

(8/18/09): Cincinnati NAACP Shares Important Updates on Streetcar and Water Petitions

Cincinnati NAACP shares important updates on the Cincinnati Streetcar and Water Petitions.

Important update on Streetcar Petition and Water Petition Cincinnati NAACP

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- Petitions were delivered to Clerk of Council on August 3, 2009. Petitions were filed legally and in good order.
 - Petitions were held by the City of Cincinnati for 10 days. (The Cincinnati NAACP Legal Redress Chair has not identified the law that requires the City to hold signatures for 10 days. There is a provision for the County petitions to be held for 10 days).....
 - The Cincinnati NAACP disputed that the signatures if held for 10 days should be released on August 13, 2009. The City argued that they do NOT count August 3, 2009 as a day based on the law. The first day counted for the 10 day hold period would be August 4, 2009.
 - The City of Cincinnati released both petitions to the Board of Elections on Friday August 14, 2009. The Board of Elections will certify both petitions this week if the needed number of signatures are valid. The needed numbers of signatures is 6,150 good signatures for each petition. The Cincinnati NAACP is waiting for confirmation from the Board of Elections that the needed threshold has been met. This is a very important step to achieve in the process of successfully petitioning your government.....
 - After the Board of Elections officially certifies the petitions they will notify the Clerk of Council and the City of Cincinnati that the people have successfully achieved the threshold of 6,150 signatures and will request language for the ballot.....
 - The Cincinnati NAACP Legal Redress Chair, Chris Finney, and President of the Cincinnati NAACP met with two city lawyers by conference call on Friday, August 14, 2009 at 3:30 pm. The head lawyer for the City Attorney John Curp was one of the two lawyers. The point of the meeting was to assert to the City that the Cincinnati NAACP would like to be apart of the process to write the language that the citizens of Cincinnati will see on November 3, 2009. Attorney Chris Finney ask the city lawyers if they had drafted any language or had had any conversation about the language to date. The lawyers said that it was client privilege. This means the city lawyers communicated that they were not the lawyers for the Citizens of Cincinnati who pay their salaries but the lawyers for the Mayor and City Council. This is true. It is a very important point that all citizens must understand.
 - The Legal Redress Chair said that he would send an email everyday to the city requesting if any language has been written for his review and asserting that we would like to be apart of that process.
 - The Legal Redress Chair identified to the city lawyers that it did not seem like the NAACP would see the language in a timely and cooperative spirit but he would send the emails each day asking to be apart of the process.
 - The City Council will vote to put both issues on the ballot at the September 2, 2009 meeting. All members of Council at the September 2, 2009 meeting must vote YES to place the issues on the ballot by law. It is a very important and powerful process to watch the elected officials submit to the will of the people. We encourage all those who signed the petition or circulated the petition to come to city hall by 2:00 pm to watch Democracy in process. I predict that Council Member Bortz who has a conflict of interest with the streetcar project and supports selling our water will politically grandstand but at the end of the day be forced to submit with a yes vote placing both issues on the ballot. I expect similar behavior from Council Member Berding but he also will have to submit and vote yes to place both issues on the ballot.
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- Our Legal Redress Chair was advised by the city lawyers at the August 14, 2009 meeting that we would most likely not see the language that he has written for the ballot until September 3, 2009. It is so important that every citizen understand that the Cincinnati NAACP nor any of its partners have anything to do with writing the language for the ballot. The Members of Council and the Mayor who support a \$200 million streetcar and the selling of our water will use this last opportunity to confuse voters. They are not interested in Democracy but only interested in getting what they want for their special interest groups.....
 - This means that the Cincinnati NAACP will not see the language for the ballot until September 3, 2009.....
 - The language by law must be at the Board of Elections by September 4, 2009. The Board of Elections will then place the language on the ballot that the Cincinnati City Lawyers have written who only represent the Mayor and City Council. The Board of Elections must have the language by September 4, 2009 so they have the opportunity to mail absentee ballots to citizens.
 - This time line only gives the Cincinnati NAACP 24 hours to review the language that the City has written and have any input or challenge the language in the court of law. It is unrealistic that the Cincinnati NAACP would challenge the language in the court of law because that would not allow for the September 4, 2009 Board of Election deadline to be met. This is why we have been concerned about the petitions being held for 10 days if the law does not specifically require this for the City of Cincinnati. Also we remain unclear why August 3, 2009 was not counted as one day. Each day

in this process is critical.....

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The Cincinnati NAACP has the legal right to petition its government. African Americans have been excluded from the voting process and we refuse to go back to Jim Crow. The process to petition our government is not easy as you can see from the email above. At each step the elected officials can undermine democracy if we are not vigilant in protecting our voting rights. The Cincinnati NAACP remains concerned with the public policy direction of the Democratic Party which controls the majority of City Council and the Mayor's office. The Mayor continues to push a streetcar as he lays off over 300 city workers. The Cincinnati Retirement Plan shortfall remains the biggest issue that the City of Cincinnati faces. It can bankrupt the City of Cincinnati.