

## Response to the Board Statement on the Election

The CCPA Board statement regarding the election makes an unsubstantiated claim that FOWH members did not and have not disclosed conflicts of interest. The Board has also failed to acknowledge or respond to other conflicts of interest that have been openly stated. The first thing that members should note is the complete contradiction between the statement and what Board Members are claiming at public meetings.

Many Board Members repeat claims of having no knowledge of the planning meetings or of agreements that were struck in those meetings, yet the CCPA statement clearly states, *"In the end, all parties began to work together to plan for a successful Annual Meeting and board election. The WOW Hall hired the facilitator suggested by the Friends of the WOW Hall. The WOW Hall also chose the online voting platform they suggested, EZVote Online, as well as the help they offered by way of a suggested individual trained on how to use the program."*

**In the end, the CCPA Board acknowledged that they did negotiate; agreements were made; the CCPA Board and staff, for whatever reason, broke those agreements; and then Board Members denied the existence of the meetings and agreements. Any lack of knowledge on the part of Board Members is either willfully not participating, or a failure of communication by the Board and staff members present at those planning meetings. It has nothing to do with Friends of WOW Hall (FOWH).**

With respect to an accusation of an undisclosed conflict of interest, based on rumors we have been hearing, we can only assume the mysterious "conflict of interest" that is being suggested is the fact that Heather Kent, who was going to be operating the EZVoteOnline software, is in a relationship with Steven Berkson, one of the candidates. That is not, and was not, a secret. We believe it was mentioned in a meeting, we spoken from the same ZOOM account on several occasions, and we presumed everyone was aware. If it was not explicitly stated or someone missed it, there was no intention of deceiving anyone. In any case, this is an issue of Board and staff inaction. No one did anything to prepare, and at the last minute, we filled the gap. This is detailed below.

The bottom line is that FOWH had tried to get the Board to do anything, for any of these meetings, for months, including manage the voting process. Just a few days before the Annual Meeting, the Board had done nothing to prepare for an online election. For FOWH, Heather and Steven, in consultation with the owner of EZVoteOnline, put together a system **WITH PROTECTIONS FROM MANIPULATION BY ANYONE**. Due to the short time frame and the need for technical expertise, the only practical way to set something up was by Heather and Steven working from the same residence over many hours. We believe this was apparent in planning meetings and during the demonstration of the election plan which was agreed to.

Again,

- 1) We believed everyone knew we were in a relationship, there was no secret.
- 2) It was the best we could do in 2 days, when the Board had done nothing. It was simply not logistically possible to train more people with so little time.

- 3) FOWH did not bully the Board into something, but simply tried to provide a solution for a *problem that existed because of Board inaction.*
- 4) Mindful of the various conflicts of interest (including staff's financial interest in the outcome), the PLAN WAS DESIGNED SO NO ONE COULD MANIPULATE THE ELECTION.

Any accusations of a prior relationship with EZVoteOnline are simply not true, and we have said so to anyone who bothers to ask. Of course, it is more fun to just jump on good rumor.

The CCPA Board further claims the following, "*Again, the WOW Hall has a long history of secure and successful elections and no actions by the WOW Hall Board or Staff warrant a fear of anything otherwise.*" The assertion about past elections is a matter of opinion. We have heard from a number of people who disagree. The assertion that, in regard to the Board and staff's ability to hold a secure election that everyone can have confidence in, "*...no actions by the WOW Hall Board or Staff warrant a fear of anything otherwise.*" is simply false. This is detailed by Heather and Cary's account of events, and detailed in Heather's report to the Board about the August 9<sup>th</sup> meeting. We will not repeat the long list of examples here; you can read her report. For goodness sakes, a staff member with election responsibilities called for any candidates that said things he didn't like to drop out of the election. How can that not be acknowledged as an issue? Ethically, the fact that the Board posted this one-sided statement in a highly contested election without posting any opposing points of view to inform the membership such as,

- 1) The minutes of the meeting,
- 2) Heather's Voting Report,
- 3) The FOWH Recommendations for a Fair Election document, or
- 4) Any other correspondence to the board that disagrees with their assertions

is reason enough to seek a third-party to run the election.

As the accusations continue, no one responds to the fact that protections against manipulation were in place, or the fact that Heather discontinued her participation because of the removal of those protections. This should also indicate that a third-party is needed to run the election. These continued mischaracterizations and mystery accusations are a smear campaign intended to convict people by rumor, and distract from real issues.

In response to all of this, and because a candidate's participation in election process is being limited, Steven is dropping out of the election in order to remove any barrier to our ability, as members, to help ensure that a fair election is held.

Heather Kent  
Steven Berkson