

Dear Chairman Myrie

We are writing to you to express our dissatisfaction over the voting experience at the Maxwell Street Transfer station for the Primary Election on June 22<sup>nd</sup> 2021. We are experienced voters and we found the experience both confusing and unsafe. While we hope that this is our last time voting at this site, we also hope that the information could be used to provide material improvements. Our feedback also reflects conversations with election inspectors who discussed the difficulties with the site, including initially having no place to park, and who recounted that several voters felt that this site was a deliberate attempt to suppress the vote.

According to election inspectors, and in our own conversations with neighbors and voters, many people did not know where to go. The official listed information on the BOE website for 4 EDs including ours is “MAXWELL AVE FACILITY 40 MAXWELL AVE”. For those who are not aware that this is the garbage transfer facility, there is no indication that the actual site is the Dept Public Works Garage. The small picture below with the street signs is at the intersection of Madison and Maxwell. The words in the County’s notification “FACILITY” are nowhere to be seen. The larger picture shows the view driving on Madison Ave to turn onto Maxwell. The on ramp to I-95 is I blue, and Maxwell is in red. **If this site is to be used again in the general election, there must be better signage.**



Upon entering the street, there is still no indication for the location of 40 Maxwell. Plenty of voters did not notice the little sign at the far end of this alley, shown here at various times of day. Adding to the confusion, the facility is functioning as intended for the Town. Thus, there are also employees walking in the roadway which makes one wonder if they are in the correct location given the lack of signage.



When you drive down Maxwell (which many assume is just an unnamed alley) all the parking is taken as far as you can see down the street during the working hours for the town. Adding to the confusion and discouragement, there is no indication that parking will be made available for voters. For most of the long alley, there is either metered parking or signs about town parking. It is only if you can see past the white truck in the picture below, you happen upon 4 forlorn orange cones, most of which were run-over when most of us arrived. The signs to park for voting are small squares mounted on small cones tucked in the right. There were 3 regular spots and one handicapped spot with the sign face down on the ground. **This can't be ADA compliant.** Generally speaking, orange cones mean "don't put your car here". In this instance it meant "try to park here but you probably will run over the cones". Both of us ended up missing the cones and pulling into the facility and having to do a U-Turn next to a garbage truck (not visible) on the left. (The blue arrow shows the cones and parking sign). One of us had to quickly move our car to make room for a line truck. The town worker was exceptionally accommodating and patient.

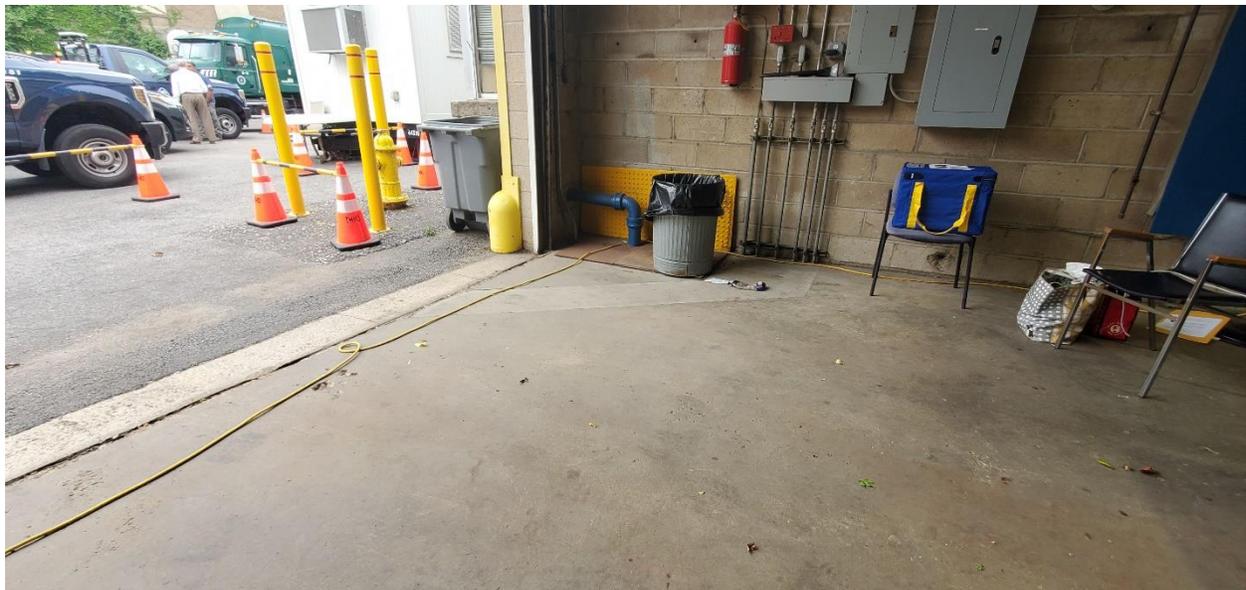


If this site is to be used again in the general election, in the rain, maybe snow, the parking has to be greater than 4 spaces and with more clarity on where to park.

Assuming that these 4 cones represent the only places to park and the intent is to NOT have people drive past the gate, then the distance between the parking and the actual voting seems quite long for the handicapped or less able. The red arrow connotes the open garage door- had the site had this closed so that the ingress would have been the highway office, the on-foot journey would have been much longer. Every other place we have voted or at which we have been a poll monitor has had some accommodation to drop someone off. While any voting location might be hit with weather, the mandated signs indicating “vote here” in this setting seemed much more unsheltered than in traditional spots. Further, the pairing of orange cones in a usually off-limits town facility dealing with highway operations does not necessarily connote “come over here to vote”.



As you may hear from some of the election inspectors, the facility itself is far from ideal. As an industrial garage, it was clearly hot when the sun was out. Had the vote been on a 90-degree day it would not have been acceptable. The inspectors opened the doors for ventilation as the garage smelled of diesel fumes from the adjoining working truck garage. With the doors open, the noise due to the operation of the adjacent public waste transfer impaired delivery of verbal instructions, and garbage blew in the open doors. Garbage and loud noise are expected for a transfer facility, but not a voting experience.



There is concern that as a garage, while there is a heater, it is not built for a 15-hour stint by many of the octogenarian election inspectors who provide this valuable service.

In total, this site seems to be woefully inadequate. While we appreciate that new site must be found if there is no more voting at public school sites, the next 2 months prior to the general election must focus on eliminating voting at this facility which in no way shape or form was ever intended for such use.

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Laura Foley