

September 29, 2009

To: Common Council Organizational Committee

Fr: Madison Election Advisory Committee
Rosa Garner, Chair

Re: Common Council Meetings on Nights of Regularly Scheduled Elections

The Madison Election Advisory Committee requests that the Common Council not schedule meetings on nights of regularly scheduled elections. The ordinance currently forbids meetings on nights where local city offices are on the ballot. We recommend that this language be broadened to include all regularly scheduled elections.

Election Day is extraordinarily demanding for our Clerk and the entire City Clerk's Office. During each election, there are many events that require special attention, and occasionally there are extraordinary events such as at East High School in November 2006. Running a successful election requires the full attention and abilities of our managerial and support staff from the City Clerk's Office and beyond. In addition, several Common Council members have made valuable contributions as Election Officials. By eliminating Common Council meetings on these nights, city officials will be able to devote full attention to maintaining the high quality of our elections. This has become increasingly important as elections come under greater and greater scrutiny.

Election Days in 2010 are February 16, April 6, September 14, and November 2. (September 14 is the only Election Day in 2010 that does not fall on a regularly scheduled Common Council meeting night.)

Thank you for your consideration of the Committee's recommendation. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.