

The Illinois Ballot Integrity Project

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Minutes of the June 8, 2005, Meeting  
Compiled by Roy L.

Larry called the meeting to order at 7:05.

Present

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Caroline G.  
Roy L.  
Kevin M.  
Sharon P.  
Larry Q.  
Neal R.  
Clare T.

Reports

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1. Caroline announced that Rainbow/PUSH will have a conference this weekend on election reform. Scheduled to speak are Rev. Jesse Jackson, Maude Horn, Acorn; Howard Dean, Barak Obama, Rep. Conyers, Rep. Stephanie Tubbs-Jones, Rep. Maxine Waters, Rep. Jesse Jackson, Jr, Barbara Arnwine, David Mack, Jon Bonifaz, Panda Hailes, Bob Fitrakis, and other activists working for election reform.

2. Neal reported that Ron Baiman was well received at the conference of the National Association of Public Opinion Researchers. Ron reported on statistical anomalies in the 2004 election, and assailed the explanation tendered by the Mitofsky-Edison polling organization.

NAPOR waived his registration fee (\$500), and gave him the honor of asking the first question after Mitofsky's presentation. Ron was also invited to serve on a panel for next year's NAPOR conference.

The technical paper he presented can be found at <http://uscountvotes.org/> .

3. Caroline reported that a workshop on "How to Win At Politics" was held by David Wilhelm, Jan Schakowsky, and Peter Giangreco. The workshop provided strategies for "Winning in Future Campaigns" and "Keys to Effective Messaging." Past presidential campaigns were reviewed and it was clear that the winning candidates succeeded at projecting a clean and concise message.

4. Larry reported that he is pressing Kane County to have each polling place publish its vote totals on site. This can serve as a check on the combined vote tabulations for the County.

5. Neal reported that a video of the April 9 forum on November 2004 election fraud had been aired twice on Community TV, and that there are plans to air it again. The date has not yet been decided.

The forum was sponsored by Andersonville Neighbors for Peace, and featured panelists Ron Baiman, Dr. Lora Chamberlain, and Neal R. More information on this event is contained in our April 2005 minutes.

6. Kevin reported on Illinois House Bill 1968, which is aimed at updating the Illinois Election Code. The bill was passed recently by the legislature, and is now awaiting the Governor's signature.

For whatever reason, the bill specifically regulates only touch-screen ("DRE," or "Direct Recording Electronic") machines.

Optiscan and other voting equipment are not affected by this bill.

\* The bill originally included a requirement that DRE machines must use only open-source software. But this requirement was absent from the final bill. Nonetheless, nothing theoretically prevents the City and County from requiring such a clause in contracts.

\* The final bill does provide that the materials, scripts, and procedures used in testing and certifying any DRE machines adopted in the state be made publicly available. This includes the materials of the Independent Testing Authorities (ITA) that provide federal certification.

It's not clear whether failure to provide those materials would result in automatic decertification of the machines.

\* The bill requires a voter-verified paper audit trail (VVPAT).

\* The bill also requires a recount of 5% of all polling places in each county. This "recount" may be performed by scanning a barcode printed on each VVPAT from the DRE. (Question: Does it forbid a handcount?)

The bill can be viewed online at <http://il.gov>. (The main body of the bill is about a paragraph long. All the details are in amendment 1.)

[ Join the two halves of the following URL to locate the text of the bill:

<http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/fulltext.asp?DocName=&SessionId=50&GA=94&DocTypeId=HB&DocNum=1968&GAID=8&LegID=16879&SpecSess=&Session=> ]

7. Kevin reported that it's all but settled that Cook County and Chicago will be adopting Sequoia DRE and Sequoia optical scan machines for 2006. One DRE and two optiscan machines will be purchased per polling place.

The second optiscan is for backup; the DRE is expected to be little used, and so unlikely to need backup.

The Cook County Finance Committee (consisting of the Cook County Board itself) will meet to discuss the contract on Tuesday, June 14, and will vote on the contract on Tuesday, June 21. All indications are that the contract will be approved. Details of the contract are not presently available, and it is not known if they will be made available for public comments before it is voted upon.

Kevin says the proposal of the Open Voting Consortium is intriguing. But they don't have a deliverable product yet, and election officials are feeling time pressure to choose equipment now.

8. Roy proposed a strategy for counting ballots. After confirming the need for paper ballots and handcounting, the strategy further specifies that the cast ballots be published. Roy suggests that this is the ultimate in ballot-counting transparency.

The problems with using computers can be resolved if computers aren't entrusted with performing the final vote count. Their work must be checked from start to finish. What needs to be fully verified is not only the ballot, but also the ballot counting. Current strategies are insufficient to fully secure the ballot counting, because they rely on statistical "guestimates."

Roy describes the strategy at <http://e-grapevine.org/citizensaudit.htm> and he requests that people do their best to "tear it apart" by coming up with all conceivable objections. This will help him refine the idea.

During discussion, suggestions were offered for gaining a wider audience:

- \* Print and distribute copies of the paper at forums and conferences.
- \* Write an article for The Reader.
- \* Distribute the paper more widely on the Internet.
- \* Offer to sit on election-reform panels.
- \* Present a lecture to civic and church groups (Women for Democracy, Universalist Unitarian in Lake View and Hyde Park, Third Unitarian in Austin, etc).

#### Announcements

Kevin announced that the Oak Park Peace and Justice Committee will be sponsoring a Peace Fair on September 10 in Oak Park. Groups that wish to set up a table can do so for a \$25 donation. The Peace Fair will be held at Scoville Park, at Oak Park Avenue and Lake Street.

#### Action items

#### Volunteer

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| 1. Update our room reservations at Healing Earth Resources, and get on their calendar.  | Larry |
| 2. Pass out flyers at Rainbow/PUSH conference this weekend, to promote our group.   | Neal  |
| 3. Contact friendly Cook County Commissioners about the upcoming City/County voting-machine contract.<br><br>Ask if the contract will be available beforehand for public comment. | ?     |
| 4. Solicit legal assistance from--<br><br>Members of our group<br>National Lawyers Guild<br>NAACP<br>Rainbow/PUSH<br>Others   | ?     |
| 5. Find out if the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) can be of assistance in obtaining voting-machine source code.  | ?     |

The meeting was adjourned at 9:01 pm.