


May 11, 2007

TO: Mayor Dave Cieslewicz & Common Council President Michael Verveer

FROM: Madison Election Advisory Committee  
Sybil Better, Chair 

RE: Common Council Meetings on Nights of Regularly Scheduled Elections

At its May 8, 2007 meeting, the Madison Election Advisory Committee approved the following recommendation:

We recommend that you forward a proposal to the Common Council eliminating Common Council meetings on the nights of regularly scheduled elections. Currently, ordinance 2.01(4) forbids meetings on nights of elections 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 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, in the past, several Common Council members have made valuable contributions as pollworkers. 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.

In 2008, these dates are February 19, April 1, September 9 and November 4. (The September election does not fall on a regularly scheduled Common Council meeting night, since it is the second Tuesday.)

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