

Lemos, June

From: Lee, Will
Sent: Monday, April 23, 2018 1:49 PM
To: Lemos, June
Subject: Fwd: RE closed session tonight

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: <jay@mcn.org>
Date: April 23, 2018 at 1:47:13 PM PDT
To: <wlee@fortbragg.com>
Subject: RE closed session tonight

Dear Will,

I feel our Council Members are dispersed throughout our City.

I have a call into the County Clerk Recorder to ask a couple questions of.

The increased cost to the County for printing different ballots.
And the cost of printing the Voter Handbooks for different small districts.

And if the City pays for the Election costs for printing or how that works.

Maybe you all ready know the answer but I want to know if it costs the City of the County or who absorbs that cost.

I would like to encourage you to look at other alternatives for our City to keep the At Large Election Process in our City.

Forming a Charter City is one idea I have heard could work.

Please don't support changing our elections from at large to districts.

Kind Regards,
Jay

Lemos, June

From: Cimolino, Michael
Sent: Monday, April 23, 2018 6:14 PM
To: Lemos, June
Subject: Fwd: tonights closed session agenda item

----- Forwarded message -----

From: jay@mcn.org
Date: Apr 23, 2018 2:36 PM
Subject: tonights closed session agenda item
To: "Cimolino, Michael" <MCimolino@fortbragg.com>
Cc:

Dear Michael,

I feel our Council Members are dispersed throughout our City.

I have a call into the County Clerk Recorder to ask a couple questions of.

The increased cost to the County for printing different ballots.
And the cost of printing the Voter Handbooks for different small districts.

And if the City pays for the Election costs for printing or how that works.

Maybe you all ready know the answer but I want to know if it costs the City of the County or who absorbs that cost.

I hope you will look at other alternatives for our City to keep the At Large Election Process in our City.
Forming a Charter City is one idea I have heard could work.

Kind Regards,
Jay

FORT BRAGG CITIZENS AGAINST DISTRICT ELECTIONS

PATTERSON'S PLOY

The election process is under attack in the City of Fort Bragg. A group calling themselves the "Coast Committee for Responsive Representation," being represented by local attorney Jacob Patterson, is claiming that our voting process is discriminatory to minority voters within our community. Mr. Patterson is following the latest trend of parasitic attorneys suing governmental agencies over their current "at large" election process whereby every voter in a municipality, school or service district can choose from each candidate on the ballot. Mr. Patterson and The Coast Committee are demanding a switch to a district vote whereby our City is divided into districts and the voter is only allowed to vote for those candidates within their own district but may be allowed to vote for the mayoral position. We use this district election process in the election of our supervisors at the county level. However, one can see the advantage of having our own representative from our own district when we have differing economies and the bulk of the population is inland. But in our small City of approximately 7,200 residents, is this really the best form of conducting elections?

Mr. Patterson and his Committee are threatening to file suit based upon the California Voting Rights Act of 2001, as amended. While we believe the intent of this act is honorable, we also believe it was to address larger cities whose citizens of color face reduced participation, reduced services and reduced opportunity. Smaller cities, however, are increasingly coming under attack. Fort Bragg is the smallest municipality to date to face this.

Mr. Patterson's plan assumes that if there is a particular neighborhood with a large minority of people of color, specifically our Latino and Hispanic population, then having their own district would allow better representation of that group and make it easier for minorities to seek office. Mr. Patterson claims that our current election process keeps Latino and Hispanic voters from running for election and that the Southern portion of Fort Bragg has a Latino or Hispanic population that is four times that of the Northern part of Fort Bragg. Mr. Patterson is basing his claim by comparing federal census tracts 104 and 105 and other data. We have not had a chance to review this information, but we question the methodology used to reach Mr. Patterson's conclusions

Historically, the change from an at large election process to a district election process has resulted in little added participation by the Latino and Hispanic communities. It may have helped in larger communities, but in Fort Bragg, Latino and Hispanic voters would be barred from supporting another Latino or Hispanic in another district and therefore may face less representation. Fort Bragg is a very liberal city with an open heart to the Latino and Hispanic minority. The real issue here is whether our election process has thrown roadblocks into Latino and Hispanic participation in City government. We have many Latino and Hispanic employees working for our City and our own Chief of Police and many of our police officers are of Latino and Hispanic descent. Even undocumented Latino and Hispanic members of our community have been welcomed to participate in many of the programs offered to the community in general, including water and electric discounts, among a multitude of social services.

Dividing Fort Bragg into voting districts will not guarantee that Latino and Hispanic voters would even elect a representative of color. As for Mr. Patterson's claim of a 4 to 1 ratio of Latino and Hispanic residents between the Southern half of Fort Bragg and the Northern half of Fort Bragg, we feel that his figures are far off the mark. Were the City to divide into four districts of approximately 1,800 residents

FORT BRAGG CITIZENS AGAINST DISTRICT ELECTIONS

each, the Northern half would have approximately 3,600 residents including approximately 900 Latino and Hispanic residents (25%). The other 3,600 residents on the South would be comprised of approximately 1,225 Latino and Hispanic residents (34%), but one might have to gerrymander the district to get a majority of Latino or Hispanic residents into one district, which may be illegal under both Federal and State law. Many of these residents may not even register to vote or may be ineligible to vote because of citizenship status. Changing to a district voting system would also serve to disenfranchise those Latino or Hispanic voters in other districts from voting for a candidate who came from a predominately Latino or Hispanic district. How is this equitable?

We believe this attack is being orchestrated by Mr. Patterson, who has a definite financial interest in the outcome and is using his Committee to achieve this goal. In our opinion, were Mr. Patterson interested in being a good citizen, he would have brought this issue before the City Council, without threat of legal action and allowed the City and its' citizens to conduct hearings and study the issue instead of forcing us to modify our election process within 135 days. Most all of our Latino and Hispanic residents work hard to be a part of our community, they participate in the education process and have become good citizens, whether legal or not. We cannot say the same for Mr. Patterson when he threatens his own home town.

To date, no municipality has been successful in defending the at-large voting process and Mr. Patterson is guaranteed attorney fees of as much as \$30,000 without even filing a lawsuit should the City give in to his demands. Mr. Patterson claims that he is very successful suing governmental entities. Does he plan to sue all of our school districts, fire districts and other special districts here in Mendocino County where he resides? One may wonder whether Mr. Patterson earns his living off the backs of taxpayers and in the case of Fort Bragg, taxpayers with limited income.

Fort Bragg Citizens Against District Elections

April 23, 2018