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COMMITTEE**

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Member

RON SHILLINGLAW
Member

VACANT
Member



SUZETTE MACHADO
Elections Program Coordinator

PATRICIA SAMANIEGO
Clerk

**VOTING ACCESSIBILITY
ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

GOVERNMENT PLAZA
5951 S. Mooney Boulevard
Visalia, CA 93277
(559) 624-7300

MINUTES

Present: Members Donabed, T. Shillinglaw, R. Shillinglaw, and Esquibel
Staff Present: Suzette Machado and Patricia Samaniego

May 25, 2023

10:00 a.m.

**Registrar of Voters Office, Conference Room
5951 South Mooney Boulevard
Visalia, CA 93277**

**NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC
PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

At this time, members of the public may comment on any item not appearing on the agenda. Under state law, matters presented under this item cannot be discussed or acted upon by the Committee at this time. For items appearing on the agenda, the public is invited to make comments at the time the item comes up for Committee consideration. Any person addressing the Committee will be limited to a maximum of three (3) minutes so that all interested parties have an opportunity to speak with a total of fifteen (15) minutes allotted for the Public Comment Period. At all times, state your name and address for the record.

1. Approve March 23rd, 2023 Minutes.

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m.
Donabed – Shillinglaw, 4-0 Approved March 2023 Minutes.
Resolution No. 2023-006.

2. Public Comments.

Public comment was given by Chairman Donabed and Member Esquibel informed the committee and staff that the Tulare County Transit Center may (possibly) provide free rides on Election Day.

Public comment was given by Staff. Staff gave formal introductions to committee members who have yet to meet.

3. Brown Act Rules and Adherence as an advisory committee.

Staff recalled in the last meeting the committee's desire to emulate Kings County's LAAC/VAAC meetings online. Staff reached out to one of the staff members in Kings County

there and was told that Kings County LAAC and VAAC act solely as advisory committees and not as a legislative body, so they have more leeway. Staff contacted the Registrar of Voter's County Counsel Matthew Pierce. Staff provided members of the committee with copies of the Tulare County Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee Bylaws and read aloud the correspondence to the committee. The email that Staff sent asked for clarification and interpretation regarding the committee's adherence to the Brown Act since the Tulare County VAAC's Bylaws reference the Brown Act frequently. The email included an attachment of the Tulare County Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee Bylaws. Matthew said the advisory committee isn't exposed to any litigation threats and cannot hold closed sessions. He advised that the office remove the "Closed Sessions" portion from the VAAC Bylaws. That section of the Bylaws referenced the Brown Act the most. Staff said they will further talk about that portion of the Bylaws with the Registrar. At an earlier staff meeting, an update was given to the Registrar following the correspondence that was received by Matthew. Staff were given the ok to investigate the matter at hand a little further. Chairman Donabed asked if the committee was allowed to hold online meetings, and how the internet connection would hold up. Staff reassured Chairman Donabed that the Wi-Fi is more than stable to hold online meetings for the committee, were that to happen before the office relocates to the new location on Akers. Soon, there will have to be an update to the Bylaws, for the "Time and Day of Regular Meeting" portion to reflect the new building's address. At that time, the "Closed Sessions" portion written in the current Bylaws may be removed or amended with respect to the Registrar's directive. Member Shillinglaw asked if the Bylaws can be revised with suggestions from the committee members. Staff said that the suggestions will need approval from the Registrar and Board of Supervisors.

4. Poll sites surveyed and poll sites to be surveyed.

For Prosperity Sports Park Suzette double-checked and there is a bus stop nearby. Chairman Donabed asked what time the building opens, Suzette said the building opens at 9 am. Member Esquibel said that the first bus stop rides at 7 am. Chairman Donabed asked staff to send an email and call committee members a couple of days before the survey is done to join the Administration unit in their survey. She also asked about the homeless encampments surrounding the poll site. Suzette said that the park bathrooms are kept locked and that she tries to staff primarily men at that poll site since most of the women don't feel too comfortable. The Tulare Police know the park is used as a poll site for elections and drive by to ensure everything is well. The poll site is in a nice area but noted that there aren't many buildings nearby that are large enough to act as a poll site. For now, would like to keep Prosperity Sports Park because it is a large space. Member Shillinglaw brought up the Tulare Senior Center as a possible poll site, but Suzette has said that the center doesn't want to give up its space for one day because they need it for their day-to-day operations. Chairman Donabed asked about the Portuguese Hall, but Suzette said that they charge quite a bit to use their space as a poll site. The parking lot is not paved, it's a lot of rocks and if it were to be used as a poll site, staff would need to make sure the car park is ADA compliant. Donabed asked about using the Tulare Fairgrounds, and it has been a few years since the office has asked to use the Fairgrounds as a poll site and Suzette doesn't believe it has been used as a poll site before. The Fairgrounds is now allowing the public to park their cars on the grass and a few other changes have been made so that the office can contact them once more. Suzette would like to find a place on the other side of the railroad because that train is notorious for clearing slowly.

A. Larry Itliong Resource Center

The center is a small building made of adobe, and it used to be the firehouse. As a historical building, structurally, not much can be done. The center has granted the Registrar of Voter's Office permission to use the building as a poll site for the upcoming election. The Poplar area, it's an adequate size for the population to use as a poll site. They have over two hundred and fifty voters and have been granted a poll site, Previously,

Pleasant View School since there were two campuses, people would end up at the wrong site and it became tricky. The car park in front of the center is flat cement that is unlabeled. Modifications for parking will be made, the office will furnish the poll site with portable ISA signage, "Voter Accessible Parking" The entrance that will be the main entrance to the site, is the door nearest the accessible parking on the right-hand side of the building. The threshold is a little excessive, so the office will furnish a small ramp for the main entrance. The slope and the level were fine. The weight of the push-side door was fine, the height was all right. May have to place warnings because of uneven sidewalks. The main area's slope was carpeted and leveled. The voters will enter a doorway past the kitchen to go vote in the computer room that is furnished with cubicle-like desks. There is space and privacy for people to do their voting. The doorway that leads into the kitchen is not wide enough for wheelchairs to pass through. An accessible privacy booth will have to be placed in the main area. A booth in the main area will be placed near the Ballot Marking Device for voters who use a wheelchair to be able to vote. Voters that don't use a chair, but need a cane or another mobility aide can make it past the doorway. The blue booth is to make sure nobody is behind the voter so that they can vote privately. There is a larger table in the center of the room that houses the cubicles; it will be taken out of the room on Election Day so people can walk in and around with ease. Member Shillinglaw asked who owns the building. Staff said that the non-profit, "Central Valley Empowerment Alliance" organization runs the Larry Itliong Resource Center. On the Accessibility Kits, a section details Bus Stop Accessibility. Staff looked on Google Maps and Google Earth and couldn't find where the Bus Stop was located. Member Esquibel said the bus stop would be grouped with the Porterville folks in Tulare County Area Transit. The contact for the TCAT is named Albert Barragan.

B. Strathmore Memorial

The original date for the survey had to be moved due to flooding issues. Strathmore has also increased the number of voters. All three elections were done at the memorial building. The situation of the building is that the main entrance is the widest slab of the sidewalk. There is a car park on the left and a car park on the right. Suzette noted that the flattest area of the parking lot was on the left-hand side of the memorial building. The pavement itself is rough. The entrance has a ramp but does not meet the current guidelines for the slope and the width. Chairman Donabed said that the ramp should be up to current guidelines as a federal memorial building it doesn't make sense. Suzette suggested an alternate path that folks could use instead of the ramp; on the survey, she noted that in the parking area, there is a sidewalk that leads to the side of the building where another entrance is. The entrance is gated and would need to be unlocked and made sure it was available. On Election Day, staff will confirm that the side entrance will be available. The voters will enter through the main entrance and check-in, in the lobby, then head into the voting area. The side entrance leads straight into the voting area. Folks who will use the side entrance instead of the main entrance will need to be checked in properly before heading into the voting area. Aside from the ramp not meeting current standards, the slope in the voting area is level is fine, and the sidewalk is fine. The parking lot on the right side should not be used as it is not in good condition, so the left side of the parking lot will be for voter use. Chairman Donabed raised concern that people will use the right side of the building to park their cars, Suzette said that she would send some cones to the building to block off that side of the parking lot. Donabed asked if there were any alternative buildings that were available for use besides the memorial building, to which Suzette said that the Memorial building is open for public use nearly every day of the week and the bathrooms are available to use. The people that maintain the building are aware of the parking situation and they know the limitations of the building. Since the building has been established in the neighborhood as a poll site, the public walks over the side into the building. Suzette listed off the various measurements of the ramp to the committee. Chairman Donabed said that her wheelchair is on the smaller side and wasn't sure that hers would fit the measurements of the ramp. Member Esquibel said that this building has had this as an ongoing issue for a long time, relating back to the city council and they have been trying to widen the ramp for years. Suzette said she would talk to the person that opens the building and make sure that the side entrance is available for use.

She will also make a note for the Inspector of that polling place that the side entrance is wheelchair accessible. An ISA parking sign, a mat, some cones, and doorstops will be sent to the polling site.

C. Lindsay Memorial

This building has a nice parking area, a generous amount of accessible parking, and no issues with the ramp. The only difference is that the front doors are hard to open and need to be propped open on Election Day. Bus stop availability will now be included in the polling place surveys from here on out.

5. Review old and New Accessibility kits.

Staff provided the 2018 version of the accessibility kits and the revised version from 2021 that shows the data that the Administration Unit records when they perform poll site surveys to determine whether the poll site is considered ADA-compliant as a polling place.

6. Adjournment to July 27, 2023 meeting.

Adjourned at 11:09 a.m.