

Baltimore City Green Party

Bylaws

ARTICLE I. NAME

The name of this organization shall be the Baltimore City Green Party

ARTICLE II. PURPOSE AND VALUES

2.1 Purpose Statement

The purpose of this organization shall be to work toward a Green society as represented by the Ten Key Values of the Greens Party of the United States:

Ecological Wisdom

Social Justice

Grassroots Democracy

Nonviolence

Decentralization

Community-based Economics

Feminism

Respect for Diversity

Personal, Local and Global Responsibility

Future Focus

The Baltimore City Green Party shall apply the Ten Key Values to Baltimore City and shall focus its efforts on creating and maintaining a sustainable Green political-culture in the city of Baltimore. With respect to the Board of Elections, the Baltimore City Green Party shall serve as the Baltimore Central Committee of the Maryland Green Party.

2.2 Methods

The Baltimore City Green Party may use any and all non-violent methods for achieving social change including, but not limited to: direct action, community organizing and education, personal empowerment, issue-oriented campaigns, ballot initiatives and electoral campaigns.

ARTICLE III. STRUCTURE

3.1 Membership

Membership in the Baltimore City Green Party is open to anyone, regardless of gender, race, color, national origin, spiritual belief, sexual orientation, economic status or physical challenge.

a.) Qualifications

There are two forms of Membership in the Baltimore City Green Party: Non-Active Members and Active Members. Non-Active Members include all individuals currently registered to vote in Baltimore City with the Green Party affiliation.

Active Members shall meet the following criteria:

- 1.) Be currently registered to vote in Baltimore City with the Green Party affiliation.
 - A.)
- 2.) Attend at least one Baltimore City Green Party sponsored meeting where attendance is recorded every six months. An individual is not considered an Active Member until his or her 2nd meeting of attendance.

If an individual is legally unable to register to vote due to age, citizenship or other status requirements, he or she is granted Active Membership status in the Baltimore City Green Party provided he or she meets the following requirements:

- 3.) Be at least 16 years old
- 4.) Sign a statement affirming that he or she is in general agreement with the Ten Key Values and wishes to become an Active Member of the Baltimore City Green Party.
- 5.) Meet the attendance requirement, as stated in # 2 above.

b.) Powers and Duties

The Active Members shall have final approval over all platform, policy, strategic and financial decisions of the Baltimore City Green Party. The Active Membership may elect or recall the officers of the Steering Committee. They may also re-direct the efforts of standing committees and working groups and amend the bylaws as necessary.

Membership in this organization is based on mutual respect. Active Members are encouraged to embrace the principle that Green success is based on integrity, unity and placing the harmonious well-being of the Baltimore City Green Party ahead of personal ambition and self-interest. Active Members must participate in good faith in discussion and decision-making, and resolve conflicts peacefully. Active Members shall refrain from abusive and/or disruptive behavior. Any Member who fails to fulfill these responsibilities may be subject to suspension or removal (see section d.).

Furthermore, Active Members are expected to provide current contact information to the Steering Committee and to voluntarily notify the group of changes in address or party status that will affect their Active Membership status.

c.) Meetings and Decision-Making

See Article IV

d.) Suspension or Removal

Any Active Member may be suspended or removed for reasonable cause, such as excessively disruptive or abusive behavior, willful misrepresentation or fraud. Once a suspension or removal is proposed, the Membership may consider the proposal at a subsequent General Meeting, provided the suspension or removal is supported by at least three Active Members. The General Meeting may vote to delegate this decision to the Steering Committee (*Such a vote would only require a simple majority)

The individual being considered for suspension or removal must be given an opportunity to speak and/or provide witnesses on his or her behalf. As with any substantive decision, the Active Membership will utilize the Formal Consensus procedure to make suspension and removal decisions. At least 2/3 of the Meeting must support the suspension or removal for it to pass.

Suspensions may last 1 – 6 months. A suspended Member may not participate in consensus decision-making or attend General or Steering Committee meetings for the duration of his or her suspension. The same applies to removed Members.

Removed and suspended members may request an appeal of the decision once every year. A reinstatement requires a 2/3 majority.

3.2 Steering Committee

a.) Powers and Duties

The Steering Committee (SC) of the Baltimore City Green Party shall facilitate work between General Business Meetings, oversee press and media activities and serve as a primary liaison body with other organizations. The Steering Committee shall make endorsements and statements only in keeping with policies set forth by the Active Membership at General Meetings. When necessary, the SC shall serve as the legal board of the organization. All SC decisions are subject to review and revision by the Active Membership.

In all matters, the Steering Committee members must bear in mind that they are merely elected to serve the Membership, and therefore must act in accordance with the Ten Key Values. No member shall be placed in a position of unqualified authority over others. In all actions, the Steering Committee shall be answerable to the Active Membership as a whole.

b.) Steering Committee Meetings and Decision Making

The Steering Committee meetings shall be open to all Active Members and those whom the SC chooses to admit. Consensus decisions are encouraged, but in the event that a vote is required, a two-thirds majority of Steering Committee members is sufficient to decide the issue at hand.

The Steering Committee may make decisions outside of a formal meeting (i.e. – using email), but the Steering Committee shall keep a record of its decisions and make that record available to Active Members upon request.

c.) Composition of the Steering Committee

The Steering Committee shall be composed of the Treasurer, the Secretary, and a specified number of Co-Chairs. The number of Co-Chairs shall be set once a year at a General Business Meeting prior to the Annual Assembly, and the total number of SC members shall be an odd number. The Active Membership shall elect each member of the Steering Committee at the Annual Assembly.

Co-Chairs

The Co-Chairs shall be responsible for notifying the Active Membership of upcoming meetings, drafting a proposed agenda, working with the Secretary to take and log minutes of General and SC meetings, and keeping accurate records, including a current membership list. The Co-Chairs shall interface with the media, and where appropriate, speak on behalf of the Baltimore City Green Party. The Co-Chairs shall also maintain a post office address and telephone. If the Treasurer is unavailable, the Co-Chairs are authorized to write and sign checks on behalf of the Baltimore City Green Party.

Treasurer

The Treasurer shall keep well-documented accounting records, monitor ongoing expenses, file campaign finance reports with the Board of Elections and make regular reports to the Steering Committee and the Active Membership. The Treasurer is authorized to write and sign checks on behalf of the Baltimore City Green Party.

Secretary

The Secretary shall ensure that official notes are taken at each meeting and from those notes, produce a record meeting minutes. The Secretary must maintain a log of meeting minutes and provide copies of the minutes to Active Members upon request.

e.) Qualifications

Members of the Steering Committee must be current Active Members of the Baltimore City Green Party.

Furthermore, Steering Committee Members shall not serve on the decision making body of a political party other than the Green Party. If they decide to do so, they shall immediately disclose such membership and remove themselves from the Steering Committee.

e.) Steering Committee Terms of Service

The Steering Committee Members shall serve a term of one year, beginning immediately after their election at the Annual Assembly, and then must seek re-election. The Co-chairs, Treasurer and Secretary shall serve a maximum of three consecutive years.

Outgoing Steering Committee members are expected to be available provide training and relevant materials to incoming Steering Committee Members.

f.) Recall of Steering Committee Members

Steering Committee members may be recalled by the following procedure.

1. A recall proposal must be placed on the agenda. The person making the recall proposal shall provide a rationale for the recall. The facilitator will ask if there is support for moving forward with a recall decision. If at least three Active Members support moving forward, then consideration of the recall will occur at a subsequent General Business Meeting. The Active Membership will employ the Consensus Decision-Making Process to finalize the decision.
2. If a Steering Committee member is recalled, the Active Membership will elect a replacement as soon as possible. The replacement will complete the remainder of the year until the Annual Assembly.

3.3 Standing Committees and Working Groups

The Active Membership may establish Standing Committees and other working groups as necessary to initiate and coordinate the activities of the Baltimore City Green Party. The SC may establish such bodies on an interim basis, pending review by the Active Membership.

Proposals for new Standing Committees and working groups must be supported by at least three Active Members, and must clearly define the purpose of the proposed new body. Working groups shall not have representation on the SC.

ARTICLE IV. Meetings and Conduct of Business

4.1 Types of Meetings

The business of the Baltimore City Green Party may be conducted at three types of Meetings:

- a.) The Annual Assembly: This meeting shall be held once a year for the purpose of electing a Treasurer, a Secretary, two Co-Chairs and other business, as necessary. The Annual Assembly is open to the public. All Active Members and Non-Active Members have decision-making privileges at the Annual Assembly. Reasonable advance notice of the time, date, place, and proposed agenda of the Annual Assembly should be provided to each Active Member and as many Non-active members as possible.

- b.) General Business Meetings: These meetings are held regularly at the call of the Steering Committee. They are open to all Active and Non-Active Members, and invited guests. All current Active Members shall have decision-making privileges at these meetings. Reasonable advance notice of the time, date, place, and proposed agenda should be provided to each Active Member in his or her chosen form (phone or email). Each General Business Meeting shall be conducted by a Facilitator appointed by the Steering Committee. The Facilitator shall verify the Active Member status of those in attendance. The first order of business at each General Business Meeting shall be introductions, followed by review of the proposed agenda. Adjustments to the proposed agenda may be made either by consensus or at the discretion of the Facilitator.

- c.) Steering Committee Meetings: These meetings are held as needed, at the call of a majority of the current Steering Committee. They are open to all Active Members of the Baltimore City Green Party and to invited guests of the Steering Committee. Only current members of the Steering Committee have decision-making privileges at these meetings. Reasonable advance notice of the time, date and place of each SC meeting should be provided to each Active Member in his or her chosen form (phone or email).

4.2 Decision-Making

The Baltimore City Green Party shall strive for consensus on all decisions, open-mindedly hearing all views and concerns in full. This provision shall be subject to reasonable time constraints.

a.) Informal Decisions

Meetings may often result in brainstorming and organizing discussions, and members may often make informal agreements, such as volunteering to complete a task. Such “informal decisions” should be allowed to proceed naturally. However, if an Active Member has concerns, he or she

may ask the facilitator to check for consensus on the issue. The facilitator should seek to resolve any concerns. If the concerns cannot be resolved, the group may choose, by simple majority, to implement the Formal Consensus Procedure (see below).

b.) Formal Consensus Procedure

The Formal Consensus Procedure shall proceed as follows:

1. The Proposal is clearly stated.
2. The proposal is clarified as necessary.
3. There is a discussion among those in attendance.
4. The facilitator asks if there is consensus¹ on the proposal. If there is consensus among those in attendance with decision-making privileges, the proposal is adopted. END. If there is not consensus and the proposal is not withdrawn, continue.
5. The areas of concern are identified, clarified, and discussed as necessary.
6. The Facilitator suggests a modification of the Proposal and asks if it will resolve the concerns. If there is consensus among those with decision-making privileges, the Modified Proposal is adopted. END. If there is not consensus and the Proposal is not withdrawn, a simple majority of those in attendance with decision-making privileges choose a Resolution Option.
 - a. Table to a later meeting of the same body. END.
 - b. Refer to a later meeting of a different body (the Annual Assembly, a General Business Meeting, a Steering Committee meetig, another committee, etc.). END
 - c. Refer to a Committee or Working Group for study and report. END
 - d. Call for a ballot vote (see 4.3)
 - e. Put to a Formal Vote, only if 2/3 of the Active Membership is present, as determined by the Facilitator.

¹ Consensus is reached either when all are in agreement, or when those with concerns voluntarily stand aside.

7. The Formal Vote: The Proposal or Modified Proposal is adopted only if it receives 2/3 of the Yes/No vote total. Whatever the result, the number of those in attendance with decision-making privileges, the number of Yes/No votes cast, and the breakdown of the votes must be recorded. END

c.) Formal Proposals

Certain decisions are of a weighty enough nature that they require a formalized procedure. These “Formal Proposals” shall be placed on the proposed General Business Meeting agenda by the Steering Committee. Examples of decisions that should be made into formal proposals are large financial spending decisions, platform positions, by-law changes, major endorsements and strategic decisions.

Any Active Member may submit a Formal Proposal to the Steering Committee. It is requested that formal proposals be submitted to a Steering Committee member at least 5 days prior to the General Business Meeting. The Steering Committee may make suggestions as to the wording of the proposal. The Steering Committee may use its discretion in deciding the proposed agenda, but the Active Members have the final say over the agenda at a General Business Meeting.

In general, a formal proposal is presented at one meeting (the “first meeting”) and the decision is rendered at a subsequent meeting (the “2nd meeting”). The 2nd meeting must utilize the Formal Consensus procedure. The exact wording of the formal proposal should be made available to all Active Members at least 5 days prior to the 2nd meeting.

Some formal proposals are of an urgent enough nature that the Active Members may choose to render a decision at the first meeting. To do so requires that 2/3 of the Active Membership be present, and a simple majority of the Active Members present at the meeting vote in favor of moving forward. If the members agree to consider a proposal from the floor, the Secretary must record the exact wording of the proposal in writing. In general, formal proposals to make official statements or endorse upcoming events should be decided at the first meeting.

If a simple majority of the Active Members present at the meeting say so, the formal proposal, once presented, does not need to be considered by the group.

*Note – In the interests of keeping the Active Membership list updated, the Steering Committee may contact Active Members who have been missing meetings to see if the member still wishes to keep his or her “Active” status. If not, the member removed from the Active Membership list.

d.) Votes by Proxy

Active Members who cannot be present at a meeting may designate a proxy. A proxy is considered valid if it is signed by an Active member and has a clear designation. If there is dispute over whether a given proxy is valid, the Active Members present at the meeting shall render a judgement by a simple majority vote.

4.3 The Ballot Vote

One last option for deciding an issue is the ballot vote. A simple majority of the Active Members present at a General Business Meeting may call for a ballot vote. The ballot vote requires that a

proposal be made into a ballot and that all Active Members have an opportunity to cast a vote on the ballot.

An ad-hoc ballot committee shall be formed immediately to organize the vote, including the creation of the ballots, notification of Active Members, date, time, location and method of voting and the counting of the ballots. Where applicable, an instant run-off method of voting is preferred.

The ballot vote is the preferred method for deciding candidate nominations.

ARTICLE V. BYLAW AMENDMENTS

5.1 Procedure for Amendment

Proposed bylaw amendments must be submitted in writing to a SC member at least 5 days prior to the General Meeting at which the proposed amendments will be presented. After presentation, the Active Members may choose to consider the proposed amendment at a subsequent General Business Meeting. In order for a by-law amendment to be considered, the amendment must have the support of at least three Active Members.

5.2 Notification

At least two weeks in advance of the General Meeting at which an amendment or amendments to these bylaws are to be considered, the SC shall notify all Active Members of: a) the date and time of the meeting, b) the complete text of the proposed amendment(s), and c) the complete text of the provision being considered for amendment.

5.3 Ratification

At General Business Meetings, the Active Membership may adopt by-law amendments through the Formal Consensus procedure.

ARTICLE VI. Branches

The Baltimore City Green Party encourages the establishment of Branches throughout Baltimore City.

A Branch may be officially recognized by petitioning the Baltimore City Green Party, and such recognition shall be acknowledged when a Branch meets the following qualifications:

1. The Branch shall consist of at least five (5) individuals who are at least 16 years old and are either Active Members or are Non-Active Members of the Baltimore City Green Party.
2. The Branch shall have regular meetings.
3. The Branch shall formally recognize and conform to the Ten Key Values, consensus seeking decision-making and principles of non-discrimination.

All active Branch Members shall be considered Active Members of the Baltimore City Green Party.

ARTICLE VII. Candidate Nominations

During election year, it is necessary for Candidate Nomination procedures to be in place

In the year prior to an election year, the Steering Committee shall develop a procedure for the official nomination of Green Party candidates in the Baltimore City jurisdiction. The Active Members shall review and approve the procedures.

During the election year, the Steering Committee is responsible for ensuring that the Candidate Nomination procedures are implemented fairly and accurately.

ADOPTED August 23, 2009, and as AMENDED, by the General Membership of the Baltimore City Green Party.