

Whittier Alliance Membership Voting Procedures

2023 Annual Meeting

Member Registration

Overview: Whittier residents and individuals owning property or a business in the Whittier neighborhood are members of the Whittier Alliance. In order to exercise their voting rights, members must first verify their voting eligibility. A list of resident, business, and property owner members who have previously established the right to vote will be kept at the Whittier Alliance and brought to meetings.

Once voter eligibility is established, rights of members may be exercised immediately. Membership includes the right to vote at Whittier Alliance Acting Committee Meetings, the Annual Meeting, Special Meetings of the membership, and for the election of board members and Chairs for all Acting Committees. The methods through which residents, property owners, and business owners can each establish their voting eligibility are outlined in [the Whittier Alliance Bylaws on pages 2-3](#).

Process:

- Members can pre-register through an online form available on the WA website, by submitting necessary documentation to WA staff via email, or in person at WA meetings/events and the office.
- New member registrations will be processed by two staff members, ensuring that they are cross-checked before being added to the eligible voter list.
- All newly registered members will be automatically added to the eligible voter list.
- Member registrations and ballots cast for the first time will be marked as provisional until a second staff member can cross-check provided documentation and officially confirm their eligibility.

Voting

Overview: The WA Bylaws dictate that eligible ballots be cast over a minimum 7 day voting period. The 7 day time frame need not be applied only to business days.

Process:

- After the Annual Meeting has begun, a final call for nominations from the floor will be made.
- Two WA staff members will verify the eligibility of newly nominated candidates.
- Eligible candidates will be added to the ballot (both digital and paper) and are encouraged to engage with attendees about why they would like to serve in the role.
- Whittier Alliance staff or a third party will present the final ballot.
- Items seeking a full membership vote, such as the establishment of Acting Committees for the following year, will also be listed on the ballot.
- In the event that any new matters arise during the meeting which would require a full membership vote, attendees will be asked to complete a basic google form indicating their name, membership address, and whether they vote in favor of, against, or in abstention of the proposed item being added to the final ballot for a full membership vote.
 - WA staff will have created the form template in advance, so that the motion language would only need to be added in and the link provided to attendees
 - Whittier Alliance Staff or a third party would cross reference the registered voter list with those who completed the form in the meeting to ensure only verified members are determining what ultimately ends up on the ballot. It is considered a provisional ballot measure until that point.
- The final ballot and 7 day voting period will officially open that evening at 5pm.

- Members do not need to be in attendance at the meeting in order to vote; a digital voter guide will be available with information on the candidates and other items requiring a vote on the final ballot.
- WA may organize a meet and greet opportunity during the voting period for all candidates on the ballot to connect with community members for additional Q&A and conversation.
- The Annual Meeting formally adjourns when the election results are announced following the voting period.
- A neutral third party cross-references all ballots cast with the final registered voter list to tally/certify the results.
 - In the event of a tie in the Resident or Business/Property Owner elections, the process will be resolved in one of the following ways:
 - A vote of the sitting WA Board will be taken to select a candidate
 - A coin flip will determine which candidate is selected
 - A coin flip will determine which candidate is selected for the three year board seat; if there are any current vacancies of the same board seat type, the losing candidate may be appointed by the sitting WA Board to serve in the remainder of the vacant seat's term
 - In the event of a tie in a committee chair election, both of the top vote getters will serve as co-chairs and represent the committee on the WA Board with equal voting power and membership.

Remote Ballots

Overview: In an effort to expand access to decision making, we offer a digital voting option in addition to in-person opportunities across the 7 day voting period. A secure election software, Election Runner, will be utilized to ensure that the only ballots cast online are by registered Whittier Alliance members and that access to them is restricted after they are submitted.

Process:

- The list of registered voters will be uploaded to Election Runner. Each voter is assigned a unique pin by the system.
- If the voter provided an email address:
 - They will receive an email notification that the election voting period has begun with a unique link to access their secure ballot.
 - Members registering with an email after the voting period has begun will receive their ballot notification as soon as they are added to Election Runner individually.
- If the voter did not provide an email address:
 - They can contact the WA office to request their unique pin after verifying their information. Voters will be provided with their unique pin and a secure link to the election to begin voting.
- Links generated by Election Runner will not allow multiple votes to be cast and automatically deactivate after 5pm on the final day of voting.

In-Person Ballots

Overview: To mitigate some of the barriers some community members face in operating in the digital space, WA will offer one-on-one, multilingual support (English, Spanish, and Somali) with casting both digital and paper ballots in person at the Whittier Alliance office. In-person voting hours will be publicized, so that members know when they can come by for assistance in their preferred language.

Process:

- **Digital ballots**

- Upon arrival, the person's voting eligibility will be checked by the staff member on hand; if they are newly registering and a second staff member is available, the cross-check will take place immediately to confirm registration. If not, the ballot cast will be marked as provisional.
 - Staff will manually add the voter to Election Runner, which will then create the voter's unique pin.
 - A computer or tablet will be set up for voters to enter their unique pin into Election Runner to submit their ballot.
- **Paper Ballots**
 - For members who are mobility-challenged or housebound, and/or prefer for any other reason to vote on paper, printed ballots in English, Spanish, and Somali will be available upon request.
 - Printed ballots may be requested for drop-off and pick-up at off-site locations that would reach members who otherwise would likely not be able to vote, such as senior community housing.
 - Requests can be made by calling or emailing the WA office at 612-871-7756 or info@whittieralliance.org.
 - Requests must be made by 5pm on Monday, May 16th, 2022.
 - A ballot will be delivered by a WA staff member to the voter's home address by 5pm on Tuesday, May 17th.
 - Ballots will be picked up by 12pm on Friday, May 20th by a second WA staff member; this process shall serve as the cross check for confirming someone's address for voting eligibility if they were not previously registered.
 - Printed ballots provided to each voter will include:
 - A registration card be completed and submitted to WA with the completed ballot
 - A list of acceptable methods for establishing voting eligibility
 - A printed and numbered ballot with a sealed envelope to be returned in
 - A print-out of the online voter guide information
 - Members voting in person with a paper ballot who are not yet registered will need to either complete the online registration form and have their ballot marked as provisional or provide paper documentation verifying voting eligibility along with the completed registration card and ballot in the sealed envelope provided.

Voter Outreach

Overview: In accordance with Minnesota State law regarding nonprofit governance, membership of the organization shall not receive formal notice of the WA Annual Meeting more than 30 days prior, nor less than 15 days from date of the meeting. Whittier Alliance sends a neighborhood-wide mailer out to all households and businesses about 30 days prior, including information on when and where the meeting will take place (or where to access the meeting link if held virtually) and the basics of what will be discussed or voted on. The information on the mailer is provided in English, Spanish, and Somali.

In addition to the mailer, WA staff, Board members, and volunteers conduct multiple methods of in-depth, culturally-relevant outreach to ensure members know about the opportunity and how to participate. Strategies prioritize connection with members of Whittier's East African and Latinx communities, BIPOC neighbors, non-English speakers, renters, MCAD students, and others who are more often underrepresented in neighborhood voting opportunities.

Outreach strategies:

- Neighborhood-wide mailer (approximately 8,500 addresses)
- Meeting, election, and voter information on the Whittier Alliance website; content can be viewed in English, Spanish, Somali, Arabic, Vietnamese, Hmong, & Chinese (Simplified)
- Social media channels provide regular meeting content and updates (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Discord, and NextDoor)

- WA's email newsletter list receives regular meeting information, reminders, and promotion of artists and other details
- Providing necessary, culturally-responsive context on participation to Somali women in a WhatsApp managed by WA staff
- Utilizing mass text software like Callfire to send multilingual text messages to large numbers of people at once
- Neighborhood-wide flyering and door-knocking, prioritizing portions of the neighborhood with larger populations of Spanish and Somali speakers
- Partner with property management companies to distribute meeting information directly to tenants via interior door-knocking/flyering and resident newsletters/e-blasts
- Targeted flyering in businesses serving culturally diverse community members
- Partnering with neighborhood faith leaders to communicate the opportunity to their congregations/constituencies
- Provide promotional copy and images to neighborhood partner organizations who work primarily with place-based constituents, such as Minneapolis College of Art and Design and Whittier Rec Center