

## GREEN PARTY OF CONTRA COSTA BY-LAWS

### **ARTICLE I: PURPOSE AND VALUES**

The Green Party of Contra Costa (GPCC) is a political party of individuals committed to the vision of a future worth inheriting--for ourselves, for all living creatures and for the planet as a whole. Human beings are only one part of the interdependent global ecosystem and must learn to live in harmony with nature and with each other. By applying our 10 Key Values, the Green Party of Contra Costa works to build holistic, environmentally sustainable, and just communities. The Ten Key Values are:

- |                         |                                      |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Ecological Wisdom    | 6. Community-Based Economics         |
| 2. Grassroots Democracy | 7. Feminism                          |
| 3. Social Justice       | 8. Respect for Diversity             |
| 4. Nonviolence          | 9. Future Focus/Sustainability,      |
| 5. Decentralization     | 10. Personal & Global Responsibility |

The GPCC will abide by all laws of the State of California pertaining to political parties and the By-Laws of the Green Party of California.

### **ARTICLE II: MEMBERSHIP**

#### **A. Definition**

Membership is open to any person registered in the Green Party who lives in Contra Costa County.

Anyone may become a supporting member by paying an annual fee. Benefits conferred upon contributing members include a subscription to the monthly newsletter and various premiums depending upon the level of contribution.

People who are ineligible to register to vote (because of age, lack of citizenship, etc.) but are helping to achieve the goals of the GPCC may become members by being approved by the County Council, subject to the approval of the general membership. These unregistered members may attain the rights and responsibilities of membership, but they may not run for public office.

#### **B. Member Rights And Responsibilities**

1. Members may:
  - a. Form and serve on committees
  - b. Participate in the decision-making process as described in Article III, Section E and the Addendum re: Consensus-Seeking Process at meetings and participate in any actions agreed upon at meetings

- c. Approve and amend the Bylaws of the GPCC
  - d. Run for County Council or other offices (if they are registered)
  - e. Remove Council members according to procedures in these Bylaws
  - f. Serve as delegates to state meetings as defined in these Bylaws
2. Members are NOT empowered to:
- a. Represent the CCC Green Party (e.g., act as spokesperson) without the consent of the general membership

### **ARTICLE III: MEETINGS**

All meetings shall be open to all interested members and observers and shall be announced in advance. Attendance and a summary of decisions shall be recorded at all general and County Council meetings and shall be available for viewing by any interested member.

#### **A. General Meetings**

General meetings shall be held once a month.

#### **B. Special Meetings**

Special meetings may be called by the County Council, appropriate committees or upon agreement of the membership at a general meeting.

#### **C. Agenda**

The agenda for general meetings shall be set by the County Council or a committee appointed to do so by the Council. Members may submit agenda items to the Council for consideration. Meeting agendas shall be posted or distributed at every meeting.

#### **D. Functionaries To Assist Group Process**

**Facilitator(s):** Provides non-directive leadership; assists process clarity; honors agenda contract; promotes good will. A facilitator does not give personal opinions unless s/he clearly relinquishes role and speaks as an individual. Gender balance between co-facilitators is desired.

**Time Keeper:** Keeps group aware of time status when it is important.

**Note Taker:** Records minutes of meeting, highlighting decisions made and tasks taken on by the members. The note taker shall receive copies of all proposals brought before the membership. These will be included in the record as received and as amended during the session with notation as to disposition of the proposal.

**Scribe:** Records on board or piece of paper concerns or items of discussion that come out at meeting.

**Vibes Watcher:** Keeps emotional level of meeting on even keel; role may be filled by an individual or the whole group.

### **E. Decision Making**

All members, and observers when time permits, may participate in the decision making process. In the event that a vote is necessary to make a decision, only members may participate. If a member cannot attend a meeting, s/he can send a written statement to be read by another member if the subject is on that meeting's agenda.

Consensus is a process of decision-making in which all legitimate concerns of group members are addressed to the satisfaction of the group. A proposal is a positive statement of a possible action for a group to take. A concern is a statement of how the proposal as stated might conflict with the group's stated purpose or shared values. Concerns are resolved as the proposal is explained or changed to address them. Decisions of the Green Party of Contra Costa shall be made using the consensus-seeking process as follows:

1. Consensus is sought after adequate discussion, including the repeated asking for and discussion of any unresolved concerns, within the time and content limits of the agenda.
2. Any stand-asides will be recorded.
3. In calling for a consensus, any unresolved concerns will be recorded, and those unresolved concerns will signal a move to a vote.
4. Voting will be on the basis of a two-thirds majority for business and procedural questions and an 80% majority to amend, repeal, or replace bylaws and to make policy decisions. If there is a question as to which voting count to use, the higher percentage will be used.

See Addendum for more a detailed summary of the Consensus-Seeking Process.

## **ARTICLE IV: COUNTY COUNCIL**

### **A. Size and Method of Election**

The number of seats on the County Council will be determined by the Secretary of State before each County Council election. The Contra Costa Registrar of Voters will notify the GPCC of the number of seats.

According to the California Elections Code, if the number of County Council seats is 12 or less, each candidate will run in the county at large. If the number of seats is 13 or greater, seats will be divided among supervisorial districts according to State laws.

### **B. Duties and Responsibilities**

The County Council shall be responsible for all activities relating to conducting the day-to-day business of the county chapter and any policy level decisions shall require the approval of the membership. These general responsibilities include the following:

1. Attend Council meetings
2. Attend general meetings
3. Uphold the stated purpose and values of the GPCC
4. Establish agendas and select facilitators for general meetings
5. Publicize council and general membership meetings
6. Monitor and assist committee work; refer matters to committees
7. Request and receive regular reports from committees
8. Authorize specific expenditures using consensus-seeking process for those under \$100; expenditures over \$100 require the consent of the general membership. The council must report expenditures to the general membership on a monthly basis.
9. Ensure that the decisions of the membership are implemented
10. Ensure that minutes are recorded and maintained for County Council and general meetings
11. Make statements in the name of the Green Party of Contra Costa or authorize others to do so that are consistent with the policy of the general membership
12. Ensure that the legal and fiscal responsibilities of the GPCC are fulfilled
13. Make interim policy decisions, which must be approved by the general membership at the next general meeting

### **C. Meetings**

Council meetings shall be held at least once a month.

### **D. Vacancies**

Vacancies shall be filled by unanimous appointment of the Council, subject to the approval of the general membership.

### **E. Recall Procedure**

Any County Council member may be removed by the membership. A proposal to this effect may be brought before the membership and the Consensus-Seeking Process [described in

the Addendum] will be used. If a vote is required, 80% of the membership must approve the recall.

## **ARTICLE V: OFFICERS**

Officers are those County Council members and other members who are appointed by the general membership to fulfill certain duties. The County Council will present a proposed list of Officers and their duties at the first general meeting following each County Council election. Once approved by the general membership, the list of Officers and their duties shall be documented in writing and such shall be retained by the County Council.

## **ARTICLE VI: COMMITTEES**

The members or the County Council may create committees and approve their purpose, activities, authority and duties.

Once committees have been approved, they will remain in existence once the general membership has approved their formation as long as they:

1. Regularly report to the general membership
2. Adhere to the Bylaws and values of the Contra Costa Green Party
3. Have a purpose

Members or the County Council may dissolve a committee if it fails to meet the above criteria or when it has fulfilled its purpose.

## **ARTICLE VII: LOCALS**

### **A. Certification**

The County Council shall certify or decertify local chapters of the GPCC. A certified local must meet the following requirements:

1. Define their geographical boundaries
2. Adopt By-Laws in accordance with the By-Laws of the Green Party of California
3. Comply with regulations of the California Fair Political Practices Commission and the Federal Election Commission
4. Select a Treasurer

### **B. Sharing of Voter Lists**

1. The GPCC agrees to follow the rules and regulations of both the State of California and the Department of Elections of Contra Costa.

2. Each local will be provided a copy of the data for the area it represents.
3. Party activists (tabling, outreach, newsletter, etc.) shall be given lists of voters in areas as needed for ongoing projects.
4. County Council members who are helping a local to organize shall be given a copy of the data for the area indicated.
5. Any local who obtains a more recent list than is owned by the County Council will make that information available to the County Council.
6. Distribution of this information to any third parties will be with the express agreement of the County Council.
  - a. Rule 6 applies to list(s) provided by the County's Department of Elections to the Green Party of Contra Costa and/or any other lists purchased or obtained by the County Council. Any list of voters or other information purchased or obtained by the locals is the property of that local provided that they comply with Rule 5.

## **ARTICLE VIII: DELEGATES TO THE STATE MEETING**

### **A. Selection**

1. Balance is encouraged in gender, ethnicity, area, age, culture and physical ableness
2. It is encouraged that at least one of the delegates be someone who has prior state meeting experience
3. Actual selection will be done by preference voting if there are more members interested than allotted delegates' seats.

### **B. Responsibilities**

1. Accurately represent the views of the membership
2. Report back in detail to the membership in oral or written form
3. Co-ordinate with other delegates and any participants so that attendance at as many working groups and their subsections as is possible is achieved in order to make as full a report as is possible to the membership
4. Keep in mind Green values and conduct themselves accordingly
5. Read the GPCC's state meeting orientation packet and all information pertinent to the specific meeting to be attended
6. Attend the required new delegate orientation (if a first-time delegate)

## **ARTICLE IX: ENDORSEMENTS**

The membership may decide to endorse initiatives or candidates, within the parameters of the California state election codes, using the Consensus-Seeking Process [described in the Addendum of these Bylaws]. The candidate or initiative committee would then be allowed to use the name of the Green Party of Contra Costa as an endorsing organization.

## **ARTICLE X: BYLAW AMENDMENT AND RATIFICATION**

### **A. Amendment**

These bylaws may be amended by the general membership. Amendment procedure will be the Consensus-Seeking Process [described in Article III, Section E and the Addendum of these Bylaws].

## ADDENDUM

### Consensus-Seeking Process

A proposal may be presented to the County Council for inclusion on the agenda of a general meeting, or it may grow naturally out of a meeting discussion. Either way, the proposal presenter provides a brief statement on the proposal, giving a written copy, if available, to the note taker. The facilitator determines if a quorum exists. If one does, the consensus-seeking process begins:

1. The presenter answers “clarifying questions” from members.
2. The facilitator checks for affirmations and concerns.
3. Concerns are listed by a scribe where all can see them.
4. The facilitator gets a feel for the group's assessment of the proposal.
5. The group seeks to resolve those concerns deemed legitimate by incorporating them into the proposal. The presenter must agree to modifications before they can be made. The note taker reads back any modifications to be sure they are properly recorded.
6. The facilitator asks if there remain any unresolved concerns:
  - a. If there are no remaining concerns, the proposal is adopted with a plan for implementation.
  - b. If concerns remain, go to the next level for resolution.
7. The facilitator asks those holding concerns if they are willing to allow the group to adopt the proposal without their approval with their unresolved concerns being listed with the plan for implementation:
  - a. If those holding such concerns are agreeable, these "stand aside" concerns are recorded by the note taker and included in the minutes with the adopted proposal.
  - b. If someone holding a concern is unwilling to stand aside, go to the next level for resolution.
8. The facilitator addresses the remaining concerns one at a time as follows:
  - a. The concern is restated.
  - b. Questions clarify the concern.
  - c. Discussion focuses on the single concern.

9. The facilitator asks if all concerns are resolved:
  - a. If yes, the proposal is adopted.
  - b. If no, the facilitator asks for stand asides.
  - c. If a concern remains and the person is unwilling to stand aside, go to the closing options. If time is being kept, the timekeeper will notify the facilitator when three minutes remain in the time allotted for the proposal. At this point, the presenter will decide on a closing option.
  
10. Closing options are the prerogative of the proposal presenter:
  - a. Send or return the proposal to a committee for further refinement and an attempt to resolve the legitimate concerns raised.
  - b. Suggest the empowerment of an ad hoc committee made up of the representatives of the remaining concerns and advocates of the proposal to reach some fair resolution:
    - (i) to act on behalf of the membership if time is critical or
    - (ii) to return to a subsequent meeting with a recommendation for adoption.
    - (iii) Request additional agenda time in the meeting to reach a resolution of any remaining concerns.
    - (iv) Request that the membership use the voting option.
    - (v) Withdraw the proposal.

Requests for additional agenda time for an item will include a specific number of minutes and whether the time will be added to the length of the meeting or if it will come from some other item. An 80% vote of the membership is necessary to approve the request for more time.

11. When the closing option of voting is selected by the presenter of the proposal, the facilitator will proceed with the following steps:
  - a. The note taker will be asked to read the proposal as it stands.
  - b. The total "yes," "no" and "abstaining" votes of the active members shall be recorded and included in the meeting minutes.
  - c. Two-thirds is necessary to approve a business item; 80% is necessary to approve a policy item; if uncertain, 80% is required. Abstentions are not counted in calculating the percentage vote; however, if 20% or more of those voting abstain, the proposal fails.

12. **Points of Order**: Any member may signal the facilitator by raising two hands if s/he:
- a. believes a violation of this procedure has taken place (POINT OF PROCESS)
  - b. does not understand the procedure (POINT OF CLARIFICATION)
  - c. has knowledge of an item of information that is important to the discussion (POINT OF INFORMATION).