

Cambridge Democratic City Committee Bylaws

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Cambridge Democratic City Committee

Bylaws

June 29, 2006

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I. Definitions

A. Name of Committee

This committee shall be known as the Cambridge Democratic City Committee, hereinafter referred to as the City Committee.

B. Quorum

A quorum shall be at least one-fourth of the number of members on the Secretary's roll.

C. Majority

A majority shall be one-half plus one of those present and voting. Members who vote "present" or "abstain" shall not be counted as voting.

D. Notice and Notification

Notice and notification shall be deemed to be sufficient when the mailing of said notice or notification is undertaken by United States mail, electronic mail or by personal delivery.

II. Qualification of Members

A. Membership of the City Committee

Pursuant to statute (Chapter 52 of the General Laws of the Commonwealth), all of the members of each of the Democratic ward committees of Cambridge shall constitute, together, the City Committee. Unless otherwise permitted by a majority vote of the City Committee, the City Committee shall not recognize the eligibility of a ward committee member to vote at a meeting unless his or her name has been furnished to the Secretary of the City Committee by a duly authorized officer of his or her ward committee prior to the call of the meeting to order, in a writing specifying the new member's name, residential address, and telephone number, email address, if available and the vacancy he or she fills, as applicable.

Each ward committee shall consist of no more than twenty elected members, as well as twenty year members of the City Committee residing in the ward and members of the Democratic State Committee residing in the ward.

In the event that a ward committee member moves between wards, it is the historic ideal that the receiving ward committee accept said transferring member into membership at the first opportunity.

Any ward committee may by vote appoint associate members. Associate members shall not have the right to vote except as permitted under state party bylaws and charters but shall have such other powers and duties as the ward committee may determine and shall be candidates for any vacancies in the ward committee.

B. Organization of the Ward Committees

Each ward committee must, within ten days after the thirtieth day next following the election of its members but prior to the organizational meeting of the City Committee, meet and organize by the election of a chairperson, a vice-chairperson, a secretary, a treasurer, an affirmative action & outreach advisor, and such other officers as it may decide to elect. A ward committee may choose to elect two co-chairpersons in lieu of a chairperson and a vice chairperson. Should a committee choose this option; the co-chairpersons may not be of the same sex. The chairperson and the vice-chairperson may not be of the same sex. The offices of secretary and treasurer may be held by one person. The affirmative action & outreach advisor may, if the committee so decides also be the chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary or treasurer of the ward committee.

Unless individual ward committee bylaws provide otherwise, ward committees shall elect officers every two years no later than the 15th of April of the given year.

The Secretary of the each ward committee must notify the Secretary of the Commonwealth, the Secretary of the City Committee, the Democratic State Committee, the Office of Campaign and Political Finance and the Cambridge Election Commission in writing of the election and names of the officers of her or his ward committee and the addresses of the officers of his or her ward upon their election at the organizational meeting or upon the occasion of any change in status. In addition, ward secretaries shall supply to the Secretary of the City Committee the telephone numbers and email addresses of all members and associate members as available.

The treasurer of each ward committee must notify the Director of the Office of Campaign and Political Finance that he or she accepts the responsibilities of that office.

C. Vacancies in a Ward Committee

A vacancy shall occur in a ward committee if any of the following occur:

1. Fewer than the full number of members was elected to the ward committee.
2. A member submits his or her resignation to the secretary of the ward committee who forwards the same to the Secretary of the City Committee.
3. A member cancels or changes his or her party enrollment.
4. A member has been removed under the provisions of Article Two, Section V of the Charter of the Democratic Party of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts
5. A member is appointed to a state or federal office that precludes membership in a partisan political body.
6. The end of the year passes in which a member moved her or his residence for voting purposes outside of the ward.

A vacancy shall be filled by a vote of the remaining members of the ward committee. The new member shall take office upon the notification of the Secretary of the City Committee pursuant to Section A of this Article and upon the mailing or delivery of notification to the Secretary of the Commonwealth, whichever occurs last. Notification to the Secretary of the Commonwealth is effective as of the date the notice is mailed.

D. Twenty Year Members and State Committee Members

Any member of the City Committee who has served as such for a total of 20 or more years is entitled to become a twenty year member of his or her ward committee and the City Committee. Upon the designation of any such twenty year member by his or her ward committee such member's elected position shall be vacated. Twenty year members of the ward committees and the City Committee have all the rights, privileges, duties, and responsibilities of elected members of the ward committees and the City Committee, including full voting rights. Twenty year members shall not be included in the 20 member limitation on ward committees.

Any member who believes that he or she is entitled to such twenty year member status shall notify his or her ward committee, which will make the initial determination of such member's status. The ward committee secretary shall notify the Secretary of the City Committee upon any such designation. Any disputes concerning any member's status as a twenty year member shall be referred to the City Committee's Credentials Committee.

Any duly elected member of the Democratic State Committee of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts shall be a member of his or her ward committee and the City Committee. State Committee Members of the ward committees and the City Committee shall not be included in the 20 member limitation on ward committees. All state committee members of the ward committees and the City Committee have all the rights, privileges, duties and responsibilities of elected members of the ward committees and the City Committee, including full voting rights.

E. Calling a Meeting Without Consent of Chairperson

In the event of a refusal of the Chairperson of a ward to call a meeting of a ward committee, a majority of the Executive Committee may call a meeting of said ward committee.

III. Officers, Their Election and Duties

A. Officers

The officers of the City Committee shall be Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, and Affirmative Action & Outreach Advisor. They shall each serve for a term starting when elected and shall serve until the next following election meeting as defined in Section III B below or until a successor is elected.

B. Election Meetings

The City Committee shall meet annually for the election of officers no later than April 15th. The first such election shall be held at the organizational meeting required by law (M.G.L. ch. 52, § 4), and subsequent elections shall be held on dates as near as practicable to the anniversary date of the organizational meeting.

All officers of the City Committee shall be elected from amongst the members of the City Committee.

An officer shall be deemed elected when she or he gets a majority of the votes of those members present and voting, provided that a quorum is present.

C. Vacancies in and Removal from an Office

A vacancy shall occur if an officer ceases to be a member of a ward committee, resigns or is removed from office.

An officer may be removed for failing to perform the duties of the office by a majority vote of those present and voting at the next meeting of the City Committee following a motion to remove, provided that a quorum is present.

A vacancy due to the removal of an officer shall be filled at the same meeting at which he or she has been removed.

Vacancies for reasons other than removal shall be filled at a meeting of the City Committee called for the purpose, for which due notice has been given to each member. Pending such a meeting, the Chairperson of the City Committee, with the concurrence of the Executive Committee, shall appoint a member of the City Committee to act as that officer.

D. Chairperson

The chairperson shall preside at all meetings of the City Committee and of the Executive Committee and shall have general charge and supervision of all subcommittee activities subject to the control and approval of the City Committee and the Executive Committee.

E. Vice-Chairperson

The Vice-Chairperson shall perform the duties and exercise the power of the Chairperson in the absence of the Chairperson.

The Vice-Chairperson shall not be of the same sex as the Chairperson.

F. Secretary

The Secretary shall be responsible for notifying members of any meetings of the City Committee and Executive Committee as set forth in Sections III J, IV A, IV C, and V C below. Such notice shall contain the agenda for the coming meeting in full.

The Secretary must inform the Secretary of the Commonwealth, the Democratic State Committee, the Office of Campaign and Political Finance and the Cambridge Election Commission in writing of the election and of the names of the officers of the City Committee.

The Secretary shall maintain a membership list containing the name, residential address, telephone number and to the extent practicable, the email addresses of each member and associate member of the City Committee.

The Secretary shall keep a record of the proceedings of the City Committee and the Executive Committee. The record of the proceedings maintained by the Secretary shall include a record of members present and their vote on all roll calls.

The Secretary shall make available to any ward committee member and to any Democratic candidate who qualifies for the ballot, by request, a list of the names and addresses of all members and associate members; and with the approval of individual members and associate members, their telephone numbers and/or email addresses.

In the event the Secretary is absent at a meeting of the City Committee or Executive Committee, the Chairperson shall appoint an Acting Secretary.

G. Treasurer

The Treasurer shall have custody of the funds of the City Committee and shall maintain accounts of all receipts and disbursements of such funds. He or she shall disburse the funds of the City Committee as may be ordered by the City Committee or, if not in excess of \$500.00, as ordered by the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee may authorize expenditures to total more than \$500.00 provided that a report of such expenditures is made to the next City Committee meeting.

The Treasurer shall maintain receipts for all disbursements. The Treasurer shall render at each meeting of the City Committee an account of her or his transactions as Treasurer since the date of the previous account and a statement of the current financial condition of the City Committee.

The Treasurer shall make a collection of voluntary contributions from each City Committee member in the course of City Committee meetings when appropriate.

The Treasurer must notify the Director of the Office of Campaign and Political Finance that he or she accepts the responsibilities of that office.

In the absence of the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson, the Treasurer shall preside at meetings of the City Committee and Executive Committee.

H. Affirmative Action & Outreach Advisor

The Affirmative Action & Outreach Advisor shall implement the affirmative action and targeted outreach programs of the State and National Democratic Committees and shall perform such other duties with respect to targeted groups as shall be determined by the City Committee or as requested by the State Committee.

She or he shall be Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Voter Registration.

I. Absence of Officers

In the event of the absence of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Treasurer, the Chair shall be designated by the Executive Committee.

J. Executive Committee

The Executive Committee shall conduct the business of the City Committee between the meetings of the City Committee in a manner that is consistent with the decisions of the City Committee.

The Executive Committee shall be composed of the five officers of the City Committee plus one representative from each of the eleven ward committees to be chosen by each ward committee. The immediate past Chairperson of the City Committee, if still a member of the City Committee, shall be a voting member of the Executive Committee. All meetings of the Executive Committee shall be open to all members of the City Committee. Non-executive Committee members may participate in meetings at the discretion of the Committee although only members may vote.

Meetings of the Executive Committee may be called by the Chairperson or any three members of the Executive Committee provided that at least five days notice is given every member of the Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee shall call meetings of the City Committee giving at least ten days notice of the time and place of each meeting to all members of the City Committee. The Executive Committee shall fix the agenda of the next meeting of the City Committee and shall include such agenda in the call to the meeting.

The Executive Committee may authorize expenditures to total more than \$500.00 provided that a report of such expenditures is made to the next City Committee meeting.

The Executive Committee shall, at the next meeting of the City Committee following the annual meeting for the election of officers, present a proposed budget for the ensuing year for the consideration and approval of the City Committee.

K. Credentials Committee

In the event of challenges to the right of one or more members to his, her, or their respective seats, a credentials committee comprised of the vice-chair, the treasurer, and the affirmative action officer shall investigate the challenges forthwith and shall make a report or reports to the City Committee, which shall act thereon; provided, however, that no member shall vote on a matter germane to his or her own credentials and provided further that if a member of the credentials committee would be investigating a challenge pertaining to his or her own ward, the chair shall appoint a member of the Executive Committee who is not a member of the affected ward and who is otherwise disinterested to serve in his or her place. Members of the credentials committee shall have the right to vote by proxy at a City Committee meeting if the City Committee continues to conduct business during the investigation by the credentials committee.

L. Standing Committee on Voter Registration

There shall be a Standing Committee on Voter Registration whose membership shall include the Affirmative Action and Outreach Advisor of the City Committee, the Affirmative Action and Outreach Advisor of each Ward Committee, or their designee, the Democratic Election Commissioners of the City of Cambridge and any other members as appointed by the Executive Committee. The Affirmative Action & Outreach Advisor shall be the Chair of the Standing Committee on Voter Registration.

The Standing Committee on Voter Registration shall work to encourage voter registration, particularly among underregistered and other target groups.

M. Sub-Committees

The City Committee may establish such sub-committees as it deems necessary. Each such sub-committee shall be composed of all members and associate members of the City Committee who desire to serve on the sub-committee.

The sub-committee shall submit reports to the City Committee as necessary or requested. A minority of the sub-committee may submit reports to the City Committee and those reports shall be accorded the status given to a majority report.

Unless terminated earlier by the City Committee, the term of all sub-committees shall expire with the term of the City Committee.

All sub-committees shall be required to keep a record of their proceedings to be made available upon request.

N. Select Committees

Select committees may be established by the Executive Committee and their members, at least three in number, may be appointed by the Executive Committee.

O. Conflict of Interest

No member of the Executive Committee shall participate in a matter in which he or she has a significant financial interest, whether directly or indirectly.

IV. Meetings and Their Rules

A. Notice of Meetings

No meeting shall be called unless ten days notice can be given to each member and associate member of the City Committee.

The call to the meeting shall include the agenda for the meeting in full and the minutes of the previous meeting. Members living at the same address may elect to receive one notice.

All meetings of the City Committee shall be open to all who wish to attend, but only members may vote.

B. Number of Meetings

The City Committee shall meet at least four times during the year. In addition to the annual election meeting, the City Committee shall meet every year between the first Thursday after Labor Day and the second Thursday in October.

C. Call of Meetings

Meetings shall be called either by the Executive Committee or upon petition from sixteen members from more than one ward of the City Committee for a meeting at a stated time and place. Upon receipt of such a petition, the Secretary shall send out notice of such meeting. The Secretary must be given at least two weeks to send out this notice. The petition must specify the agenda for the stated meeting and this agenda shall be distributed with the call to the meeting.

D. Distribution of Motions

For a motion to be placed on the agenda, a written copy must be furnished to the Secretary at least two weeks before the meeting. The Secretary shall make an appropriate number of copies (at least one per ward) for distribution at the meeting.

Should the Secretary receive a motion after she or he has sent out the call to the meeting but two weeks or more before the date of the meeting, she or he shall send a copy to each of the ward committee chairpersons.

E. Order of Business

The order of business of all meetings of the City Committee shall be:

1. Call of the roll
2. Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting
3. Reports of officers
4. Reports of committees, sub-committees and select committees
5. Reading of communications
6. Unfinished business
7. New business
8. Program
9. Announcements
10. Adjournment

F. Altering the Order of Business

Any matter may be taken up by the City Committee out of order upon the vote of two-thirds of those present and voting, provided that a quorum is present.

At the discretion of the chair, an announced speaker may be given the floor at any time during the meeting.

G. Voting

Upon submission of an oral or written petition of ten percent of the members present the chair shall have the roll called upon the motion indicated in the petition. All such roll calls shall become a part of the minutes of the meeting.

H. Cutting Off Debate

Debate may be closed if a motion to call the previous question is adopted by a majority of those present and voting provided that a quorum is present and further provided that at least ten minutes of debate on each side of the motion has been heard, unless no member desires to speak on the appropriate side.

I. Reconsideration

Motions announced in the call to the meeting may be reconsidered only at the same meeting at which they were first voted on.

J. New Business

New business (not announced in the call) may be taken up by the City Committee, provided a quorum is present, except that, upon the request of forty percent of those present and voting it shall instead be put on the agenda of the next meeting.

K. Suspension of the Rules

Suspension of the rules shall be allowed by two-thirds (2/3) vote of members present and voting, provided a quorum is present.

L. Rules of Procedure

The City Committee shall be governed by the most recent version of Robert's Rules of Order, except where other provisions are made elsewhere in these Bylaws.

V. Amendment of the Bylaws

Amendments to these Bylaws may be proposed in writing at any meeting of the City Committee, providing the amendment is signed by five members. Such a proposed amendment shall be placed on the announced agenda of the next following meeting of the City Committee. An amendment shall be adopted on the vote of a majority of those present and voting, provided that the amendment obtain the majority vote of at least one-fourth (1/4) of all members of the City Committee.

VI. Continuity

Unless and until amended or repealed by the elected members, these Bylaws shall continue in effect from year to year and no formal motion shall be necessary at any meeting of the Committee in order that they continue in force.

VII. Procedures for Selecting Candidates for Election Commissioner

A. Purpose and Empowerment

Intending to promote easy access to the electoral process by all residents of Cambridge, to encourage government activity aimed at actively enfranchising citizens and to promote the widest possible participation among Cambridge Democrats in selecting a Democratic Election Commissioner, the City Committee, by virtue of the power invested in it by Section 3 of Chapter 239 of the Acts of 1921, as most recently amended by Chapter 432 of the Acts of 1939 and by Section 10 of Chapter 52 of the General Laws, adopts the procedure set forth below to govern the selection of candidates for Election Commissioner for years in which the term of a previously appointed Democratic Election Commissioner expires (hereinafter referred to as "expiration year").

B. Questionnaire

No later than December 15 of the year prior to the expiration year, the Executive Committee shall prepare and adopt a questionnaire, which shall include questions concerning the exercise of the powers and duties of the Election Commission. The questionnaire shall be made available from all members of the Executive Committee and from ward committee chairpersons, and its availability shall be widely publicized and advertised in the press.

Any person who wishes to be nominated for the list of three persons required to be submitted to the City Manager (hereinafter referred to as "list") shall respond in writing to this questionnaire, and this response shall be received by the Secretary no later than February 1 of the expiration year. The Secretary shall compile these responses and make them available to members of the City Committee, the press and the public.

Any meeting of the Executive Committee held for the purposes of this section shall be open to the public and subject to the most recent version of Robert's Rules of Order as they concern committees, excepts as otherwise provided in the Bylaws.

C. Public Hearing

The Executive Committee shall hold a public hearing for the examination of candidates for Election Commissioner not later than February 15 of the expiration year and shall give notice of it to every member of the City Committee as if it were a meeting of the City Committee. The hearing shall also be publicized in the press.

Any person who wishes to be nominated for the list must be present at the hearing to answer questions from members and from the public, unless she or he notifies the Chairperson before the hearing of her or his unavailability because of unforeseen emergency, in which case she or he must be present to answer such questions at the meeting required in Section D.

D. Nominations

The Executive Committee shall call a regular meeting of the City Committee for a date not later than February 28 of the expiration year and shall include in its agenda the selection of the list.

At this meeting, nominations for each position on the list shall be in order. For each position, no person shall be nominated who is not a resident of and registered as a voter in Cambridge, is not enrolled in the Democratic Party, did not respond to the questionnaire referred to in Section B, or did not attend the hearing referred to in Section C, except that, if no one meets both of the latter two requirements, those who meet the other requirements may be nominated.

E. Voting

After nominations have been closed, voting shall occur as follows, in each case by call of the roll provided, however, that no roll call vote shall be required to fill a position that is not contested. First, the first position on the list shall be filled. If no candidate receives a majority of the votes cast by members present and voting, all candidates except the five receiving the largest number of votes shall be eliminated, but no candidate tied for fifth place shall be so eliminated. Further votes shall be taken until a candidate receives such a majority. The candidate receiving the fewest votes shall be eliminated after each vote, including the first. The second and then the third positions on the list shall then be similarly filled, beginning in each case with nominations, but no person who has already been selected will be considered again.

F. Transmission

The Secretary shall transmit the list to the City Manager as soon as possible after its selection.

G. Further Procedures

The Executive Committee may provide by rule for any procedure not inconsistent with these rules which it considers appropriate in executing these provisions.