

Larchmont Edgewater Civic League Meeting

October 23, 2023

- 1) President Kinnison called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.
- 2) Norfolk Police Dept. Officer Charles Dreer, the CRO for our civic league, briefed a new spreadsheet that covers Larchmont and Edgewater “year to date” crimes, from homicide to sexual assault to robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny from/parts from automobiles and stolen vehicles. YTD 2023: 44 larcenies from/parts from vehicles and 12 stolen vehicles. Both of these numbers represent a decrease from 2022 ytd. He reported that 25 officers graduated from the most recent police academy. Another academy will be starting soon (3 per year).
- 3) Guest speakers:
 - James Shull – Ranked Choice Voting. Mr. Shull represents *Up Vote Virginia* (upvoteva.org) and *Veterans for All Voters* (veteransforallvoters.org). Ranked choice voting can be thought of as “instant runoff elections.” In a Georgia election, for example, no one candidate secured a majority of votes, so the person who received the fewest votes was eliminated. Two months later, a runoff election was held. Ranked choice voting should eliminate the need for a runoff election.
 - Presentation:
 - Ranked choice voting (RCV) is a step in the right direction to update antiquated methods of voted that we borrowed from the UK. What’s the

biggest problem in American political discourse now? Hyper-partisanship, i.e., taking the conversation to the far right or the far left. Ranked choice voting brings the conversation back to the middle. In many elections, when there are more than two candidates in a race, a winner can be elected simply because 60%, 70%, or even 80% of the votes are scattered between other candidates. Special interests win, voters lose. It's time we change how we elect people.

- There are over 100 years of RCV data to pull from. Australia and Ireland have been using RCV for 100 years. This style of voting increases the competition by eliminating the spoiler effect. It re-incentivizes those running for office to serve a wider majority – beyond the “base.” It ensures true majority support. It has been shown that RCV reduces negative campaigning and promotes discussion of productive issues. Campaigns are more substantive, in that candidates speak to the issues. RCV saves taxpayer \$\$/time by eliminating expensive/untimely follow-on runoff elections. This voting style ensures more military and overseas votes get counted.
- A ranked choice ballot allows you to rank the candidates in order by your preference. The winner must “cross 50%” to win. In round 1, if no one crosses 50%, the person with the least votes is eliminated. *“That candidate’s voters’ ballots are redistributed to their second-choice pick. In other words, if you ranked a losing candidate as your first choice, and the*

candidate I eliminated, then you vote still counts: It just moves to your second-choice candidate. That process continues until there is a candidate who has the majority of votes.” (Kambhampaty, 2019.

<https://time.com/5718941/ranked-choice-voting/>

- Ultimately you have a person who wins with >50% of the votes, i.e., a consensus candidate! By talking to the center, you win more votes.
- Where is this done now: In Maine and Alaska, statewide. Hawaii uses it for special elections. Oregon and Nevada will be voting on RCV soon. This is not a “red” state thing or a “blue” state thing. Republicans pioneered RCV here in Virginia. It was used most recently when Governor Youngkin was selected in a Republican primary.
- We can use RCV here in Virginia, for local elections including for a county board of supervisors or city council elections. For example, to instigate RCV in Norfolk, our city council would just need to agree to do it.
- Data shows that in places using RCV, voter turnout has increased, because voters get more choice. 3rd parties can get a place on the ballot. There is more voter engagement!
- Next steps: Educate the community about RCV.
- Resources:
 - <https://upvoteva.org>
 - <http://fairvote.org/>
 - <https://www.veteransforallvoters.org/>

- <https://rankedchoicevotingfactscom/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/groups/rcvfornorfolk>
- <https://www.rcvresources.org>

- 4) Community Event Updates. RAT Race, Pumpkin Patch at LUMC. Thanks to everyone who helped unload the pumpkins. A family friendly and free Fall Festival Block Party is scheduled for October 29th, 4 – 6 p.m. The location is the greenspace between Larchmont United Methodist Church and CrossRoads Church. Cathy Lewis discussed speakers at ODU and will provide the civic league with more information about upcoming events. For example, a recent speaker was LTG H.R. McMaster, USA-Ret. Liz Paiste announced that there is a new water filtration station at Jeff Robertson Park.
- 5) LECL Committee Openings: Parks and Rec (including trees); Public Safety and Traffic; Membership and Community Engagement; Newsletter; Audit; Memorial Day Parade Planning. Contact Mike.Crockett@yahoo.com if you would like to volunteer for any of these committees. There was a question about a running/walking track in Larchmont (originally identified to be located on the Larchmont Elementary School grounds). Nate stated it was not on the city's radar at this point. [Nate will ask Parks & Rec director to speak to the civic league].
- 6) Lamberts Point City Park Initiative Update. LECL has formally endorsed this initiative. The website is <https://www.lambertspointcitypark.com/>

7) New Pedestrian Crossing System at Jamestown Crescent and Monroe (west side only).

Our new crossing signals are up and working. Caveat: Be careful! Cars are still flying through this crosswalk even though the lights are blinking.

8) Crossing Guard Vacancy: Jamestown Crescent & Monroe Intersection. School crossing guards are needed city-wide. \$18.00/hour, flexible shifts, and the opportunity to work near your neighborhood. Apply today! Several positions available. Questions? Call 757.823.4464.

9) New Business. Early in person voting at the Lamberts Point Community Center begins tomorrow, October 24th, at 11:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. Complete information is on the Norfolk Office of Elections website. <https://www.norfolk.gov/706/Office-of-Elections>

10) Mr. Jason Rogge, President, 757 Rugby Academy. <https://www.757rugbyacademy.com>

11) Upcoming civic league meetings: November meeting is a social at Waters Edge Winery, November 27th. The December meeting will be on the 3rd Monday, December 18, at LUMC.

12) Meeting adjourned at 8:32 p.m.

15 in attendance (in person) (includes 2 guest speakers) plus one baby (not counted)!
2 in attendance on Zoom

Respectfully,
Gail Nicula, Secretary