

Ballot Integrity Project
Minutes of 2/11/04 Meeting
(Draft 2/24/04)

[] Introductions

The meeting was called to order by Roy L. at 7:14 pm at Healing Earth Resources, 3111 N. Ashland, Chicago.

The following were present:

Steve C.
John G.
Don G.
Ron H.
Annette J.
Rochelle K.
Roy L.
Larry Q.
Gail S.
Julia T.

Julia agreed to act as recording secretary for the meeting.

[] Approval of Minutes.

The minutes of the January meeting were approved as published.

[] Old business.

[] Meeting with Peter Z, former hacker.

Roy reported he met with Peter Z on December 16. Peter said he could not describe how a particular voting machine could be hacked unless he saw the actual machine. But he said there are other ways to tamper with a machine: unplug it, cause a short circuit, zap it with static electricity. A programmer may also be able to reprogram it after linking it to a laptop. Or he might use a counterfeit smart card to cast multiple ballots.

Peter has written a book on election fraud in Chicago's 1st Ward. Its name is "It Happened Four Years Ago." It can be purchased at local bookstores, or downloaded free at <http://chinet.com/~pete>.

[] Task forces

[] Contact with public officials.

Larry reported that he has not heard back from either the Secretary of State's office nor the Lieutenant Governor about a meeting.

[] Voting as handled by other countries.

Larry reported on New Hampshire's extensive use of paper ballots (50% of counties) and their unusually high rate of recounts (about 25%).

He also described Canada's use of handcounts in federal elections. The ballot normally has about fourteen contests. He spoke with Canada's elections supervisor, who said Canada has no plans to replace these handcounts with voting machines.

Women for Peace meeting.

In December, Julia invited Larry, Steve, and Roy to speak to the North Shore Women for Peace.

The meeting took place on January 29. About thirty to forty persons attended. Guests included Harvey Grossman of the Chicago ACLU, Mike Kreloff of the Cook County Clerk's office, and a representative from the League of Women Voters. Also attending was Kevin McDermott, a county employee with extensive knowledge of the issue.

Annette, Julia, and the speakers concurred that the attendees were very involved and the afternoon was very engaging.

There has not yet been followup between the speakers and any of the guests.

Vision Statement.

A draft of a vision statement by Larry, and one by Roy, were critiqued.

The group proposed that Larry and Roy confer and attempt to produce a mutually agreeable single statement on how votes should be counted.

Requests received for materials.

Requests for study materials have been received from Sharona M and Barbara R.

Sharona is an activist who has been networking with national politicians, New Hampshire state officials, and the Democratic presidential campaign workers about voting machine issues. She has requested materials to distribute at a conference to be held on February 28 in Boston.

Barbara is a member of Lincoln Park Neighbors United For Peace. Her group will be sponsoring a "new voting technology" afternoon here in Chicago on April 20. She is requesting basic information to hand out about the issues, and may invite our group to send a speaker. (A detailed report was attached to the January agenda.)

The group agreed to assemble materials for both events. Roy agreed to manage this effort.

New business

Populex.

Populex is a voting-machine manufacturer base in suburban Chicago. Their machine produces a paper ballot with a machine-readable barcode. Frank Carlucci, who is a friend and supporter of Vice President Richard Cheney, is part owner of Populex.

Our "battle plan".

The challenge

Timeline of purchase decisions for voting machines?

We discussed the need to develop a calendar of deadlines for action, based on the purchasing deliberations and milestones of Cook County and other jurisdictions.

[] Education/outreach

[] Organizations.

Steve recommended comissioning a "Speakers Bureau." He suggested speaking at churches, synagogues, and mosques.

It was suggested that we should also present information to computer science and political science departments at local universities.

Annette suggested that it would be valuable for our group to have handouts ready at such events.

[] Handouts

Steve says we should aim at collecting "memes," mindblowing facts and ideas that grip the hearers and change their perceptions. An example was the fable he composed about a bank that did not give paper receipts for deposits. This is an apt allegory for paperless voting machines.

[] Media.

Steve recommended a campaign of sending Letters to the Editor.

[] Website.

Roy suggested that it's time for our group to have its own domain name and website.

The group chose "ballotintegrity.org" as the domain name. Steve and Larry chipped in a total of \$11 to register the name.

Roy hopes to have a website operational by Friday, February 27. This would provide a place to post materials for Sharona, Barbara, and the general public.

Steve suggested posting a list of worthwhile websites, like <http://epic.org>, <http://verifiedvoting.org>, and <http://www.crisispapers.org>.

He also urged that our website publish original material of our own. He asked, "What can we do that no one else is doing?"

He and Larry suggested three documents we could create:

1. A U.S. map showing the location of computerized voting machine malfunctions.
2. A U.S. map showing counties using the various makes of computerized voting machine.
3. A U.S. map showing the percentage deviation of election results from exit poll results.

<http://www.electionline.org> has data relevant to the above, including what counties nationwide have bought or will buy which equipment, and who owns the voting machine companies.

[] Outside support.

It was recommended that we consider joining with groups like WellstoneAction.org.

Please rephrase if this is not correct!

Rochelle notified us that True Majority has taken up the cause, and she urges us to ally ourselves with them. She passed out copies of an email announcing the launching of their campaign.

[] Announcements

Steve announced that Rush Holt's bill H.R. 2239 now has 118 sponsors, including Republicans. More info can be found at <http://thomas.gov>.

It was also announced that the Fairfax County Republican has published a document called "Operation Ballot Integrity."

FairElections.org, associated with Martin Sheen, was recommended.

Roy announced that he has been invited to speak at his computer club this month. He has not yet organized his presentation, but he will invite others in our group to participate if the content will not be purely technical.

The next meeting will convene at 7:00 pm on March 10, 2004, at The Healing Earth Resource Center.

[] Adjournment.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:03 pm.