

Two Amendments Proposed for City Charter

The Minneapolis Charter Commission is submitting two proposed charter amendments to the ballot in November: the first addresses municipal filing fees and the second aims at leveling liquor licensing regulations.

Municipal Filing Fees

A proposal to increase municipal filing fees ping-ponged between the Charter Commission and the City Council several times during the past 15 months, ending in a failed proposal which failed to secure a unanimous vote of the City Council at its meeting on June 13. Now, the Charter Commission will submit the question of changing municipal filing fees to voters as a ballot question in November.

The current \$20 filing fee was set by state statute in 1967, and has not been modified since that time. Charter cities, like Minneapolis, can change filing fees through charter amendments. Three separate proposals to reset municipal filing fees have been submitted by the Charter Commission over the past year; none were successful at being adopted.

The final proposal that was approved by the Charter Commission—and which will appear on November’s general ballot—proposes to set the filing fees for local offices as follows:

For Mayor — \$500;
For Council Member — \$250;
For Board of Estimate & Taxation Member — \$100;
and
Park & Recreation Commissioner — to \$100.

Of course, state law gives candidates the option to file via petition rather than pay a fee. The statute requires a candidate to gather the lesser of 500 signatures of registered voters or the signatures of 5 percent of the total votes cast in the last election for that particular office.

If the increased fees recommended by the Charter Commission are adopted by voters, they would become effective at the next regularly scheduled municipal election in 2017.

If the ballot question is approved by 55 percent of those voting in the affirmative, the existing 70:30 licensing regulations would be eliminated from the city charter. The companion licensing regulations related to alcohol would be handled by ordinance under the city’s general governing powers provided by state law.

70:30 Liquor Licensing Regulations

In 1996, voters approved a charter amendment authorizing liquor licenses to be issued to restaurants in smaller commercial areas outside the city’s downtown zone as long as at least 70 percent of their gross receipts came from the sale of food. Customers could only be served alcohol in those restaurants if they also ordered a meal. The intent was to prevent restaurants which sold beer and wine from becoming problem areas for neighborhoods and residents.

Today, a growing number of restaurants, largely located in south and southwest Minneapolis, fall under this food-to-alcohol formula, sometimes referred to as “70:30” regulations.

Continued on page 2

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- | | |
|-----|--------------------------------|
| 1-2 | Amendments on Ballot Page |
| 2 | Calendar of Events |
| 3 | Absentee Voting |
| 4 | Voter Outreach Update |
| 5 | Polling Place Update |
| 6 | Election Judge Training Update |
| 7 | Election Judge Recruitment |

CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2014

June - July

Training Classes for Primary

August 12

Primary Election

August - October

Training classes for General

November 4

General Election

OFFICES ON THE 2014 BALLOT

United States Senator

United State Representative

Governor and Lt. Governor

Secretary of State

State Auditor

Attorney General

State Representative

County Commissioner

County Attorney

Sheriff

Minneapolis School Board Directors

Supreme Court Justice

Court of Appeals Judge

District Court Judge

Continued from page 1

Under a separate 60:40 mathematical formula, set by ordinance, the City licenses restaurants to serve beer and wine for properties located in larger commercial nodes that are at least seven acres in size.

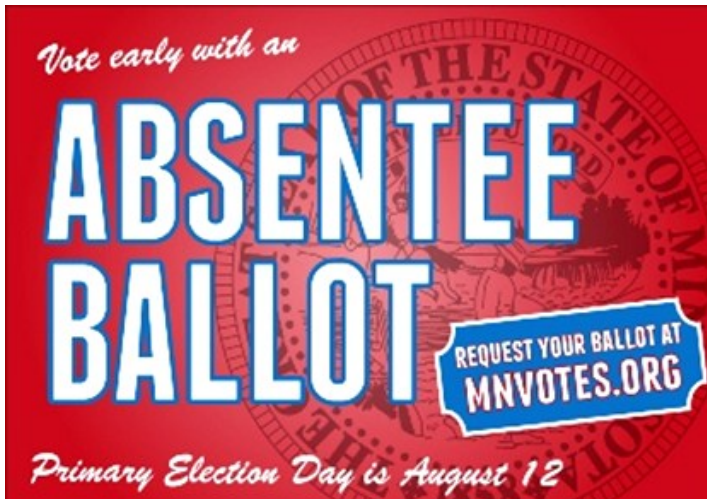
As a consequence, there are two sets of regulations that apply differently, based primarily on location within the city. The City of Minneapolis is interested in updating and modernizing its liquor licensing regulations to align with changes in the economy of scale between costs for prepared food and beverage alcohol.

Work on updating the existing 60:40 license provisions is already underway; however, changes to the city charter which affect 70:30 licensing regulations, under state law, must be submitted to voters to be changed.

The companion amendments—one by ordinance, the other by charter amendment (ballot question)—are being proposed to replace the existing food-to-alcohol sales requirements and feature new policy definitions for restaurants and bar areas so that establishments have a level playing field, whether located in commercial or residential areas.

The proposed amendments also include new management responsibilities for restaurant operators which require monitoring of sound and customer behaviors in and near their businesses. Finally, the proposed amendments give the City Council greater flexibility in issuing licenses, including the ability to restrict hours of operation for outdoor alcohol service areas and limits on the levels of license entertainment that can be provided.

If the ballot question is approved by 55 percent of those voting in the affirmative, the existing 70:30 licensing regulations would be eliminated from the city charter. The companion licensing regulations related to alcohol would be handled by ordinance under the city's general governing powers provided by state law.



“No Excuse” for Absentee Voting

This year, Minnesota becomes the 27th state to offer its voters no-excuse absentee voting. The new “no excuse” law, which was approved overwhelmingly during last year’s legislative session, allows voters to request absentee ballots—or to vote absentee in-person—regardless of whether they can get to their polling places on Election Day.

Before the new law became effective, Minnesotans voting absentee had to attest that they would be physically unable to get to their polling places, citing one of only a handful of specific reasons identified in state statute, including illness or travel. The new policy that eliminates the need for a valid excuse means that voters can take advantage of this reform no matter what their reason might be.

Minnesota’s new absentee voting law, combined with new and improved on-line tools that let voters register and check the status of their absentee ballots, reflects a growing nationwide movement to improve access to the ballot box and make voting even easier. Minnesota also joined about two dozen other states that now have laws allowing on-line voter registration, another reform that benefits voters.

The combination of voting reforms that have been approved in the past few years means that voters can now register, request an absentee ballot, receive it, and cast their absentee ballot without ever going farther than their mailbox.

Absentee voting for the 2014 primary opened on Friday, June 27. On that first day, the City served more than 400 in-person absentee voters—setting a new record! And the pace of in-person absentee voting at City Hall continues, though significantly reduced.

When combined with the total number of mailed absentee ballots that have already been returned to the Elections Office, Minneapolis has served more than 1,042 voters to-date during the 46-day absentee period. Thanks to Dani, Cathy, Lucy, and the rest of the crew, we’ve managed to stay ahead of the demand — but it has been challenging. Given the strong turnout already experienced at City Hall, we anticipate this year’s absentee voting may crash all previous years’ records.



City Clerk— Casey Carl and Elections Director—Grace Wachlarowicz on the first day of Absentee Voting.

GET OUT THE VOTE!

Voter Outreach Update

As part of the 2014 election season, the City of Minneapolis will be engaging in a robust Voter Outreach and Education effort that builds on the VOE plan first developed in 2013. The primary goal of these efforts is ensuring that all Minneapolis residents know about upcoming elections and have the information they need to participate.

A comprehensive communications strategy forms a critical base for this work, ensuring consistent messaging is being delivered through multiple channels. This messaging includes a focus on the three basic steps all voters need to follow to cast a ballot, including: 1) Get registered; 2) Get informed; and 3) Go vote. More broadly, these communications also focus on the importance of participating in elections as part of being engaged in the community, a message driven home by the tag-line "Your City. Your Vote."

This includes voting as well as other activities that can be both informal and formal, like sharing election-related information with friends and family and serving as an election judge in a polling place.

The Elections website, vote.minneapolismn.gov, is a key tool for communicating election-related information. With up to date content focused on voters, candidates, volunteers, students, and others, the site makes it easy for visitors to quickly find the information most important to them. The site also features a full array of online tools focused on making voting easier, including tools to register to vote, check your voter registration status, apply for an absentee ballot, check the status of your absentee ballot, find your polling place, and download your sample ballot.

All informational handouts and materials produced by the Elections & Voter Services Division as well as several items from the Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State are linked to the site for quick access and easy downloading and as needed printing.

We are seeking to partner with a variety of community organizations to expand the reach of this messaging throughout the city. This also enhances the capacity of these organizations to support the engagement of their stakeholders and participants in the electoral process by providing neutral, clearly non-partisan information and tools to educate, inform, and engage potential voters.

In addition to full access to our print and electronic materials, we provide a train-the-trainer curriculum to organizational staff and volunteers to equip them to share key election-related information with others. New in 2014, we are also piloting a voter pledge card that organizations can use to engage voters and then also implement reminders to voters using our technology by email, text, or phone.

We are committed to the vision of ensuring every eligible Minneapolis voter has the opportunity and ability to participate in elections, and building new pathways to bring that vision into reality.

Eight New Precincts (and some Polling Place moves, too!)

As part of Minneapolis Elections' ongoing effort to help improve the voter experience, especially in reducing the time waiting in lines at the polls, eight precincts have been added in Minneapolis, effective with the August, 12, 2014 primary election. We worked closely with the affected City Council Ward offices, along with many neighborhood organizations, on determining new precinct lines and new polling locations.

Our team is grateful for the participation of all who contributed in this process. The new precincts have been added where we've seen greater density in recent years (downtown and the North Loop), in areas that have been serving very high numbers of voters, and finally in a couple spots where we've had some challenges in terms of voter flow (with reduced numbers of voters, these sites should be easier to manage in busy elections). Many judges and voters will recognize a couple of the "new" precincts and polls as a return to previously used boundaries and polling sites.

And, due to construction, **for 2014 only...** 2-5 from Pratt School to Prospect Park United Methodist Church, 22 Orlin Ave SE
We believe these changes will be Improvements for both the voters and our poll workers in the 2014 elections and beyond. We'll continue to look at our needs, analyze the sites we use, and seek new potential sites. As always, we welcome your feedback from the frontlines, especially in these new polling places.

New precincts include:

- ◆ 1-10 – voting at Columbia Manor/Golf Club, 3300 Central Ave NE
- ◆ 3-10 – voting at National Guard Armory, 1025 Broadway St NE
- ◆ 3-11 – voting at 514 Studios, 514 3rd St N
- ◆ 3-12 – voting at Minneapolis Central Library, 300 Nicollet Mall
- ◆ 5-9 – voting at Harrison Park Recreation Center, 503 Irving Ave N
- ◆ 12-11 – voting at Trinity Lutheran Church of Minnehaha Falls, 5212 41st Ave S
- ◆ 12-12 – voting at Roosevelt High School (Gym), 4029 28th Ave S
- ◆ 13-10 – voting at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 4557 Colfax Ave S

We've also relocated some polling places:

- ◆ 3-7 – from Standard Heating and Air to Soltvå Apartments, 701 2nd St N
- ◆ 7-5 – from Emerson School to St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral, 519 Oak Grove St
- ◆ 11-7 – from Mt. Zion Church to Urban Refuge Church, 5501 Chicago Ave
- ◆ 12-4 – from Hiawatha School to Hiawatha School Park Recreation Center, 4305 42nd St E

Any questions, concerns, or general feedback related to these new precincts and polling places can be sent to Tim Schwarz at:
tim.schwarz@minneapolismn.gov
or at 612-673-3136.

Training Updates

Election judge training season is officially underway! Thus far we have successfully completed over twenty training classes, but still have many left to go. If you have completed your training for 2014, congratulations! If not, we look forward to seeing you soon!

Training has been exciting, and feedback and questions from class have been rich and plentiful. As a result of this feedback we have been able to make improvements to the course and course materials to ensure that our election judges have the best training experience possible. Above all we want our election judges to be prepared to serve on election day.

As part of ensuring that our judges are prepared for election day, we have focused on providing a variety of training materials online. Currently available online are the training lecture slides, several polling place reference sheets, and a set of tools produced by the Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State that include: the 2014 Election Judge Guide, a workbook, and a set of videos.

Additionally, a Frequently Asked Questions section will be posted soon to respond to some of the questions raised in training. It is highly recommended that election judges utilize these resources in preparation for election day. Online election judge training materials can be found by going to: vote.minneapolismn.gov, hovering the mouse over “Election Judges” (near the top of the page), and clicking “Training Materials” in the drop-down menu. Updates are made frequently, so check back often!

Law changes this year pose new challenges for our election judges, but these are certainly something that our stellar team can adapt to. Of particular importance are the changes to the proofs of residence allowed for election day registration, which will be a key topic for judges to review before election day.

Progress with regard to establishing additional training sites throughout Minneapolis has been steady. A few Minneapolis schools will be participating, and potentially one Minneapolis library.

It is our goal through this initiative to facilitate access to training for our election judges, therefore the additional sites have been strategically placed in areas of the city where the population may have difficulty attending class at the current training facility in northeast Minneapolis. We will still be teaching the majority of classes this fall in northeast Minneapolis, but a few classes will be taught at these additional sites.

This is an exciting year with many changes and many opportunities for growth. Let us take on these challenges together and always aim to improve. See you in class!



Election Judge Recruitment

We welcome your help in recruiting Election Judges in the new precincts for 2014 (see below). As election judges you are our very best recruiters, because you can speak to the responsibilities and pleasures of being involved in Election Day leadership.

In addition, we are looking to have more judges with the following language skills:

Fluent in HMONG, SOMALI, and SPANISH

New precincts:

WARD 1

- ◆ (1-10) Polling place: Columbia Manor/Golf Club, 3300 Central Ave NE

WARD 3

- ◆ (3-10) Polling place: National Guard Armory, 1025 Broadway St NE
- ◆ (3-11) Polling place: 514 Studios, 514 3rd St N, Ste 101
- ◆ (3-12) Polling place: Minneapolis Central Library, 300 Nicollet Mall

WARD 5

- ◆ (5-9) Polling place: Harrison Park Recreation Center, 503 Irving Ave N

WARD 12

- ◆ (12-11) Polling place: Trinity Lutheran Church, 5212 41st Ave S
- ◆ (12-12) Polling place: Roosevelt High School Gym, 4029 28th Ave S

WARD 13

- ◆ (13-10) Polling place: St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 4557 Colfax Ave S

Please forward our application to any friends, family member, neighbors, etc

<http://vote.minneapolismn.gov/judges/application>

STUDENT ELECTION JUDGE FIRSTS

This year, for the very first time, **Student Election Judges have an opportunity to serve in a Primary election!** 29 current high school students and recent high school graduates stepped forward and accepted the invitation to train side-by-side with team election judges this summer.

This extended joint training means **Student Election Judges (SEJs) can now perform all polling place duties except those requiring party balance.**

To qualify as a Student Election Judge, individuals must be:

- a U.S. citizen, age 16 or older
- able to read, write and speak English
- in good academic standing in high school or home school
- have permission from their school and parents

Minneapolis Elections & Voter Services partners with several public, private and charter schools to recruit interested SEJ participants, but individuals are also welcome to apply independently. Information is available at vote.minneapolismn.gov or by contacting Mary Davis at 612-673-3870.

