

Co-op Coalition Survey: Virtual Meetings (8-2020)

Thanks to the 9 who responded. Virtual meetings, while becoming increasingly more common, is still a relatively unfamiliar activity for many Coalition members. Much depends on an individual co-op's needs (one size does not fit all) and the skill sets of the co-owners with larger co-ops benefiting from a larger pool of people. Below are a few examples how some Coalition members have conducted their meetings—a couple with considerable detail. It's great that members are trying to help out one another during these stressful times.

In a message dated: Wed, Aug 19, 2020 1:21 pm

Subject: Co-op Coalition SURVEY: Virtual Annual Meetings (due 8/28) (Pres)

If you have held, or are planning to hold, a virtual annual meeting, you can be a great help to another Coalition member. Their question follows. Please "Reply" no later than Friday, August 28. We are in this together and helping out one another during this difficult and challenging time demonstrates that we genuinely care for one another.

The question:

How are folks handling virtual annual meetings? Attendance, proxies, ballots, and voting. All of our board meetings have been virtual since the pandemic started and our annual meeting is fast approaching: September. We are most interested in learning how managers and boards are handling voting for board member candidates. Because we cannot meet in person, we have to give a deadline to receive proxies and ballots. We also need to do the ballot voting in advance on paper left at the front desk. This may pose a problem for last minute write-ins or a contested election. However, we need a reasonable amount of time to tally up a quorum, proxies, and ballots. So, we are doing a deadline of 12 noon on the day of the meeting (a cut-off time). The sign-in sheet cannot be done in person so we will have to count attendees on Zoom.

What are the pitfalls to watch out for with this virtual, annual meeting environment, which is much more involved than a regular board meeting? Thanks for your help! Hopefully, this information also will be of value to others.

DC Cooperative Housing Coalition

www.CoopsDC.org

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<p><25 units</p>	<p>Our cooperative is having its annual meeting in early September 2020 virtually (via Zoom). Some points for us:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• We are a pretty small community (11 units) so we can conduct business a little more informally.• We don't have any elections coming up so there's no need to worry about elections related issues• To determine quorum, we simply determine who is present through an attendance sheet• For voting on matters and business, we have found it productive to have a discussion on the matters during the annual meeting but we vote via email/mail• Our cooperative found that as a general housing cooperative filed with DCRA, we are not authorized to conduct proxy voting per DC Code 29-914. We understand condominiums and other housing types with HOAs may allow for proxy votes but we believe the law to prohibit members in a cooperative to use a proxy.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o https://code.dccouncil.us/dc/council/code/sections/29-914.html
<25 units	These are all good questions but we don't have any answers yet. I wonder if we might have our Association attorney give us guidance.
25 – 49 units	We're planning our annual meeting in December. For voting, we hope to ask our property manager to help. Shareholders will email her by the deadline (a day or two after the Zoom meeting) with their votes and she will count them. This way, no one on the Board will know how each person voted.
25 – 49 units	We will be very interested in the answers to this question - our Annual Meeting is upcoming in November! Zoom has worked well for our Board and Committee meetings. I would suggest appointing a moderator (not President or Secretary) to control traffic and recommend using the mute function so that only one Member speaks at a time.
25 – 49 units	We have not had a post Covid-19 Annual Meeting. However, we did convene a special Zoom Meeting to vote on amendments to our By-Laws and Articles of Incorporation. All voting was by proxy. We held a "Townhall Meeting" to allow owners to ask questions and voice their opinions. Several days after that we held the formal meeting to record the votes. All votes were by proxy and had to be submitted prior to the formal meeting. We gave 10 days advance notice for both the Townhall and formal meetings.
25 – 49 units	<p>Out of a preference for in-person gatherings, we initially postponed our meeting by several months; we had no pressing business on the agenda and no contested races for seats on the board - or so we thought. As it turned out, one member of the board wound up leaving the building shortly before the meeting was scheduled to take place via Zoom. The Nominating Committee (NC), in consultation with the Board, allowed Association members to vote either by e-mail or with a paper ballot. If the former, the member sent a message to an address the NC set up and to which only they had access. If the former, the member requested a paper ballot embossed with the Association's seal and put their marked ballot in a box kept by the front desk attendant.</p> <p>Over 90% of the membership voted and about 60% took part in the virtual meeting, a higher participation rate than we normally see. Once the meeting got underway the host muted all participants except the Board member who was speaking, then unmuted people at the conclusion of each presentation for questions. We found it worked pretty well. The meeting lasted perhaps half the time it normally does, which wasn't a bad thing.</p>
50 - 149	No responses
150 - 174	We have not had our annual meeting yet, luckily, but will be working through those issues. One solution is to have electronic done by survey monkey. Another is to do the early voting to give time to count votes.
175 - 275	No responses
276+ units	<p>We held our Annual Meeting in April. Owners could either mail in their ballots or vote online.</p> <p>Our governing documents allow us to reach quorum from mail in ballots. We cut off voting at 5:00pm on the day of the election.</p> <p>Although the meeting was held via Zoom, our Election Coordinators came in the office to count the ballots.</p>
276+ units	<p>Check with your general counsel to see how voting and quorum can be counted under your by-laws and the state laws where you are incorporated.</p> <p>We used Zoom webinar because our annual meeting size was too large for a zoom meeting (max out at 100 people). Our meeting was in March, the week after lock-down started, and zoom was the best option at the time.</p>

We gave immediate notice to members about changing to a virtual meeting and how they could access the meeting (see FAQ and messages in links below).

We required registration in advance. Pre-registration makes it easier for attendees to login to zoom and creates attendance and voting records for everyone in a post webinar report. You should add additional registration questions on the registration screen--make them required--so you know who is in the reports after the webinar. In addition to the name and email, we added "I am an owner" drop down with Yes/No as an answer. "I am serving as a proxy for another unit" drop down with Yes/No as an answer. and "Units I am representing" (a text box).

We also set up reminder emails that had links to the FAQ as well as posted elevator and lobby signs everywhere.

Because of the technical ability of some residents, we also offered a listen only number, but to participate (e.g., speak, vote, etc.) you had to be pre-registered and use the unique internet link that is sent to each registration.

Our General Counsel advised us to announce at the beginning of the meeting that it was being recorded. I also had general counsel and the parliamentarian in an off-line conference call on my cell phone so we could discuss things outside of in the Zoom meeting in case something went sideways during the meeting.

At the beginning of the meeting, we used slides to show everyone how to raise their hand, use the chat window, and vote in a poll.

We also had to adjust our standing rules to fit a virtual meeting since they were written for in-person voting with paddles, etc.

We pre-loaded several zoom polls that were opened to the attendees at the appropriate time (e.g. motion to approve the agenda, motion to approve the minutes, motion to adjourn). We also had some generic motions created as polls in case business came from the floor that needed to be voted on. Motions were made and seconded by hand-raises from the attendees, then the poll was used to record the vote for everything.

I recommend sharing a presentation (power point with script is linked below) since it can give information help keep the meeting moving.

I also recommend doing a practice run with 5 or 6 people the day before so you can make sure the mute/unmute settings are correct and you are comfortable using them.

[Here is a google folder](#) with the resources we created for our meeting.

[Message](#) sent to owners

[FAQ](#) shared on Building Link including zoom help links/videos

[Lobby signs](#) for week before the meeting

[Power Point presentation](#) with script in the notes

Good luck!