

Language Accessibility Advisory Committee (LAAC) Meeting Minutes

October 26, 2017 – 2 p.m. – 3 p.m.

City Hall, Room 305

Meeting Attendees:

John Arntz, Director, Department of Elections
Yelena Cappello, Department of Elections
Mayank Patel, Department of Elections
Jonathan Aaberg, Department of Elections
Jill Fox, Department of Elections
Kimberly Daniel, Department of Elections
Shane Burgos, Department of Elections
Andy Pastalaniec, Department of Elections
Catherine Lee, Department of Elections
Gerry Porras, Department of Elections
Christian Arana, Latino Community Foundation
Christopher Bardales, Mayor's Office of
Neighborhood Services
Alison Chan, Self Help for the Elderly
Jason Chan, Charity Cultural Services Center
Ana De Carolis, Mujeres Unidas y Activas
Lulu Feliciano, SFMTA
Gregory Keech, City College Department of
English as a Second Language
Heather Kittel, Mayor's Office on Disability

Diane Le, Mayor's Office on Neighborhood
Services
Hazel Lee, SF Shanghai Association
Laura Melgarejo, PODER – People Organizing
to Demand Environmental & Economic Rights
Mohsin Mirza, Asian Americans Advancing
Justice/Asian Law Caucus
Sandra Panopio, Office of Civic Engagement
and Immigrant Affairs
Omar Pimentel, Mission Graduates
Kenny Song, Intercultural Institute of California
Jonathan Stein, Asian Americans Advancing
Justice/Asian Law Caucus
Danielle Utley, SFUSF Multilingual Pathways
Department
Annette Wong, Chinese for Affirmative Action
Judy Young, Vietnamese Youth Development
Center
Cathy Zhang, Sound of Hope Radio
Maggie Zhou, SFUSD Multilingual Pathways
Department

Meeting Minutes:

1. Welcome and Introduction of the Purpose of the LAAC
 - a. Under SB 450: California Voter's Choice Act counties that will seek to introduce the Vote Center model are required to form a LAAC
 - i. While San Francisco has not elected to participate in SB 450 at this time, the creation of the San Francisco LAAC is seen as an opportunity to engage the community and foster a working relationship with community members around issues related to language access
 - b. Introduction of Department of Elections staff
2. John spoke to several issues that are on the horizon for the Department of Elections and that will be areas that the LAAC can discuss and provide insight
 - a. Proposition N – Non-Citizen Voting in School Board Elections
 - i. The next election that will include the contest for Board of Education will be November 6, 2018
 - ii. Implementation details are still being worked out and as new information becomes available it will be shared with the LAAC

- b. Conditional Voter Registration
 - i. New registration option for voters' who miss the registration deadline, 15-days before an election, to register and cast a provisional ballot at the Department's office
 - ii. Will be available in San Francisco starting with the June 5, 2018 election
 - iii. Getting the word out about this new program will require a lot of messaging and will allow the LAAC to weigh in on language concerns associated with communicating this new program to San Franciscans
- c. Remote Accessible Vote-by-Mail system
 - i. A new system that will allow voters with disabilities and voters who live overseas and serve in the military to receive and mark their ballots electronically before printing and mailing back to the Department for counting
 - ii. The new system will require development of materials and outreach messaging related to accessibility for people with disabilities and language access
- d. Different Voting Systems
 - i. The Department will soon issue a RFP for a voting system to replace the current voting system when the contract expires in December, 2018
 - ii. A new system, once chosen, will require significant messaging and input for how to best educate San Francisco voters on how to use the system
 - iii. Supported from funding provided by the City's Committee on Information Technology, a consultant is currently preparing a business case to assess the feasibility of the City's options to develop an accessible, open source voting system.
 - iv. Developing a voting system may introduce new vocabulary to elections and voting in the City and the LAAC can support the development of materials regarding people's language access needs to understand and use a newly developed voting system.
 - v. To best educate San Francisco voters on how to use the system
- e. Possible development of an Open Source voting system
 - i. The Board of Supervisors has asked the Department of Elections to look into the possibility of developing a new open-source voting system
 - ii. This group can help determine criteria that should be included to address language access needs
- f. Ongoing Department messaging and materials
 - i. The Department is always seeking to improve the effectiveness of messaging and materials and the LAAC can assist by providing new and innovative ways of connecting with hard-to-reach audiences
 - ii. Are there existing patterns of communication or community connections that we can leverage to ensure our message is received and understood?
- g. The Department of Elections welcomes Election Day participants, observers, and monitors who are interested in safeguarding the process
 - i. We ask that members of the community and LAAC organizations take this commitment one step further and participate on Election Day by serving as Poll Workers and encouraging members of the community to also serve on Election Day

3. As outlined in the invitation letter, LAAC meetings are scheduled to take place four times per year, however if this frequency is not ideal for tackling the myriad topics related to language access John and the Community Engagement Team are open to meeting more frequently or in smaller working groups to ensure optimal communication opportunities
4. Each LAAC member introduced themselves and spoke of their goals for joining the LAAC, which include:
 - a. Engaging new immigrants who may prioritize finding work over exploring opportunities for civic engagement and empowering them to participate
 - b. Engaging in two-way communication between the Department of Elections and the community
 - c. Helping spread the word and informing implementation of Prop N – Non-Citizen Voting in School Board Elections
 - d. Seeking to improve how voting is explained to new voters
 - e. Improving outreach to high school students and educating soon-to-be voters
 - f. Assisting in the implementation of new legislation and furthering the goals of the Language Access Ordinance
 - g. Assisting the Department in producing more-effective educational materials
 - h. Collaborating with the Department of Elections to increase Poll Worker engagement and participation
 - i. Macro-level policy implementation
 - j. Helping San Francisco continue to be a leader in modeling best practices for other county election offices
 - k. Expanding engagement in democracy in the community and diminishing barriers to participation
 - l. Seeking new ways to partner with the Department of Elections to go beyond targeted education during an election, but finding new ways to educate the electorate year-round
 - m. Enhancing communication mechanisms for voters and potential voters who may not be comfortable receiving information in writing
 - n. Bridging local and state efforts to enhance language access services
 - o. Improving election education, as elections are not just a one-day event and require ongoing communication and effort to ensure a well-educated electorate
 - p. Ensuring no voter is disenfranchised due to language barriers
 - q. Sharing experiences and learning best practices that can inform other City departments and municipalities regarding language access
 - r. Ensuring culturally appropriate materials and resources are produced, especially for monolingual voters, by monitoring language use
5. To ensure the LAAC is successful in addressing areas that are important to the group, LAAC members are encouraged to submit future agenda items or topics of conversation to John and the Community Engagement Team
 - a. Some ideas that were shared included:
 - i. The Department of Elections should consider sharing details of required election-related activities and timelines so the LAAC has context for when and why events take place at certain times

- ii. The Department of Elections should consider sharing more about what challenges have been experienced in the past regarding voter engagement and education, allowing the LAAC to assist in crafting new and innovative ways of overcoming previously identified challenges
 - iii. Addressing barriers to marking the ballot, particularly for voters who are unfamiliar with ballots in the U.S. (or the County for that matter), and developing ways to streamline the voting process and make it more accessible to all
 - iv. Finding ways of educating voters and potential voters who may experience literacy barriers
 - v. Developing mechanisms for conducting year-round education so voters are prepared to participate and are less overwhelmed by the process when it comes time to vote
 - vi. Utilizing infographics to help visual learners and those with limited literacy gain valuable election information in an accessible manner
 - b. With a high level of interest in a variety of language access-related matters it was discussed that working groups might be a beneficial means of utilizing LAAC participants and making timely recommendations
 - i. The working groups would develop a shared goal to work towards
6. John shared that there are no scheduled elections in San Francisco until June 5, 2018
- a. The work accomplished during the off-season will help inform efforts during an election cycle
 - b. An election cycle will provide even greater context for LAAC participants to see their recommendations in action and learn about the Department's work first-hand
7. The next scheduled LAAC meeting is Thursday, January 23, 2018 from 2 p.m. – 4 p.m. in City Hall, Room 305