



## HSVPOA Denies HSV People Access to Vote Count

### Description

By [Cheryl Dowden](#), March 24, 2020

Hot Springs Village Property Owners' Association held its Board of Directors vote count today, March 24, 2020. Hot Springs Village People requested to document and report on the vote count procedures, but we were denied access.

### Vote process was riddled with problems

This count was originally supposed to occur on March 19 but was delayed due to the failure of many ballots not being mailed out as originally scheduled. The excuse given for this fiasco was the resignation of Buddy Dixon.

The whole election process has been fraught with missteps. We were informed about an envelope missing a ballot and one envelope containing two ballots.

There are numerous reports of some Property Owners being denied their right to vote by nonreceipt of ballots. There was no procedure set to address this issue. It was "too bad" if you didn't receive a ballot.

Of course, we cannot actually prove that some Property Owners were not in receipt of ballots due to the careless manner the POA conducted the election. As there are no identifiers on the ballots or envelopes, there is no way of telling who returned a ballot or who didn't. This supposedly was done in the guise of confidentiality. There is a system that could have accurately addressed this issue and maintained the confidentiality of all voters.

### Double Envelope Voting System

There is a well-known system used by other Associations called the "Double-envelope System" that would have remedied this situation. The Double-envelope System is a confidential method used to keep track of all votes. This system is a foolproof way of maintaining the confidentiality of voters. This system, in tandem with other checks and balances, would reduce if not completely prevent election

fraud by both the POA and Property Owners. (I am not suggesting that any Property Owner has ever committed voter fraud or that the POA has slipped in extra ballots.)

If a Property Owner claimed he/she did not receive a ballot, he/she could be supplied with one. If this Property Owner was mistaken or lying, then proof of this would turn up during the vote count. This is how the Double-envelope System works:

“The outside envelope contains the voter’s information. The people who handle those envelopes confirm that the voter is eligible, hasn’t already had a ballot counted, etc.”

“Provided that there are no irregularities, they then certify the ballot as eligible and remove the outer envelope.” This ballot would be checked off of a master list of Property Owners/Properties. Of course, some Property Owners would have their name more than one time on the master list and have multiple ballots, if they were owners of more than one property.

The now certified ballot, contained within the inner envelope, is then passed on in a batch to be counted by other election officials.

“The purpose of this is to preserve voting secrecy. The officials who know who cast the ballot don’t see the ballot. The officials who count the ballots don’t know what voter cast them. So no one ever knows how you actually voted.”

### **HSVPOA Board Denies HSV People**

Although Hot Springs Village Voice and KVRE were allowed to view the vote count, Chair Cindi Erickson denied Hot Springs Village People. The excuse was COVID-19. Initially, Chair Erickson only approved for the Village Voice to attend. She changed her mind when KVRE expressed its dissatisfaction with being left out and permitted them to attend. Chair Erickson failed to give HSV People the same opportunity.

Was access denied perhaps because we have often published disagreeing opinions regarding the actions of HSVPOA Board and Management, or because some of the Villagers’ comments on this website are not very favorable to the POA Board and management?

In the past, there have been numerous reports of retaliation against those outspoken against the POA. As long as the POA picks and chooses the news sources and shows favoritism, there will be no real freedom of the press in Hot Springs Village.

### **Lorri Street requested we be allowed to attend the count**

Lorri Street, the founder of “We the People,” also requested that Joe and I be allowed to attend this count. In an email to Ms. Nalley and Chairman of the Election Day Committee Kahle, Ms. Street had this to say:

“As a volunteer member of the ballot counting committee, I think it’s of paramount importance that the reporting team of Cheryl and Joe Dowden also be included to further add integrity and credibility to the overall ballot-counting process. That gesture would be seen by many, many HSV Property Owners as a step toward more ballot counting transparency.”

Yes, Lorri is right. The gesture would have been seen by many as a step towards transparency. Guess the Board once again dropped that ball.

We will do better next year!

## **A big shout out of appreciation to the vote counters**

**Thank you to the Villagers who volunteered to count the votes today. These are selfless individuals who freely gave of their time and efforts to perform this painstaking and tedious chore and we will be forever indebted to you for this service.**

By Cheryl Dowden, March 24, 2020

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### **Date Created**

03/24/2020

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