

Venice News Features
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Grass Roots Venice Neighborhood Council vote count finalized

BY CINDY FRAZIER

Results of the recent Grass Roots Venice Neighborhood Council election have been finalized after a recount of balloting for three seats on the 21-member board, according to Julie Rajan, executive director of the League of Women Voters of Los Angeles.

One of the contested seats — District Two representative in North Venice Beach — was settled in the end by a coin toss, Rajan said.

The recount did not alter the results announced provisionally by the group following the election.

The recount was held Monday, June 24th, at League of Women Voters headquarters in downtown Los Angeles, more than a week after the Thursday, June 13th elections.

BOARD CHANGES — Several longtime Venice activists who had previously served on the disbanded Venice Town Council were elected to the board.

Tisha Bedrosian, who served as president pro tem of the Grass Roots group during two years of organizing and ran unopposed for president, received 392 non-provisional votes — more than any other candidate and two-thirds of the 594 non-provisional votes cast that evening.

John Davis, who had previously been elected as secretary pro tem, was defeated by Elena Popp, who received 49 more votes.

The League of Women Voters has been hired by the city to manage elections for all City of Los Angeles Certified Neighborhood Councils, according to Rajan.

"It's a very interesting process and we're very excited about it," Rajan said.

621 VOTERS — In Venice, there were 621 ballots accepted on election day, including 27 provisional ballots that were counted only in the case of close elections, Rajan said.

A number of ballots submitted by new members were rejected because they were submitted without sufficient proof of "stakeholder" status in the Venice community, she said.

Proof of stakeholder status included identification with a Venice address, a business card with a Venice business address or other written proof of residency, employment, or other involvement in the area, she said.

A number of attorneys who worked in Venice wanted to join as stakeholders, so the League of Women Voters accepted their ballots

provisionally and then contacted their employers later to verify that they were legitimate stakeholders, Rajan said.

In other cases, provisional ballots were accepted from persons wishing to join as stakeholders because they were involved with activist groups in Venice and their status was also checked later by a League of Women Voters member.

STAKEHOLDER AUDIT — Rajan added that the League of Women Voters also conducted a random audit of existing stakeholders in order to verify their status.

Provisional votes were counted on election day for candidates whose ballot difference was less than 27 votes, she said.

Two of the seats — District Two and an at-large representative — were tied and required a runoff election, which was conducted by a show of hands of those at the meeting, she said.

A recount was conducted in three cases — second vice president, secretary and District Two representative — to ensure that ballots were properly counted, Rajan said.

Voting was heaviest for the seven executive board members, and lightest for district representatives.

"Voters did not have to vote for every seat," Rajan noted.

In addition, the Venice group allowed members to vote in any district in which they felt they had the greatest "stake," not the district in which they lived.

FINAL RESULTS — Election results (not including provisional votes):

President, Tisha Bedrosian, 392 votes;

Vice president, Greg Fitchitt, 371;

Second vice president, Chris Wood, 264;

Treasurer, Mark Van Gessel, 248;

Government relations, John Caldwell, 244;

Communications, Chris Bedrosian, 268; and

Secretary, Elena Popp, 279.

At-large representatives (seven elected):

Laddie Williams, 296;

Sheila Bernard, 285;

Phyllis Des Verney, 256;

Lydia Ponce, 221;

Yolanda Miranda, 218;

Rick Feibusch, 194; and

Barbara Gibson, 185.

District representatives:

District One, David Moring, 18;

District Two, Bonnie Cheeseman, 59;

District Three, Naomi Nightingale, 64;

District Four, Chris Williams, 58;

District Five, Kelley S. Willis, 30;

District Six, DeDe Audet, 19;

District Seven, Alice Stek, 95.