

**Hopkins Charter Commission
Annual Report
2007**

The Hopkins Charter Commission met on April 24.

The Commission continued to work on the issue of Instant Runoff Voting (IRV).

The City of Minneapolis approved IRV voting in November 2006. In 2007, the Minneapolis Election Department began working with the Secretary of State's office on statewide standards for conduct of Municipal IRV elections.

The IRV method proposed in Minneapolis is similar to that used in Hopkins for single seat election. However, it differs for multiple seat elections.

The Commission discussed the advantages and disadvantages of a state standard on Instant Runoff Voting.

The advantages would include protection from lawsuits. A statewide standard would have to be challenged as a violation of the state constitution. The Attorney General would likely defend against any such suit.

Standards would allow the same system to be adopted by a number of cities. Costs for software or hardware changes could be shared among a number of cities.

Disadvantages may include a different manner of electing multiple candidates for multiple seats, the situation that exists when electing Hopkins Council Members.

There was considerable discussion about which way Hopkins should go. The consensus was that the City should try to influence the state standard by providing whichever body is studying IRV with a copy of the proposed Hopkins method.

The Commission then discussed holding a mock election to educate the public on IRV. The Commission discussed the manner of the election and what the election would be about. The Commission determined that ballots could be mailed out with the City newsletter. There was discussion about holding the mock election in 2007 and using the presidential candidates. There remained a question about how that would work with the multiple candidates running for multiple seats.

In the end the Commission approved the following actions:

1. Staff would contact the League of Minnesota Cities to determine how many cities currently elect council members in a similar manner as Hopkins.
2. The proposed "Hopkins IRV method" would be forwarded to the Secretary of State's office as a suggestion for handling such elections, using IRV, and also to seek comments about this method.
3. The Commission would conduct a "mock election" sometime in 2007 for the purpose of educating the public about IRV.

4. Commissioner Hesch would contact Fairvote for advice on how to conduct such a "mock election."

Commissioner Hesch and Assistant City Manager Jim Genellie represented the Commission at meetings held by the Secretary of States office on IRV.