner Bonislawski learned from her that the Archives Committee consists of both the City of Cambridge, and private entities including the City Clerk, City Engineer, Cambridge Public Library, Cambridge Historical Commission, Harvard, MIT, Longy School of Music, Cambridge Historical Society, Mount Auburn Cemetery, and Radcliffe.

They have a sub-committee which will meet on March 3, 2009 at 3:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Historical Commission, and the next full committee meeting will meet on May 12, 2009, 3:00–5:00 p.m., at the Longfellow Carriage House.

- b: Commissioner Cobb reported that she also inspected the vault on January 14 and found it secure. She also reported that 270A Concord Avenue is a real address but that it appears to be a commercial site containing the studio of Nolan Watts, who offers Advanced Therapeutic Massage.

### III: Action Agenda - Old Business

- 1: The letter to Russ Malone, Chair of the Massachusetts City Clerk's Association was reviewed and some edits and changes made. Commissioner Cobb moved and Commissioner Spears seconded a motion to approve the letter which passed 4–0.

The Commission discussed reviewing its election procedures and the following points were made:

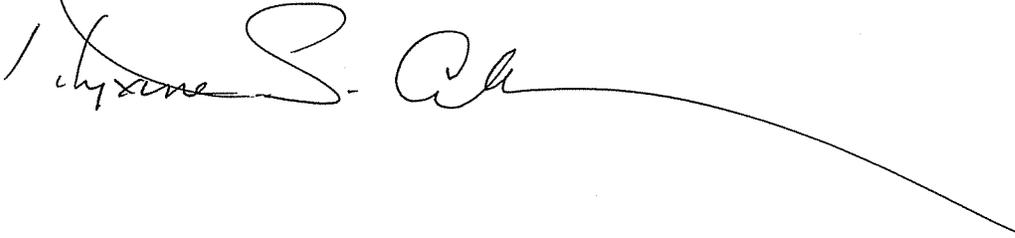
- a: Commissioner Bonislowski suggested that Executive Director Weinerman's suggestion that the Commission *share and compare best practices* with other cities is a good suggestion but she felt that the Secretary of State's office is the best resource.
- b: Commissioner King reiterated his suggestion from election night in November that ensuring that all precincts had a laptop with the complete voter lists would be helpful in making them more self-sufficient.
- c: Commissioner Cobb agreed that laptops would be useful but also wanted to conduct a full review of the 'envelope system' to find more efficient and effective ways to manage the precincts.
- d: Commissioner Spears asked if it would be easier to supply each precinct with a full voter list.
- e: Commissioner Cobb suggested that requiring a verbal check-off in precincts, and a more formal check off of pre-election procedures at the Commission, with each step being initiated and completed with the initials of the person assuming responsibility for that step might ensure that nothing slips through the cracks.
- f: Commissioner Bonislowski suggested the deadlines for each step be formalized.
- g: The Executive Directed agreed that each of these suggestions had merit and could be useful. She felt the process should be preceded by a review by people who conducted elections: the City Clerks and Commissioners from cities the approximate size of Cambridge. She agreed that the Secretary of State's office could be a useful resources but that she had emailed the Elections Office twice seeking their input and had received no response. She also plans to devote some time in the summer creating an Operations and Procedures Manual for the Commission.

h: Commissioner Cobb suggested that a small manual also be developed for precinct Wardens and Clerks to assist them in hand counting write-in ballots. Elections with few write-ins pose no difficulty, but when write-in campaigns are actively waged, as occurred in Ward 9 in the September 2008 Democratic Primary, the less formal system breaks down. She noted that there are few remaining people who actually participated in regular vote counting in the days before scanned ballots.

2: Vault Documents (see attached)

Commissioner Cobb moved and Commissioner King seconded a motion that the meeting adjourn. The motion passed 4-0 and the meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Attested by: Polyxane S. Cobb, *Secretary to the Board*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Polyxane S. Cobb", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.



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## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Marsha Weierman

### Minutes of the Board of Election Commissioners Meeting Wednesday, February 11, 2009

A regular meeting of the Cambridge Election Commission was held in the Sophie Anastos Room at City Hall on Wednesday, February 11, 2009. The meeting was called to order at 1:30 p.m. Commissioners King, Spears, Bonislowski, and Cobb, the Executive Director, Donald Drisdell, City Solicitor, Karen Francis, Commission staff, and Edward Sullivan, candidate for City Council were present.

#### I: Action Agenda - New Business

1: The single item on the Agenda was to set the date for the Vacancy Recount for the City Council seat left vacant by the resignation of Councillor Brian Murphy. Commissioner Cobb moved and Commissioner Spears seconded a motion that the Vacancy Recount be held on Tuesday, February 24, 2009 at 2:30 p.m. at the Commission Office. The motion passed 4-0.

a: The Executive Director will send notices to all candidates before the end of the day advising them of the recount and their rights to be present and to have witnesses present on their behalf.

2: A brief discussion was held concerning eligibility. One candidate, Jonathan Janik, has moved to Arlington and registered to vote there. The City Solicitor suggested that we contact Mr. Janik to ascertain his intent with regard to the Vacancy Recount. If so, the City Solicitor will research his eligibility under those circumstances.

Edward Sullivan wondered whether the Commission would confirm that all other candidates continued to live in Cambridge. A Commissioner asked if he had knowledge that one or more had moved from the city. He said he did not. The Executive Director noted that VRIS (Voter Registration Information System) voting records supported the fact that all candidates (other than Mr. Janik) continued to reside in Cambridge, but that any pertinent facts to the contrary could be evaluated prior to the recount on February 24, 2009.

Commissioner Cobb moved and Commissioner Spears seconded a motion that the meeting adjourn at 2:00 p.m.. The motion passed 4-0.

Attested by: Polyxane S. Cobb, *Secretary to the Board*