

**Village of Martin's Additions
Council Meeting – Special Session
7013 B Brookville Road, Chevy Chase, MD 20815
March 30, 2015**

Council members in Attendance – Arthur Alexander, Jon Fleming, Tiffany Cissna, Bill Lebovich, Josh Bowers; **Attorney** –None; **Assistant Manager** Beth Catherwood.

Residents in Attendance – William Davis, Elissa Bean, Sally Maran, Frank Correl, Hanne Correl, Natalie Welle, Lynn Welle, Chris Kohl, Michelle Levine, Pam Sacks, Maria Woodson.

7:30 PM CALL TO ORDER: ALEXANDER

TOPIC: APPOINTMENT OF ELECTIONS AND ETHICS COMMITTEE MEMBER

Residents' Concerns and Contributions

Chris Kohl (Shepherd St) – Inquired about criteria for selecting an Elections and Ethics committee member, since no interviews were done and public notice only made one business day prior.

Reply and Discussion: Chairman Alexander stated resident status and willingness to put in time and effort were only criteria. Councilmember Lebovich urged investigating the candidates due to excess offers to serve over the number of positions available,(eight applications for one position). Councilmember Alexander expressed his intention to introduce a motion at the next regular meeting making the Code consistent with the Charter, saying “at least three” members can be appointed to the committee. Lebovich proposed introducing such changes now. Alexander returned to soliciting comments from those in attendance.

Sally Maran (Turner Ln) – Verified there had been four members of the committee, reduced to three by the Council, then one member resigned. Questioned why 4th member was not brought back in.

Reply: Councilmember Alexander stated he had “never applied.”

Frank Correl (Turner Ln) – Referenced an email sent to Council Chairman from Committee Chairman Ted Stoddard and himself, regarding the other member of the Election & Ethics Committee. Correl reinforced the amount of time needed for a position on the Committee and the unique characteristics of the work, which might suggest the Council would benefit from contacting the two long-standing members before deciding on the third, which had apparently occurred without consult. Decisions about this position made in private go against the heart of the “openness” of democratic processes which are represented by the Elections and Ethics committee.

Reply and Discussion: Alexander remembered past decisions being made without consultation of the Committee, thus this decision followed suit. This time alerting the public of the position “opened things up.” After further discussion Correl said he and Stoddard could proceed with the work of the Election & Ethics Committee in the meantime with the help of volunteers while the process of determining the 3rd member continued.

Lebovich suggested a forum where candidates presented themselves before a decision was made, providing the desired transparency. Councilmember Bowers suggested written statements instead of an open forum. Councilmember Cissna suggested the planned appointment be made tonight and any additional applicants could serve as volunteers. Correl re-emphasized lack of consult with the current Election & Ethics Committee members and objected to emails which suggested that the two current members of the Election & Ethics Committee did not have sense enough to conduct business or make ethical decisions. He stated that he resented the suggestion of flaws in his character and ability to make difficult, honorable decisions.

Maran asked if council felt they knew candidates sufficiently to make a decision. All responded "no."

Hanne Correl (Turner Lane) asked manner of Council's decision for the planned appointment, considering an agenda clearly stating "appointment", not "consideration" or other discussion and referenced emails which indicated prior decision being made. Councilmember Alexander stated the Council had not made a decision yet. Decision making could proceed as soon as Residents Comments ended.

Maria Woodson (Turner Ln) – confused with the community listserv activity, inappropriate comments made by council members, lack of control by council members. Feels very uncomfortable, and she questioned what the goal of the Council was, if this community feeling was the Council's goal. Councilmember Fleming strongly agreed things had gotten out of control. Perception was that Village Manager's job was completely up for grabs, possibly due to confusion with election process. Fleming said the Council, "Let things slip and didn't stay in control."

Lynn Welle (Oxford St) – took issue with use of listserv for official notices.

Reply: Council stated Village is in the process of working with Constant Contact to set up official email notices. Chris Kohl voiced her support of a non-listserv communication method, also of giving sufficient lead time to residents on issues.

Motion made by Lebovich to postpone the vote for two weeks to allow time for investigation of candidates and size of the Elections and Ethics committee. Seconded by Fleming.

Discussion: Cissna stated best approach was to "vote and move on" even if one does not know the candidates, as set by precedent. Opposes change in number due to increased interest. Alexander stated precedent was such because they "never gave it any thought."

Motion restated by Alexander: to shift the appointment of an election committee member, giving time to consider input from election committee, and to introduce an amendment to the Village Code to increase the number of people on the committee for future elections.

Motion: Lebovich; 2nd: Fleming

Vote: 4-1 (For: Alexander, Fleming, Lebovich, Bowers) (Against: Cissna)

Further Discussion: Kohl supports a more open process, giving Residents more time to respond if interested. Noted no deadline was given in email to listserv. Alexander said there was no closing to the nominations given because there was none.

Fleming mentioned Council has been overwhelmed by the response to what use to be considered, said Cissna, "a death sentence."

Michelle Levine (Turner Ln) – Thanked Council for its work and reminded members of fragile trust they hold in hands.

8:00 PM Adjournment

The Council will vote to enter closed session, pursuant to Maryland Code, General Provisions Article, Section 3-305(b)(1) to discuss the employment, assignment, compensation, and performance evaluation of the Village Manager, an employee over whom it has jurisdiction.

A record of this Vote Needs to be included. (Motion, 2nd, vote) It is not on the recording.