

Berryessa Citizens Advisory Council

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Candidate Forum Guidelines

June 18, 2007

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This set of guidelines are modeled on earlier successful Candidate Fora:

- BCAC Members in good standing are eligible to participate on the Ad Hoc Candidate Forum Committee.
- The BCAC President shall appoint, to the extent possible, the Chair of the Ad Hoc Candidate Forum Committee 3 months in advance of the Forum.
- The Chair is responsible to ensure that all aspects of the Forum are planned, that the Board is kept informed of progress/issues, and the event is conducted in a manner consistent with the Charter and general decorum associated with an advisory council.
 - Even handed – no candidate having access to questions under circumstances different from the other candidates
 - Non-Partisan – no endorsement by the BCAC of candidates
 - Informational – question should be issue-based and structured so that all candidates have a response (i.e. no questions that are directed to only one candidate)
- The Board will approve the membership of the Committee at a Board meeting 2 months before the Forum to the extent possible.
- The Ad Hoc Candidate Forum Committee should have at least 4 members excluding the Chair (6 if there are to be questions from attendees).
 - Moderator
 - Two Question Sorting/Prioritizing Team (bi-partisan)
 - Issue-based questions
 - District #4 issues have priority
 - City and other district questions will have a lower priority
 - Judgment exercised regarding question length and issue
 - Paragraph long questions are difficult to remember/answer
 - Questions about the storm drain on Willow Ave are overly specific
 - Time Keeper
 - Two Question Collectors (if questions are to be accepted during the Forum)
- The Ad Hoc Candidate Forum Committee members must agree to withhold endorsements from candidates.
- Once the Chair and Committee are approved by the Board:
 - Every candidate will be invited to participate with a clear statement of the Forum procedures. There should be a clearly stated deadline for acceptance. What worked well was to give an incentive for early commitment is to offer introductory/closing speaking position choice to the candidates in order of their acceptance.
 - BCAC Members will be solicited (direct appeal at the General Meeting two months in advance of a Forum and by e:mail each month with the distribution of Meeting Minutes) to provide written questions to any ad hoc committee member (identified by name and e:mail address).
 - District #4 citizens will be informed of a Candidate Forum and solicited (via the District e:mail list POC Javier Quezada 408-535-4904) to provide written question to as ad hoc committee member Dead line for submissions will be set not later than 2 weeks before the Forum.
 - Notifications in the local papers (San Jose Mercury, Berryessa Sun, Milpitas Post, etc.) should be submitted as soon as the candidate acceptance deadline is past. This notification should include information on which candidates have accepted, all information needed to find the event, and a POC for response to questions.
 - Local papers should be invited to send press coverage with a deadline for acceptance.

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- Reporters should have a table to the side assigned to the “Press” so they can take notes easily.
- The Ad Hoc Committee Members will sort the questions and prioritize the questions in closed session one hour before the Forum is to start. The prioritized questions will be delivered to the moderator 15 min prior to the meeting.
- The draft Agenda will allow 80 minutes for the Forum Topic
 - 10 minutes for introductions and announcements
 - 2 min/candidate for Opening and Closing Statements
 - Order of opening and closing statements selected by the candidates before the meeting starts based on order of acceptance (i.e the first candidate to accept can choose to speak first, last, or any slot between...the second candidate to accept selects from the remaining slots...and so on until all slots are filled)
 - Time remaining dedicated to questions each candidate getting the same allotment of response time per question.
- The Moderator will direct each question to the candidates in order offsetting by one person with each question (i.e. each candidate gets to be first, second, etc.)
- Candidates may request to have the question repeated that will not be counted against their allotted time to answer the question.
- A Time Keeper provided by BCAC will sit in the front with placards for 2 min, 1 min, 30 seconds, and STOP
- The Moderator is to manage the Q&A period in accordance with the forum rules below:
 - Even-handedness in all dealings - The BCAC Bylaws prohibits the organization from endorsing candidates for office, and we expect that prohibition to be expressed in the conduct of our event.
 - No direct interaction among/between candidates.
 - Respect the time allotted to each candidate.
 - Applause will be limited a closing acknowledgment of all candidates. No applause after a candidate's response.
 - No distribution of campaign literature in the meeting room will be allowed. Campaign materials will be welcome in the Entrance Area between the front door and the meeting room or outside the building.
 - Each candidate may respond standing at the podium or seated.
 - Each candidate should have an individual microphone if possible
 - Candidates should be offered a microphone training session 10 min before start to familiarize them with the sound and control mechanisms.
- The Moderator should stand at a podium at the center with a separate microphone.
- Questions not used during the Forum should be destroyed.