Prop 218 in Cambria, CA

September 2007: First notice of rate increase is sent out. Those campaigning against the protest since the announcement at the August 2007 meeting were told that signatures gathered before the notice went out would not be counted. Starting from scratch, protest leaders sparked the energy of town and about 3500 letters were submitted to the District - 2266 of which were validated. Once the District had validated a clear majority, they stopped doing any other counting. The LOWV was paid to observe the process. The cost was split between the District and the CFRC (protest group). The public was not permitted to observe.

November 2, 2007: The CCSD Board accepted the official count and that the proposed rate increase could not be implemented.

May 2008: Concerned Cambrians who had been meeting and working on the issues and motivated to work to help the CCSD get the needed increase begin asking for the criteria that will be used and for a list of the affected parcels. The new protest group (lead by about half of the same people as the first protest) received a response to their request for the affected parcels that was 20 pages with a single column of APN#s (Assessor Parcel Numbers), no names, no addresses and over 400 of which were duplicate numbers. Once the duplicates were removed, the number of parcels is 3907. The district refuses all attempts to confirm or deny this number.

May 23, 2008: The District sends out a second rate increase notice (4547 notices were sent – property owners and tenant customers all received notices) and sets hearing date for July 14, 2008.

July 14, 2008: The District told the local newspaper they had only received 20 letters of protest. At that hearing, the protest coordinators submitted just under 2500 letters of protest. The group (CFR) made copies of every single protest received and worked to cross reference the addresses to parcel numbers using the County’s records (available online). When they turned the originals over to the District, they estimated there were probably 200 or so duplicates and each and every letter had been in some way correlated with the APN list they had gotten as a public records request.

The Board directed that members of the community should be allowed to observe the counting process and the Board once again hired LOWV, this time, footing the entire bill, which included several hundred dollars in mileage paid to the two volunteers.

July 15-18: Citizens were permitted to observe, in silence, not talking to the staff or the League volunteers. The first 3 days were spent alphabetizing (by street address) the entire set of letters. Then they seemed to log the letters manually, then pass them on to a be entered into whatever system was being used to catalog or classify them on the computer. Requests to the District and the League (in writing) for an explanation of the process we were watching went unanswered. When the staff wrapped up on Friday evening, they indicated the counting would resume on Monday morning, with an announcement of results at 6pm that evening.

July 21, 2008: Observers arrived Monday to find staff and League had actually worked over the weekend, excluding the citizen observers. The count wasn’t ready for that evening and the scheduled meeting was called for lack of Quorum. The District Council and General Manager and the staff voluntarily stayed for an hour answering questions from those in attendance. One of the most hopeful things we were told that day was that the District Counsel would sit down with some of the observers and go over each and every invalidated protest.


**First Week of August** I was able to talk to the SLO League of Women Voters president to ask some specific questions (a connection helped by my mother-in-law, who is a past president). According to President Ann Garfinkel, who had received a report from the observers less than two hours before I talked to her, said the LOWV did not make any determinations to validate or invalidate any individual votes. The criteria was set by the District. The LOWV suggested a small sample for signature verification. Upon finding 8 in 92 randomly chosen protests to be possibly invalid or fraudulent signatures, the LOWV suggested the letters be taken to the County Clerk-Recorder to verify the validity of the signatures. All 2500 protest letters were processed using the computerized program the Clerk-Recorder. About 50% were registered voters, so had signatures on file. If the clerk-recorder had no signature on file, it was considered valid. Of the signatures on file, 80 were “miscompared”, 61 were invalidated. (The others were duplicates.)

**August 11, 2008** A Press release is issued on the CCSD's website that the final counts had been tallied and the protest had failed to get 50% plus 1. The district had still not proven the number of total accounts or parcels they were using to get the 50% plus one. A public records request for the disqualified protests is submitted. I requested any emails or written agreement or contract with the League of Women Voters.

**August 18, 2008** District Counsel cancels scheduled meeting to go over the disqualified protests, indicating the Executive Council of the Board told him to cancel it. So there was no opportunity to go over them prior to certification by the board and their resolution to adopt the increased rates.

**August 21, 2008** Regular August meeting. Board certifies the vote without asking any questions of the LOWV or the staff, in spite of clear evidence presented by staff and during public comment that there were some numbers in dispute.

The district claims two number possibilities: the number of CCSD accounts (3999) and number of parcels served (3929). Neither one is consistent with the public records that have been provided and the District seems to have made no attempt to do so.

**August 27, 2008** My public records request response was ready

**August 28, 2008** 294 disqualified protests turned over in response to request on August 11, 2008. This is not the same number as the District claimed were invalidated. More inconsistency of numbers and no attempt to clear up the confusion.

**November 4, 2008** 2 new directors and one appointed in April 2008 win the election, unseating two long-time incumbents and changing the majority of the Board. (The other two were replaced in the 2010 election.)

**January 9, 2009** The first act of the newly seated Board was to rescind the contested rate increase citing the threat of litigation. Fighting against the impending lawsuit would have just exacerbated the problem – what with attorney fees and all the lost billing cycles when the increase could’ve padded the accounts.


No further attempts to increase the rates have been undertaken. Cambria CSD has a new General Manager as of April 28, 2011. Interest (and meeting attendance) has slipped to pre-2007 protest levels. Most of those at the meetings are either local government junkies/aspiring officials or desal opponents.
The following narrative was written in August 2008 to try to get help from outside experts for our situation – a situation that is best described as a crisis in confidence and near complete loss of trust in the CCSD Board, GM and employees.

Here are 2 links with additional details:
http://aboutcambria.com/2008/08/14/at-least-we-havent-been-bored/

Until the August 21 meeting, details about what the standards and subtleties of the verification process were kept from the public. Individual Cambrians were told that they would not be able to find out if their protest was invalidated until after the Board certified the count and passed the rate increase - when it would seem to be too late to do anything about it.

I submitted a request for all public records requests put in during the May-September 2008 period. Below is more narrative about the past year.

Cambria has a unique situation and could really use someone on our side in our current battle. The story is long and sordid and full of distrust on both sides (aren't they all.) I believe ours is one of the only "close call" majority protests under Prop 218 and could lead to an influential decision on a level near the Bighorn or Santa Clara decisions. At the least, it should prove that additional procedures must be specified for the process as it related to water and sewer rates. More and more communities are facing the prospect of organized and informed opposition. And this situation really blows.

*In a nutshell:*
Our town of about 6500 has just gone through the prop 218 rate increase in less than a year and this time the vote is VERY close - and the way it has been handled makes it seem like the District worked HARD to manipulate the final tally, imposing rules "on the fly" that would cause more protests to be disqualified. The group campaigning against the rate increase made a public records request for the invalidated protests on

What follows is some of the history of the past year. I am glad to talk with you or answer any questions you might have. You can also find out more at my blog http://www.AboutCambria.com where I've been writing about this saga since November 2007. Please forward this on to anyone you think might be interested the possibility of a really influential case. We are a small community with big things happening.

*The History: *
Last September, the Cambria Community Services District sent out notices to all the customers that their rates would be going up - significantly. Thanks to the hard work of many volunteers, about 3600 protest letters were submitted before the deadline. In a process overseen by two League of Women Voter’s representatives, 2266 were found to be valid. The LWV were brought in to assure the District didn’t "lose" or forget to count any protests. The two women were paid $20 per hour each, the cost split between the district and the volunteer group opposing the increase.
During the 45 day period between the notice and the public hearing, the district changed their minds several times as to who was eligible to send a protest. At one point a tenant had half a vote, the property owner half. Every request to know how many total parcels/properties/accounts there were went unanswered. One public records request asked the District to identify which parcels were subject to the rate increase for water and which for wastewater (since there are a handful that only have one or the other). The newspaper printed that if 2,001 protests were submitted, the protest would succeed. By the time they began counting, they had decided that either the tenant customer or the property owner could protest, and either on would count. With so many protests submitted, the district staff declared the protest successful and on November 2, 2007, the Board received the report and after nearly moving forward on forming a citizen's committee to get a more acceptable increase going, decided to let everyone "cool off" before deciding what they would do.

In the meantime, a group of Cambrians that had helped mount the protest campaign continued to meet once a week to look further into the state of the district. As part of the process of building support for the protest, a committee was formed to determine if the district did indeed need an increase. When they determined an increase was warranted, they set about working on how much the district might need the rates to go up, since they had been running the enterprise funds at a loss for several years running. A second subcommittee formed to review the capital improvement projects the district had on deck to prioritize them to reduce the financial burden by ensure public safety.

November's meeting gave us the impression the district would be asking for citizen's to join their citizen's committee and provide input, since it seemed obvious that the district was out of touch with the community it serves.

We prepared to introduce our group at the December meeting and submitted a request to be on the agenda. The December meeting was cancelled the following Monday. In January, we once again requested to be on the agenda - and were - but the Board took no action and appeared to have made a 180 about a citizen's group. We continued to meet, knowing another rates increase was on the horizon and continued to try to connect with the Board and staff with our ideas, to no avail.

A budget workshop was held in April (though "workshop" would seem to indicate there was some give and get, which there wasn't) and at the end of May, after the budget had been approved by the Board, a second rates increase notice went out. The District refused to enclose a form protest/support, as the LWV has suggested in the fall after that count. But this time, there was a core group of well-organized volunteers out collecting signatures at Farmer's Market every Friday and in front of the post office every day. They also mailed out the form protest letter, with blank lines for the required information, to Cambrian and Cambria Property Owners and said people could return the letters to the CCSD or to a P.O. Box the group had rented specifically for this purpose.

On the hearing date, the number of protests needed was STILL a question unanswered, but the District thought it would be smooth sailing. They had only received a few dozen protest letters and it seemed like there was no way the protest would even be close. Then Tina
Dickason approached the podium. Tina has spearheaded the first protest and clearly made the Board nervous. She submitted nearly 2500 original signed letters of protest on behalf of tenants and property owners who had sent them to the opposition's P.O. Box because they did not trust the district. Fewer than the last protest, but definitely within the realm of possibility, even with duplicates tossed out.

The LWV was once again brought in and paid to oversee the process, which started the day after the hearing (July 15). But this time, they were paid only by the CCSD. The Board directed staff to allow for concerned Cambrians to also watch the counting process. I attended for several hours on a couple of the days of that first week. The room was set up with large tables dividing the room, staff far on one end and citizen observers on the other. We were not allowed to speak to the counters or each other, to even whisper - understandable considering the concentration required.

One volunteer for the protest group had spent a great deal of time creating a database from the parcel numbers provided by the District and the names and addresses corresponding to the protests they had received through the P.O.Box. They also made a copy of every single protest. What they were hoping to do was to check off the protests as the district either validated or invalidated the protests, so they could challenge the disqualified ones if necessary and ensure those who were to get more than one protest counted, would get it.

At the end of the day Friday (July 19th) The District Counsel and Clerk said they would spend the weekend doing some verifications and matching with their customer data and the LWV and citizens would come back to finish Monday. Monday morning it was discovered the LWV had in fact been there over the weekend and they had finished the initial counting and matching to addresses.

Three weeks passed since the hearing on the rates, two since the date originally scheduled for the announcement of its success or failure. Those watching the process during the first week (before they closed their doors to the public) say actual counting didn't start until Friday, July 18 and continued through that weekend. Validations started Monday the 21st of July.

According to Ms. Rudock, the staff is not working on this full time anymore. A friend who went in to the CCSD office to pay her bill today asked the questions a lot of Cambrians have on their mind about the Prop 218 voting: First, can I find out if my protest was counted? The standard answer, provided in a nice way, was “not until the counting is finished.” Concerned her vote would not be validated and added to the total AFTER the counting was done, she asked if she could leave a sample of her signatures, since she has two distinct ways she signs things. The woman behind the counter (Suzy, I believe) was helpful, but unsure whether or not she could accept such a thing (though she was very helpful and professional - even during and after a call from a customer who was clearly neither). Monique came into the front office during their conversation and took the copies of my friends signature, though she wasn’t sure they’d use it.

The staff has likely been fielding many calls and visits every day of the past three weeks, some less than polite. Most of the staff is just as in the dark as the rest of the community, as the counters work behind closed doors and with no small amount of secrecy. The District Clerk, District Counsel, two other CCSD staff members and the League of Women Voters
reps (I assume) had been working on the count...whether this is still the crew counting and how many hours a day are devoted are unknown.

Doing a bit of math, if they check each and every protest (up to 2001, the number needed to defeat the increase) and each one is examined for about 5 minutes, it would take about 167 hours for one person to count and validate that many. That comes out to about 20 full-time 8 hour days with no lunch break. They MUST be getting close. It’s been over two weeks since an update - so how about one? Perhaps the Cambrian will have some new information....For now, here is some information originally posted as a comment to another post. Recommended reading from Mary Webb, who watched the whole first week of counting - free of charge to Cambrians. Thanks, Mary.

From Mary Webb:

It took 3 CCSD employees and 2 (CCSD paid) League of Women Voters representatives eight full days to alphabetize and review 2500 protests. Although the CCSD continues to label this review a “League of Women Voter’s” process, most League questions were directed to and answered by CCSD staff members Pam Duffield and Kathy Choate. In fact, the C.F.R. observers were concerned enough about this lack of oversight by the LOWV at the beginning of the week that we asked the League of Women Voter’s to observe what Duffield and Choate were doing, rather than sorting and alphabetizing the protests by street name. In response to our requests, LOWV Sara Horne agreed to move her chair closer to the CCSD employees following our request for more oversight.

After one week, of sitting in mandatory silence and observing the CCSD staff and League of Women voters sort and alphabetize and remove ballots for signature concerns, and supposed duplicates, we were finally getting to the validation process. Friday, July 18 was spent in an orderly fashion checking off addresses alphabetically, beginning with “A thru F”, a process that took 7 hours. I earned a lot on Friday as the CCSD staff was finally talking loud enough that we could hear what was being said, and the conversation involved the actual dispositioning of the protests. In other words, I could figure out what they were deciding and compare the results to my county database of protest names, addresses and parcel numbers.

When we (the Cambrians for Fiscal Responsibility) observers left on Friday, July 18, District counsel Art Montandon announced that the CCSD staff was going to meet “in the offices” over the weekend to review some of the protests that were questionable. Mr. Montandon explained that the League of Women Voters was not expected to attend this weekend review. The citizen observers were not invited to attend as it was to be held in the district offices, rather than Suite 204, and they were physically going to check files.

On Monday morning July 21, at 9:00 a.m., contrary to Art's statement, we discovered that the League of Women voters did attend this weekend session with the CCSD staff. I also discovered that protests involving street addresses “G thru Z” had been reviewed over the weekend, and, unfortunately, I and the C.F.R. observers missed out on the conversations regarding the validating of all of those protests. The League and staff proceeded to review protests they pulled over the weekend comparing them to the CCSD’s ‘ratepayer’ list, to see if those people can be found on the County’s property owner list or a “CIS” list.
As the protests are compared to differing lists, it is readily apparent to anyone witnessing the process, that the County's list contains more current information and more accurate information than the CCSD’s ‘ratepayer’ list or the “CIS” list. Many of the protest names and addresses that did not show on the CCSD database were approved by checking the county’s list. When this scenario occurred, CCSD Staff member Pam Duffield often asked “why are these names on the county list - has this change taken place recently?” only to be answered by CCSD clerk Monique “no, those changes in the County’s database had taken place in either 2001, 2004, 2006 and 2007.” I could have answered that question myself as most of those names and addresses appeared on the database I was referring to, which is a County list of Parcel Numbers, but did not show on the CCSD’s ‘ratepayer’ list.

Although the staff complained about their intermittent internet service it's important to know the county list can be downloaded into your computer without having to be ‘on line’. CCSD staff member Monique commented that “half of the owner's names may have been dropped from the CCSD's rate payer list when the CCSD databases were updated”. Once this was discovered, I wondered why the CCSD didn’t just compare ballot names to the County database, and work from that list rather than the CCSD’s ‘ratepayer’ database. Seems it would have saved a lot of time…and money.

There are stacks of protests that have been checked against one 'list, but not 'all' lists, and other tenant protests that will only be checked against ‘certain’ lists. If the CCSD does not have a tenant’s name on their tenant list, and the owner of the property has not protested, I believe those votes may be discounted, even if that tenant has paid a CCSD bill. According to the League of Women voters, there are protests that are 'suspect' as the signatures do not match a limited signature 'database' at the CCSD office, and those may be declared invalid. Art admitted the CCSD only has about half of customer's signatures on file at the CCSD office! I am also concerned that there are tenants who have signed protests that the CCSD may not know are tenants. Couldn’t we just get a cancelled check from those people who have protested and paid a CCSD bill at some point in the last year? There are protests that have been called ‘duplicates’ that I believe represent more than one vote as the customer has more than one APN (assessor’s parcel number) with water, and there are protests that have been set aside for review, due to confusion on ownership name if the property is in a trust account.

Protests were placed in separate stacks for ‘review’; some are considered ‘provisional,’ some are considered ‘duplicates’, and some are ‘verified’. Art says there are no actual ‘rejects’ yet, because each one will be review again before calling it a ‘reject’. Art said we would be able to obtain copies of the ‘rejects’ once the vote is certified, but it is unclear whether we will be able to act on a ‘reject’ or discuss ‘rejects’ after the vote is certified and before any action is taken on a rate increase.

If the protest does not succeed, Cambrians for Fiscal Responsibility will request a 10-15 day period in which to try to verify supposed 'rejected protest forms'. On Friday, Art said he didn’t know if they would be finished with the process Monday, July 21. This prediction turned out to be correct - the count has not been completed as of this writing, Saturday August 2, and the citizens have not been given an estimate of when the count will be completed and certified. I, and
others, have questions about the methodology used for this process and submitted questions, not only to the CCSD, but in person, to the League of Women Voters expressing concern during the vote verifying process. Those questions have never been answered. Because the CCSD never set forth a procedure for this vote protest, I believe the League of Women voters did not fully understand the complexities of our situation when counting began Tuesday, July 15. This is not a Presidential Election – there is no database of voter's signatures in this process as there would be in a Presidential Election. I believe the League is just now realizing it is NOT “one person = one vote” as in a Presidential election, nor is it “one site address = one vote”, but it is actually “one parcel = one vote” according to property ownership (or ratepayer) and water meter account. It’s unfortunate that these questions were not answered by the CCSD Gen. Manager, and clarified in full before beginning the process of protest validation. I believe the citizens of Cambria, the CCSD staff, and the League of Women Voters would all been better served.

So, will we reach a majority of 2001 (a number that must be substantiated)? In July, Montandon didn’t believe the CCSD would continue to pay him or staff, to research all the ‘questionable’ ballots once we reach the supposedly successful 2001 number. In effect, we are now paying Mr. Montandon, CCSD staff, the League of Women voters (and a handwriting expert?) to ‘re-review’ all of the votes because the process was not clear enough in the beginning.

Mary

Two weeks later, this press release about the protest of the rates was posted on the CCSD website:

CCSD FINALIZES RATES PROTEST TABULATION
Cambria, CA—The Cambria Community Services District (CCSD) has completed validation and tabulation of written protests to its proposed rate increase received at the July 14, 2008 public hearing, directed by the CCSD Board of Directors, the League of Women Voters San Luis Obispo County (League) provided oversight during the tabulation and validation process from July 15-August 6. Public observation was also allowed during this time. Below are the criteria required for a valid protest. These were specified by the CCSD in its rates proposal notice mailed to CCSD property owners and tenant customers in May 2008:
1) Must indicate portion of rate increases being supported or protested;
2) Must submit name of property owner or tenant customer;
3) Must provide service address and signature of property owner or tenant customer. No copies of signature acceptable.
Verified property owner customers included spouses, domestic partners, trusts, non-profit and business organizations. Verified tenant customers were only those holding a CCSD service account.
The League recommended a random sampling of the protests for signature verification. Using CCSD customer service and property owner parcel files, approximately 10% did not match the signatures on file. As a result, the League further recommended an outside signature verification process be conducted by the San Luis Obispo Clerk-Recorder’s Office, which occurred during the week of July 28. Digitized original signatures of registered voters in Cambria were used for comparison. Representatives from the CCSD and the League were present as observers. As publicly discussed by District Counsel Art Montandon, the tabulation of the written protests was reviewed per CCSD customer service account and per
service parcel. The League is prepared to certify the following results at the CCSD’s next regular Board Meeting at 12:30 p.m. on Thursday, August 21, 2008, Veterans Memorial Building, Cambria.

RATE PROTEST RESULTS

PER CCSD CUSTOMER SERVICE ACCOUNT
Valid Protests Received 1,965
Majority Protests Required 2,001 (3,999÷2 (+1)

PER CCSD SERVICE PARCEL
Valid Protests Received 1,939
Majority Protests Required 1,966 (3,929÷2 (+1)

Cambrians for Fiscal Responsibility (C.F.R.) was entrusted with protests representing approximately 2,500 households and businesses, who exercised their democratic right under Proposition 218 in rejecting the CCSD's water and sewer rate increases as well as the $8.1 million ‘loan’. By all acceptable standards used by the CCSD and San Luis Obispo County for planning purposes, 2,500 households equal approximately 2 people per household or 5,000 CAMBRRIANS. For those of you who often worry that you’re in the minority, and accept or repeat the mantra that we are a small, radical portion of Cambrians, we suggest you do your own math. WE are not the minority of Cambrians having a disagreement with the CCSD; we are the majority of Cambrians, who care about Cambria and our future. Approximately 600 of your protest forms (approx. 1,200 Cambrians) were rejected by the CCSD and we want to know why! C.F.R. is contesting the protest result based on the following:

1. CCSD did not publicly identify the parcel numbers subject to water and sewer rate increases as required by Proposition 218. If the number of parcels targeted for a rate increase has never been identified, how can a majority be determined?
2. CCSD has not disclosed the total number of protests received.
3. CCSD has not disclosed the number of protests disqualified. We do know approximately 600 protests are not being accepted.
4. CCSD has not disclosed the reasons for rejecting protests. C.F.R expected to receive copies of these rejected protests by Friday, August 15. No phone calls have been answered by the CCSD and the copies are not available.
5. CCSD has never defined the process for counting the protests. There are pages of questions and concerns that remain unanswered. There are conflicting stories from the League of Women Voters and the CCSD as to who was in charge of this protest process and how the tabulation of votes was to occur.
6. CCSD has attempted to verify signatures without an adequate signature database. Remember, this is not an election – this is a protest. According to “The Cambrian” 50 protests were disqualified due to signature invalidation, but no numbers have been confirmed to C.F.R. by the CCSD. It is unacceptable to have to rely on information from a newspaper, rather than your Community Services Administration for accurate numbers of invalidated signatures.

Cambrians for Fiscal Responsibility do not agree with any of the numbers published thus far by the CCSD. For example, in a public records request obtained June 19, 2008 the total number of CCSD Parcels required for success was actually 3,907, not 3,929 as reported by the CCSD in their news release of August 8, 2008! That means 22 fewer protests are needed
than claimed by the CCSD in its News Release. In addition, the total number of valid protests received by CCSD calculations should have been much higher than reported, whether the count is by CCSD Customer Service Account or by CCSD Service Parcel. It is unreasonable to believe that approximately 600 protests were rejected out of 2,500 received.

C.F.R. met with legal counsel for the district, Art Montandon, to learn the process for evaluating protests and how the parcels were determined. In this meeting, we were informed that even more parcel numbers should probably be deducted from our totals, reducing the total number needed for success from 3907 (C.F.R. #’s) to 3892! C.F.R. asked for copies of all rejected protest forms, but did not receive copies as expected at that meeting. According to the district, a public review of each disqualified protest will be held in Suite 204 on Monday, August 18 at 9:00 a.m. /* See below.*/ C.F.R. will not be able to answer questions about your protest forms until those copies are received from the CCSD.

Tina Dickason, Mary Webb
Cambrians for Fiscal Responsibility

*/BREAKING NEWS!* I am very sorry to say that legal counsel for the District, Art Montandon, left a message on my answer machine today, canceling our meeting for Monday, August 18th (a meeting originally scheduled for Friday, Aug. 15). This meeting is the most important one, as reasons for rejecting protests and the copies are supposed to be given at this time. These copies of rejected protests were to be given to C.F.R. on Thursday, August 14, Friday August 15 and then by Monday, August 18th – at the latest. I called Mr. Montandon’s office twice, left messages, asked for Tammy Ruddock instead, or Monique Madrid. According to CCSD staff member Suzy, none of these staff members were available to take my calls or explain why our meeting has been canceled. Our copies of rejected protests have not been delivered as promised. As usual, questions are not answered, meetings are delayed or canceled and the promises are not being kept. - Mary Webb

A Cambrian who is running for CCSD in November discussed the canceled meeting with the Board President, Joan Cobin. He says: Well......I just talked at length to Joan Cobin and she acknowledged that at least she advised Art that he could not provide CFR, *or even the protest submitter*, copies of any invalidated protests. I don’t know if any other Board member participated in that decision. I tried repeatedly to get her to budge from that position, but she believes that the protests have to be handled as the Clerk-County Recorder handles an election vote, and that they would never give copies to anyone. I don’t agree. I tried to impress upon her the significance of her actions. CCSD is currently facing a crisis of confidence and this adds fuel to the fire. The invalidation of almost 25% of the protests submitted would cause anyone concern, even though some of them were undoubtedly correctly invalidated due to being duplicates.

And The following excerpts are from messages that Ken Prohazka received from several CCSD Directors in response to an earlier message that he sent to all CCSD Directors regarding the cancelled meeting. I’m not quite sure whether or not these messages indicate that Cambrians will be able to find out exactly which protests were invalidated and why they were invalidated, but they appear to leave some hope for that disclosure. We’ll have to wait and see....
Director Funke-Bilu wrote the following:
"...in addition to the League's continued supervisorial function in the second protest, the San Luis Obispo County Clerk-Recorder's Office also contributed its resources to aid the League in determining the legitimacy of the protest process. The San Luis Obispo County Clerk-Recorder's Office, especially since it has been managed under the auspices of Ms. Julie Rodewald, is a highly respected, independent, and incorruptible body of which all citizens of San Luis Obispo should be proud. No protest vote was rejected without the mandate of the League and/or the Clerk-Recorder. My understanding is that upon the League certifying the results, the CCSD will make available for the public the entire tally including the fraudulent or defective votes."

"I appreciate your reply. I understand your argument in regard to the signature verification. I am aware of no vote disallowed by the CCSD, the League, or the County-Clerk Recorder solely because signatures were absent in their databases. My understanding is that the final arbiters of the invalid votes were the League and the County-Clerk Recorder. In any election, the County-Clerk Recorder is vested with the authority to invalidate votes it deems inconsistent with its database, including signatures that do not appear to match. As I said earlier, if the League and the County Clerk-Recorder are comfortable with the procedure and they are willing to certify same, I am also. In any event, the community will have access to the entire tally. If there were votes that should not have been invalidated, I fully expect that to be brought to my attention for appropriate redress."

Director Cobin wrote the following after reading Director Funke-Bilu's response to Ken:
"Thank you for taking time to communicate your concerns regarding the recent protest letter tally. Please know were I to write a response to your comments it would be pretty much in the same vein as the one sent to you by Director Funke-Bilu though perhaps not as articulate. Please continue to be concerned and know that all of your questions have answers on the CCSD web site or though face to face communication with any of the board members."

Director Greg Sanders wrote the following:
"The meeting you refer to has been cancelled because the Board of Directors has not yet received the validated results of the protest process from the League of Women Voters. There will be no meeting, if any, until that occurs. For the CCSD staff to participate in meetings with selected individuals and groups prior to that time would be improper, in my view. You seem to be concerned with the number of invalidated protests. I believe the report given to the Board will reveal that the vast majority of invalidations occurred as a result of duplicate protests (husband and wife both filing protests; property owner and tenant each filing a protest, etc.)."

"I'm not sure what you mean by "votes were to be iterated as to the reasons for invalidation." There will be, yet again, an explanation of the validation process at the August 21 meeting of the Board. The "criterion used to invalidate the iterated protest document," as you say, has been publicly explained on at least two occasions. The validation process was conducted under the auspices of the League of Women Voters and the San Luis Obispo County Clerk. Both are unimpeachable institutions, as far as I am concerned. I think most Cambrians agree."
The August 21 meeting provided little illumination on the process of verification, but did provide numbers that were counted, numbers verified by the League of Women Voters volunteers. Art Montandon, District Counsel, said at the meeting that they were conducting a process of “exclusion” – to ensure any fraudulent protests were not counted. Additional details on what happened at the meeting on the 21st of August can be viewed at google video (linked from aboutcambria.com).

Additional concern: Brown Act/Open Meetings
The Executive Committee of the Board (which sets the agenda every month and is the president and vice president of the Board) is apparently no longer a standing committee subject to meeting notification and public access. When an interested citizen asked to be notified of when the meetings were so he could attend, if only to observe, he was told that committee was an ad hoc committee and not subject to open meetings rules and noticing.

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