

From: [Kelly, Neil](#)
To: BoardofDirectors; [REDACTED];
[REDACTED]; [Carmen Roe](#);
[Andrew Tolchin](#); [Laura Gibson](#); [Trey Aptel](#); [Larry P. McDougal](#); [Bill Kroger](#)
Subject: SBOT - Board of Director Letter - comments and suggestions
Date: Tuesday, May 18, 2021 10:53:23 AM
Importance: High

Houston SBOT Directors and SBOT Leadership (and incoming District 4 Director Bill Kroger; I do not have the others' emails)

Some observations and thoughts in response to the May 18, 2021 email from the Houston area SBOT Leadership/Directors, and some reflections after finishing my SBOT director term last year.

1. Election participation; changes to election process

The Board and SBOT leadership should consider a task force or Board subcommittee to assess what can be done to increase participation in SBOT and TYLA elections and then take definitive action. The membership participation numbers are low.

One suggestion I have is to integrate the election/ballots into or with the annual SBOT dues payment. The idea is to make participation in the election, while still at the discretion of the SBOT member, part of a member's current required interaction with the SBOT.

There would be some logistical hurdles to deal with, and have to think through how to deal with the firms that pay for their lawyers (like my firm), but my perception is that the majority of lawyers interact with the SBOT in connection with their dues/membership renewal. And even with those firms that do block dues payments, those firms usually provide information to their lawyers about section selections and TAJF donations – an interaction with members that the SBOT can piggyback on for elections.

My rough analogy for this is “motor – voter” – get your driver's license and register to vote – pay your SBOT dues and vote. One stop shop.

This would require an adjustment in the timing of the elections and the timing of the collection of SBOT dues, and rule and policy manual changes, but I will leave those fine details to the Board and Leadership!

There may be other ideas out there on how to increase election participation. I sent emails to my firm's attorneys, and waited until the last day of voting to send a stronger message to get out the vote. That kind of worked but isn't what I would consider robust participation, much less interest in the outcome of the election(s).

2. SBOT District “town hall” meetings

I suggest using zoom or remote video conference technology for each SBOT district to hold one or

more town hall meetings that invites the district's lawyers to participate and ask questions, etc. While I doubt that there would be significant participation unless there was a hot topic, the optics of making the effort would be beneficial for the SBOT Board and Leadership.

3. Access to opportunities to present to the board

The May 18 email provides an email to provide comments to the board, which is great and what I am using, but it should also provide a link to how to sign up to make a public statement at the beginning of the board meetings (the 3 minutes deal).

Thanks to all of you for your service and efforts. I look forward to seeing you in person at some point hopefully in the near future.

Call or email if you have any questions.

Neil Kelly
Partner

HUNTON ANDREWS KURTH LLP
600 Travis Street, Suite 4200 | Houston, TX 77002
+1.713.220.4198 Phone
+ [REDACTED] Cell
+1 713.220.4285 Fax
+1.713.220.4411 Assistant – Andrea Melton
[REDACTED] | [vCard](#) | [Bio](#) | [HuntonAK.com](#)