

CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA  
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA



Agenda Date:	May 2, 2022
Action Required:	Ordinance Enactment
Staff Contacts:	Taylor Yowell, Director of Elections and General Registrar Katrina Callsen, Deputy City Attorney
Presenters:	Taylor Yowell, Director of Elections and General Registrar
Title:	<b>Central Absentee Precinct Change (2<sup>nd</sup> of 2 Readings)</b>

**Background:**

A central absentee voting precinct (CAP) is a location in a public building where absentee ballots are processed and counted on the day of the election in the presence of election officials. Virginia Code Section 2.2-712 states that each locality shall establish, by ordinance, one or more central absentee voter precincts. The City of Charlottesville maintains one central absentee voter precinct at City Hall established by Charlottesville City Code Section 9-31.

In the past two years concerns about the spread of COVID-19 prompted the Charlottesville Electoral Board and the Charlottesville General Registrar and Director of Elections to recommend that the central absentee voter precinct be temporarily moved from City Hall to City Space. City Council approved this recommendation and adopted temporary ordinances that allowed for the location change for the November 2020, June 2021, and November 2021 Elections.

The Charlottesville General Registrar and Director of Election would like the central absentee voter precinct to be permanently moved from City Hall to City Space.

**Discussion:**

City Space is a public building that is approximately 400 ft. away from City Hall. The process of Absentee Voting would remain unchanged for voters. Absentee voting has grown over the past two year and the City Space location has a larger room that can better accommodate the increasing number of absentee votes that must be processed on election day. In addition, the larger space more easily accommodates the equipment needed to process the ballots and provides election officials and election workers better ventilation and more space in which to work.

To enact the change, Council must amend City Code Section 9-31 and identify City Space as the new CAP location. In addition, City Code Section 9-31 needs to be updated to accurately reflect current section numbering in the Virginia Code; former §24.1-233.1 is now §24.2-712.

The ordinance change, if approved, would go into effect June 6, 2022.

**Alignment with City Council's Vision and Strategic Plan:** A Well-Managed and Responsive Organization.

**Community Engagement:** The public received several opportunities to provide input. The Office of Elections and Voter Registration provided public notice of the change, held a public comment period exceeding 30 days, and conducted a public hearing at the April 4, 2022 Council meeting.

**Budgetary Impact:** Moving the CAP to City Space would have no expected financial impact.

**Recommendations:** Staff recommends approval of the ordinance change.

**Alternatives:** Council may reject the ordinance and the central absentee voter precinct would remain at City Hall.

**Attachments:** Ordinance moving the central absentee voter precinct from City Hall to City Space.

**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING AND RE-ORDAINING CHAPTER 9 (ELECTIONS),  
SECTION 9-31 (CENTRAL ABSENTEE VOTER DISTRICT) TO CHANGE THE  
LOCATION OF THE CENTRAL ABSENTEE VOTER PRECINCT FROM CITY HALL  
TO CITY SPACE**

**BE IT ORDAINED** by the Council of the City of Charlottesville, Virginia that Section 9-31 of Chapter 9 of the Charlottesville City Code, 1990, as amended, is hereby amended and re-ordained, as follows:

**Sec. 9-31. - Central absentee voter district.**

There is hereby established a central absentee voter election district in ~~city hall~~ City Space for the purpose of receiving, counting and recording all absentee ballots in all elections cast within the city. Such central absentee voter election district shall receive, count and record all absentee ballots in accordance with the requirements of section ~~24.1-233.1~~ 24.2-712 of the Code of Virginia and all other applicable provisions of law. This shall be effective ~~February 1, 1979,~~ June 6, 2022, and shall remain in effect until repealed by the council.