



Memorandum

To: John Szerlag
From: John M. Lamerato, Assistant City Manager/Finance and Administration
 Tonni L. Bartholomew, City Clerk
Date: January 4, 2006
Subject: Election Precincts and Polling Locations

Attached to this memorandum is a proposed resolution for consideration by the City Council to consider dissolving Precinct 31 located in Oakland Park Towers. State Statute requires that Precinct Boundary Changes be made no less than 200 days before a State-Wide Primary Election. Due to that requirement, Council must act on this matter at the meeting on January 9, 2006.

The City of Troy mails every registered voter of Oakland Park Towers an Absent Voter Application prior to every election. Many of the residents in the towers take advantage of the Absent Voter opportunity and thus turnout for in-person voting is extremely low and very costly per voter. The following is a two-year voting pattern and cost estimate for Precinct 31. Please note that the City of Troy began mailing Absent Voter Applications to all residents over the age of 60 in 2005. The numbers for 2004 would not show the impact of such a mailing.

ELECTION DATE	VOTED IN PERSON	VOTED ABSENTEE
April 2004	69	122
August 2004	96	134
November 2004	332	257
May 2005	24	110
November 2005	53	174

The cost savings associated with elimination of Precinct 31 are estimated as follows:

Election Inspector Wages	\$750.00
Equipment Set-up and Delivery	160.00
Precinct Supplies	25.00
Ballots*	115.00
Equipment Coding	50.00
Estimated savings per election	\$1050.00

*Costs associated with ballots would be reduced due to the requirement to order ballots in 100 lots and the costs associated with additional sample and test ballots that are directly associated with each individual precinct would also be eliminated.

In addition to the hard costs associated with each precinct, it should be noted that each precinct adds significantly to straight time staffing. This staffing is used in writing test decks, testing equipment, preparing supply kits, delivering supplies to precincts and on election day in routine precinct visits.

It is the goal of the City Clerks Office to dual locate every precinct for efficiency and cost saving measures, such as the reduction of inspector staffing, sharing of precinct supplies, reduction of staffing required to deliver and pick-up equipment, as well as Election Day troubleshooting. Additionally, dual precincts can be consolidated in non-state-wide elections for dramatic cost savings. Precinct 31 as a stand-alone precinct provides an added burden as it does not afford us the ability to take advantage of the dual precinct benefits.

It should also be noted that the City Clerk's Office staff routinely visits senior facilities, including Oakland Park Towers, prior to elections to register voters and to provide assistance with the absentee process by delivering and picking up applications to vote.

The City Clerk's Office contacted Ms. Patti Dery, Manager of Oakland Park Towers, and requested to meet with her regarding the elimination of the facility as a precinct. When we advised her of our concerns, Ms. Dery was not surprised and said that she has witnessed for herself the low voter turnout and the high cost that must be associated by maintaining a precinct at Oakland Park Towers. Ms. Dery was assured that should the precinct be eliminated, the City Clerk's Office would continue to work with her and the residents by keeping them informed of upcoming elections and assisting them as we do the other senior facilities. Ms. Dery was very understanding and agreed with the elimination.

While it is recognized as a service to have the precinct in Oakland Park Towers, as it has been demonstrated the service is extremely expensive per vote. With voter turn out as low as 24 voters in a 13 hour period, an estimated cost of \$44.00 per vote, it is just not feasible to continue to operate Precinct 31, especially considering that every voter in Precinct 31 receives an Absentee Voter Application for every election. Oakland Park Towers is the only senior facility within Troy utilized as a precinct for the sole purpose of its residents. Should the precinct be eliminated the voters would be contained within Precinct 30 and would vote at St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church at 2160 E. Maple. The polling location is approximately 3,000 feet from Oakland Park Towers. It should be noted that the Troy American House facility directly adjacent to Oakland Park Towers on Grand Haven vote at Precinct 30 at St. George.

The Election Commission is scheduled to meet on Monday, January 9th prior to the City Council meeting to make a recommendation to City Council on this matter. The recommendation could be placed on the Council table for their consideration.

It is my belief that it is financially prudent for City Management to move this item forward for consideration of City Council. Should City Council act on the request, the City Clerk's Office will provide notice in the precinct at the May 2, 2006 Election with written notices to be mailed to every registered voter in Precinct 31 as required by State Statute. The Clerk's Office will also provide notice to Oakland Park Tower Management and provide the local newspaper with a news briefing on the precinct change.