

POLICY MOTION

TITLE: Bylaws Amendment: Candidate Registration

PURPOSE: To amend the MVCC bylaws to remove the requirement that each candidate obtain 20 signatures from MVCC stakeholders.

BACKGROUND: Very few stakeholders registered as candidates in the 2025 MVCC elections. No one successfully registered as a candidate for Zone 2 Director or Zone 5 Director. Only one person successfully registered as a candidate for Zone 3 Director, Zone 6 Director, Zone 7 Director, and Community Director. Only eight people successfully registered as candidates for At-Large Director, with 7 positions available. Of the 19 people who successfully registered as candidates for the MVCC, 10 (53%) currently serve on the MVCC.

As the most local form of government in Los Angeles, one of the primary purposes of a neighborhood council is to foster engagement among the community. One way to do so is to raise stakeholder participation in the democratic process, and this can be accomplished by recruiting more candidates for elections. Indeed, election turnout is likely lower when stakeholders have no candidates for whom to vote.

There are many possible explanations for the low level of candidate registrations in this past cycle: lack of awareness about elections; a lower level of civic engagement in the public; relative ease or difficulty of registration, to name a few. Some of these factors are outside the control of the MVCC; however, the MVCC bylaws include a unique requirement that candidates obtain 20 signatures of stakeholders before they may register. This carries obvious appeal. Candidates must interact with other stakeholders to receive signatures, fostering a greater sense of community in Mar Vista. The extra step also might prevent frivolous filings for candidacy. But the signature requirement also carries a cost: hidden within Article X of the MVCC bylaws and not advertised by Empower LA, those attempting to register may fail this requirement, leading to less candidates overall. It might also be challenging for less able-bodied residents to go door to door. Below is a table describing the number of available positions, number of registered candidates, and registration requirements for other councils in Region 11.

| Name | Number of Positions | Number of Candidates | Requires Signatures? |
|-----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Mar Vista | 16 | 19 | Yes (20) |
| Bel Air Beverly Crest | 10* | 13 | No |
| Del Rey | 15 | 20 | No |
| North Westwood | 19 | 21 | No |
| Palms | 13 | 28 | No |
| Venice | 21 | 31 | No |

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The MVCC had the second lowest candidate to position ratio of the other similarly comprised NCs in region 11 this past cycle, and is the only NC to require signatures to file as a candidate. Additionally, based on a candidate filing update sent on December 27, 2024, showing 23 candidates having applied, at least 4 candidates submitted non-compliant applications. The number of rejected candidates was actually higher, because that update also reflected that there were no contested seats, so more candidates ended up applying before the deadline.

Thus, to ensure greater participation in future elections, this motion would remove the MVCC's uniquely stringent signature requirement for candidate registration.

THE MOTION: Article X, Section 6: Other Election Related Language, paragraph B currently reads as follows:

"To support his/her candidacy, each candidate must obtain twenty (20) signatures from MVCC Stakeholders that are eligible to vote for the candidate."

This motion would amend Article X, Section 6 by striking paragraph B.

DIRECTED TO: MVCC Board of Directors

ACTION/VOTE COUNT:

MVCC Elections and Bylaws Committee Meeting, May 6th, 2025

Motion of support moved by Director Meuser, seconded by Director Kopelow

Motion of support approved by the MVCC Elections and Bylaws Committee 6Y-5N-2A

MVCC Board Meeting, June 26th, 2025

Motion of support moved by Director xxx, seconded by Director xxx.

Motion of support approved by the Board xx-xx-xx