Arden Registration Committee
Meeting Minutes Nov. 11, 2018

The Registration held a public meeting on November 11, 2018 in the Buzz Ware Village Center. The purpose of the meeting was to get a sense of the community about issues with referendum vote counting.

The following persons attended: Cecilia Vore, Barbara Henry, Mary Murphy, Jan Westerhouse (all committee members); Mike Curtis, Carol DiGiovanni, Deb Ricard, Warren Rosenkranz, Mary Marconi, Mariane Cinaglia.

The current vote counting process is that a referendum is passed by a majority of those eligible to vote (that is anyone 18 or older, who has lived in the Village for at least 6 month); rather than a majority of those who actually vote (return a signed ballot). This means that if a person does not return a ballot, it acts the same as a NO vote.

Examples of referendum that may occur: to confirm a new trustee; to pass the Village annual budget; to pass an alternative assessment; other special issues such as the purchase of the Avery property.

Is there a sense among those attending about the need to change this?

One way might be to offer an opportunity to Abstain on the ballot -- check Yes, No or Abstain

Would that increase participation if that opportunity existed? Do people realize that by not sending back their ballot, they are voting no?

If we offered the opportunity to select Abstain, one way to handle the count might be to subtract the number of abstaining votes from the total number of residents, and the number needed to pass a referendum would then be the majority of the difference.

Some people attending the meeting believed that Abstain was a neutral (I have no opinion) vote, while others felt that abstain meant "refraining from voting."

There was a brief discussion of the difference between an approval quorum and a participatory quorum.

Several people told the committee that if the committee feels strongly about it, to put "abstain" option on the next budget referendum ballot.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Henry

Committee Secretary