

Unscheduled Meeting

**Teleconference
October 9, 2008**

Present were: Audrey Clement, Kirit Mookerjee, Tom and Tamar Yager(Arlington) , Charlie Jordan (Blue Ridge) , Chris Fink (Fredericksburg), Paul Hughes (NoVA), Scott Burger (Richmond) , Mike Rosenberg (Virginia Beach).

The meeting was called to discuss a possible GPVA endorsement of Richmond independent mayoral candidate Paul Goldman in the election on November 4. In the meanwhile, however, Goldman had indicated that while he welcomes the endorsement of the Richmond Greens, he is not seeking the endorsement of GPVA. Nevertheless Scott Burger advised that since no mayoral candidate is likely to get a majority of the nine city council districts needed to win the election, a run-off election will probably occur. Scott sees this as an opportunity for GPVA to petition for a referendum to replace run-off elections with IRV in Richmond and elsewhere in the state.

However, Scott also mentioned that there are significant obstacles to the adoption of IRV in Virginia. First, he believes that the petition would require 10,000 signatures to get on the ballot. Second some argue that IRV would violate the Voting Rights Act insofar as it might dilute the minority vote if adopted on a city wide basis. Concerns about dilution of minority votes resulted in Richmond's current law, which requires mayoral candidates to win the popular vote in five out of nine council districts to get elected. To maintain racial balance, an IRV tabulation would have to occur in each of Richmond's council districts, with the IRV outcome in all districts determining whether any candidate had a majority of districts. If no one won a majority of districts after the first IRV tabulation, it might be difficult to determine which candidate(s) to eliminate in the next district by district tabulation. Scott offered to research and write a proposal to introduce IRV elections in Virginia for consideration at the next GPVA meeting.

A subsequent motion by Charlie Jordan to endorse Paul Goldman for mayor of Richmond was defeated on a vote of 7-0-1.

It was agreed by consensus to tentatively schedule the next meet of GPVA via teleconference on November 23 at 3 p.m. and to direct committee conveners to have their committee reports available by then.

Audrey Clement