

The Bylaws of the Fredericksburg Green Party

The following shall be the system of bylaws observed by the Fredericksburg Green Party and its members. There shall be twelve (12) articles, each dealing with related and similar topics, each composed of a number of alphabetically designated sections and numerically designated related sub-sections, and each consistent with the mission and purpose of the Fredericksburg Green Party.

Article I – Name

Article II – Purpose of the Fredericksburg Green Party

Article III – Membership

Article IV – Officers

Article V – Executive Board

Article VI – Committees

Article VII – Meetings

Article VIII – Amendatory Process

Article IX – Parliamentary Authority

Article X – Severability

Article XI -- Party Correspondence

Article XII -- Candidates for Public Office

ARTICLE I. NAME

The name of the organization described and in compliance with these regulations is the Fredericksburg Green Party of Fredericksburg, VA., hereinafter referred to as “the Party”.

ARTICLE II. PURPOSE AND MISSION

- A. The purpose of the Party is to focus public awareness on the Ten Key Values acknowledged by the global green community, and to seek ways to apply these values to the benefit of our community. We are committed to social action as well as electoral politics. We shall also serve as a center for networking with other local progressive groups and provide a basis of support for their political representation.
- B. For purposes of identification and interpretation the Ten Key Values are described as follows:

1. GRASSROOTS DEMOCRACY

For democracy to work, governments must be accountable to the citizens who elect them, rather than corporate entities and business interests. Government should be by the people and truly for the people. The Green Party works to increase public participation at every level of government.

2. SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

Greens oppose the current condition of poverty and injustice, and are working to end oppression, including but not limited to that based on class, sex, race, citizenship, age, physical disability, sexual orientation or gender identity.

3. ECOLOGICAL WISDOM

The Green Party advocates maintaining an ecological balance and living within the natural resource limits of our communities and our planet. We all have a right to clean air, water and food.

4. NON-VIOLENCE

We must develop effective alternatives to existing patterns of violence between individuals, groups and nations around the world. The Green Party promotes a value system in which our current culture of violence is unacceptable. This includes seriously reducing cold war military budgets and the elimination of global nuclear weapons stockpiles.

5. DECENTRALIZATION

Decentralization pertaining to wealth and power are the focus of this particular value. Power and responsibility must be restored to local communities, within an overall framework of ecologically sound, socially just values and ways of living.

6. COMMUNITY-BASED ECONOMICS AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE

We believe a living wage, not a minimum wage, is essential for establishing true economic justice. We support local, independently owned and operated businesses, demand responsible corporate citizenship, and are opposed to corporate welfare and privatization of community resources.

7. GENDER EQUITY

Women should receive equal pay for equal work. Proportional representation in our boardrooms and government would create a more balanced and equitable society.

8. RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY

We must honor cultural, ethnic, racial, sexual, religious and spiritual diversity within the context of individual responsibility to all. We must reclaim America's finest shared ideals of *liberty and justice for all*.

9. PERSONAL AND GLOBAL RESPONSIBILITY

The Green Party urges individuals to better understand our interdependence with local and global ecosystems. Our very existence depends on a clean and healthy environment. Individuals, governments and corporations are responsible for making choices that will protect our planet.

10. FUTURE FOCUS

We must all consider the long-range impact of personal choices and public policy on generations to come. Our society must shift away from the sole pursuit of short-term economic gain towards a more holistic, long-term vision of quality of life.

ARTICLE III. MEMBERSHIP

A. Non-Discrimination

Membership in the Fredericksburg Green Party is open to anyone, regardless of age, race, color, national origin, spiritual belief, gender, sexual orientation, or physical challenge, subject to the conditions of this article.

B. The Fredericksburg Green Party formally recognizes two types of membership, “voting membership” and “non-voting membership”.

C. Individuals seeking the classification of “voting membership” shall satisfy the following requirements:

1. Individuals shall pledge to recognize, honor and practice the Ten Key Values described in Article II.
2. Individuals shall have attended at least 3 consecutive official General Membership meetings (as defined in Article VII) and had such attendance recorded by the Scrivener in the official minutes.
3. Individuals shall commit to work in at least one (1) of the Standing Committees (described in Article VI) in a manner defined by the Chair of said committee, or agree to serve, if elected, in any position on the Executive Board (defined in Article V).
4. Individuals shall commit to adhering to the Bylaws and Code of Conduct contained herein
5. Individuals shall have missed no more than ten (10) consecutive meetings, unless a written statement of intended absence (with time frame noted) has been submitted to the Scrivener in advance of the tenth meeting.

D. Membership Contributions - It is recognized that all organizations need to develop sources of income in order to meet overhead costs (including mailings, newsletters, phone and space rental) and to support approved projects. Therefore, the Party urges all members to consider making an annual voluntary membership contribution within their means. However, the Party does not want to discourage the participation of those who are unable to make a financial contribution, and will in no way discriminate against those that are not financially able.

E. Powers of Voting Members - The voting membership shall have final approval over all local policies, expenditure and collection of funds, election of officers herein described, recall of all officers herein described, and shall be able to amend these Bylaws.

F. Individuals who wish to participate in public meetings and/or activities of the Party, but have yet to satisfy or are unwilling or unable to satisfy the qualifications for voting membership described in these bylaws, shall be considered “non-voting members” providing they agree to adhere to the Code of Conduct herein described.

1. Non-voting members shall be permitted to participate in regular discussion at General Membership meetings, and shall be permitted to participate in public actions.
2. Non-voting members shall not be considered in the decision-making procedures herein described and shall not participate in any voting procedures.
3. Non-voting members shall not participate in any voting procedures for the selection and/or retention of officers.

G. Code of Conduct for the Fredericksburg Green Party: No individual member (voting or nonvoting) shall be permitted to:

1. Commit the Party or any of its affiliated members (other than themselves) to any action, endorsement, or other policy position outside the decision making process described in these Bylaws.

2. Misrepresent the decisions or policies of the Party or related body in any public forum.
 3. Through any act of omission or commission keep for his/her own use, misappropriate, or expend Party funds.
 4. Knowingly practice or advocate acts of racial, sexual, national, sexual orientation or religious discrimination.
 5. Advocate or practice violent political action in any capacity of or connection to the Party.
 6. Disparage the work or members of the Party in any public forum, including public meetings, members of the media or official gathering of any other organization.
 7. Knowingly, and with malicious intent, violate any provision of these Bylaws.
- H. Voting and non-voting members of the Party may be subject to sanction for violating one or more of the provisions outlined in Article III Section G of the bylaws, or not adhering to the Ten Key Values defined in Article II.
- I. Procedures for Membership Sanction.
1. The process shall be initiated upon the submission, to the Executive Board, of a written complaint by one or more voting members of the Party.
 - a. The written proposal shall include the name of the member requesting disciplinary action or sanction, the name of the member to be disciplined/sanctioned, a detailed description of the rationale for the request including any evidence available, and a description of any requested sanction.
 - b. The written proposal shall be submitted to the Executive Board.
 - c. In order to protect the rights of the disputed member, copies of the written proposal shall not be released to the General Membership, except in cases in which the Executive Board requests a sanction from the General Membership.
 2. Upon receipt of the written complaint, the Executive Board has two weeks to make a recommendation to the General Membership. Such recommendation may include suspension or dissolution of membership from the Party, suspension or revocation of voting privileges, or other sanction allowed by law.
 3. Recommendations for sanctions by the Board must be reached through regular consensus.
 4. The Board must provide a written recommendation for all decisions reached regarding the request to the General Membership.
 - a. The written statement must include a justification for the recommended action.
 - b. If the Executive Board's recommendation is that no further action is necessary, a justification for that decision must be included in the written statement.
 5. If a sanction is recommended, the matter is voted on by the General Membership at an official meeting not less than one week or more than three weeks from the time the recommendation is issued.
 6. At the meeting the vote is taken the accused is permitted to make a statement of defense. If the sanction is less than dissolution the vote must be a simple majority. If dissolution is recommended the vote must be 2/3. Abstentions will not be considered part of the vote total. Voting shall be by secret ballot.
 7. The accused is not permitted to vote on the matter.
- J. There shall be an appeal process for any decision made which leads to a sanction of a member of the Party. The appeal process shall proceed as described below:

1. Any voting member, other than the member sanctioned, may initiate the appeal process.
2. Only one (1) appeal shall be permitted for each decision that led to a sanction.
3. The appeal process shall be conducted in a manner identical to that described above for the initiation of a sanction, and shall observe the same time limits.

ARTICLE IV. OFFICERS

A. The Party shall maintain the following officers elected by the voting membership.

1. Chairperson
2. Scrivener
3. Treasurer
4. Parliamentarian / Elections Supervisor

B. The Party shall have an official archivist appointed by the Executive Board.

C. Anyone running for office must be a voting member of the Party, and be registered with the Supervisor of Elections as a Green Party member.

D. Powers and duties of the Chairperson:

1. The Chairperson shall call, facilitate, and set agenda for meetings of the Executive Board.
2. The Chairperson shall facilitate meetings of the General Membership.
3. The Chairperson facilitating any meeting may temporarily delegate this responsibility to any voting member as outlined in the Parliamentary Authority referred to in Article IX.
4. The Chairperson shall serve as authorized signatories for all official Party financial accounts.
5. The Chairperson shall serve as the primary spokespersons and correspondents for the Party.
6. The Chairperson may call special meetings of the Executive Board with the concurrence of one (1) other member of the Executive Board.

E. Powers and duties of the Scrivener:

1. The Scrivener shall record minutes of general meetings and Board meetings and publish them electronically. If unable to attend a meeting it is the Scrivener's responsibility to appoint a note-taker for that meeting and to see that the notes are published.
2. The Scrivener shall maintain all active documents pertaining to the Party as a whole, including membership lists, petitions, etc.
3. The Scrivener shall create and maintain all records of meeting attendance by voting and non-voting members.
4. The Scrivener shall process and maintain all public correspondence.
5. The Scrivener may serve as an authorized signatory for the Party's financial accounts.
6. The Scrivener shall be responsible for determining whether a quorum is present at all Board and General Membership meetings.

F. Powers and duties of the Treasurer:

1. The Treasurer shall be responsible for maintaining and managing all official Party financial accounts.

2. The Treasurer shall file any and all appropriate financial documents required by law or deemed necessary by the Party membership.
3. The Treasurer shall process all reimbursements and cash advances for Party business and keep a record of such transactions.
 - a. Financial reimbursements totaling less than one hundred (100) dollars shall not require approval from the Executive Board or membership. A receipt reflecting the cost of the goods and/or services being reimbursed must be collected and maintained by the Treasurer.
 - b. Financial reimbursements totaling more than one hundred (100) dollars must be approved by the Executive Board. A receipt reflecting the cost of the goods/services must be collected and maintained by the Treasurer.
4. The Treasurer shall serve as the primary signatory for all official Party financial accounts.
5. The Treasurer shall be able to report the status of all official Party financial accounts to the General Membership at each regular meeting, and may be required to submit additional reports by the Executive Board.

G. Powers and duties of the Parliamentarian / Elections Supervisor:

1. The Parliamentarian shall keep and maintain any and all records of the Party's Parliamentary Authority.
2. The Parliamentarian shall be charged with ensuring that all meetings of the Party conform to the guidelines specified in the Parliamentary Authority.
3. The Parliamentarian shall advise the presiding officer of any meeting on the requirements of the Parliamentary Authority.
4. The Parliamentarian shall be charged with enforcing any and all time limits for debate, discussion or voting specified by the Parliamentary Authority and/or the membership.
5. The Parliamentarian shall plan and execute all elections within the Party and shall enforce any and all election rules and procedures adopted by the Party.
6. The Parliamentarian is a non-voting member of the Executive Board.
7. The Parliamentarian shall review all proposals for consistency with these Bylaws.

H. Archivist

The archivist shall be responsible for establishing and maintaining the official Party library and archive, and for ensuring the safety of these materials.

I. Terms of office

1. No term limits. Term shall last one year for each elected office.
2. Election for Parliamentarian/Election Supervisor is held at the midpoint of other officers' terms to ensure the availability of an Election Supervisor. Executive Board supervises the election of the Parliamentarian, with voting by the General Membership.

J. Election to office:

1. All elections of Party officers require minimum advance notice at two meetings prior to the date on which the elections will be held.
2. Nominations will be taken from the floor of the General Membership during each of the meetings prior to the election. Members are encouraged to nominate themselves.

3. Election Supervisor/Parliamentarian is responsible for tracking nominations, preparing, collecting and counting ballots, in a timely manner.
4. Voting will take place by secret ballot, in an instant runoff method to be determined by the Election Supervisor/Parliamentarian, subject to the approval of the Executive Board.
5. Committee Chairpersons are selected by the other members of their committee.

K. Removal from office:

Officers of the Board may be removed for malfeasance, misfeasance, or nonfeasance. Process for removal can be initiated by written proposal of one or more members of the General Membership, and follows the same procedures governing discipline of general members.

ARTICLE V. THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

A. Composition: The Executive Board shall consist of the elected officers, plus the Standing Committee Chairs (see Article VI).

B. Powers and duties of the Executive Board

1. Serves the will of the membership, with all major decisions subject to the approval of the voting membership.
2. Generates an agenda for any official meeting of the General Membership.
3. Acts as the primary investigative and judicial body that makes final recommendations to the General Membership.
4. Serves as a liaison to local, regional, and national public interest groups.
5. Serves as the final legal board and mediates all internal legal proceedings.
6. Calls, with proper notice, General Membership meetings, when required by these bylaws or when deemed necessary by any of the Board members.
7. Makes/receives recommendations to/from the membership for the amendment of the Bylaws.
8. Appoints temporary or ad hoc committees.
9. Coordinates the work of the various committees and other working groups so as to assure the goals are mutually supportive.
10. All Executive Board members must report their activities at each Board meeting.
11. Makes recommendations for approval by the General Membership for the appointment of additional spokespersons for the Party, with the explicit understanding of those appointed to use this charge with great responsibility and sensitivity to the consensus of the Party, and for explicitly defined time limits or purpose.
12. Appoints, by regular consensus, a temporary Elections Supervisor in the absence of a Parliamentarian.

ARTICLE VI. COMMITTEES

A. The following standing committees are permanent bodies. Additional standing committees may be added by approval of the General Membership through the amendatory process.

1. Education and Membership Committee – Maintains membership rolls and actively pursues growth in the ranks of Party membership. Facilitates the building of coalitions, and community awareness and understanding of the Party. Strives to increase membership diversity. Organizes external and internal education events. Serves as liaison to student Greens and addresses ways students can actively contribute to Party actions. Coordinates trans-campus activities.
2. Media / Web – Responsible for the production and distribution of press releases, letters to other organizations, brochures, community calendars, television and radio commercials, and other promotional or informative materials as directed by the Party. Responsible for ensuring a constant, quality web presence. Keeps the website current and promotes links with other appropriate sites.
3. Fundraising / Legal – Responsible for raising funds for Party activities, including the planning and implementation of fundraising events, campaigns and pursuit of individual contributors. In conjunction with the Treasurer, ensures Party compliance with local, state and federal laws.
4. Government Watchdog – Monitors local government activities. Attends public hearings and workshops as needed. Proposes alliances, cooperative agreements and actions to the General Membership for approval.

B. Ad Hoc Committees:

1. Ad hoc committees may be formed and dissolved by the Board for short-term needs or projects.
2. Ad hoc committee Chairs are elected by their committee members but are not to be considered voting members of the Executive Board.

C. Meeting Frequency:

All committees will determine the frequency in which they need to meet to fulfill their responsibilities, except: the meeting frequency of any committee may be prescribed by the Executive Board, if deemed necessary to meet the committee's responsibilities.

D. Powers and Duties of Standing Committee Chairs: Chairs of the defined Standing Committees shall:

1. Serve as voting members of the Board.
2. Serve as the liaison between Standing Committees and Executive Board.
3. Be responsible for ensuring that the committee is fulfilling its purpose, and regularly report, to the Executive Board, progress of the committee in fulfilling said purpose.
4. No person may simultaneously chair more than one standing committee.

ARTICLE VII. MEETINGS

A. Quorum at Official General Membership Meetings

1. Quorum is 25 percent + 1 voting members, including the Chairperson or her/his designee, Parliamentarian or his/her designee, and Scrivener or her/his designee.
2. If a quorum cannot be established or maintained, or if notice was insufficient (as determined by the Board), those present may proceed to consider matters on the agenda but only in an informal and advisory capacity. All matters that require Party action shall be deferred to the next official meeting.

B. Quorum of the Executive Board Meetings is 50 percent of the Board members, including the Chairperson or her/his designee.

C. Order of Business

1. Ascertain that a quorum is present.
2. Ascertain that proper notice was given and agenda posted.
3. Reading/summary of minutes of previous meeting.
4. Unfinished business.
5. Reports of officers and committee chairs as applicable.
6. New business : Review of proposals on table and ascertainment of consensus on proposals submitted directly to General Membership.

D. Proposals at General Membership Meetings

1. Content: All formal proposals at General Membership meetings shall include:
 - a. Action requested of the Party,
 - b. Timetable for the proposal,
 - c. Body responsible for reporting progress on the proposal,
 - d. Budget requirements.
2. Submission:
 - a. Proposals to be considered by the Party may be submitted by any individual member to the Executive Board or appropriate committee Chair for evaluation before submission to the General Membership.
 - b. Alternately, such proposals may be submitted to the General Membership directly. In this case, the proposal will require modified consensus for submission to the agenda.
 - c. Consideration of the proposal may be delayed until the next General Membership meeting and may be referred by the Board to the appropriate committee.
 - d. The Board can amend the agenda for time-sensitive matters, without General Membership consensus.

E. Frequency of Meetings:

1. The General Membership shall meet no less than monthly.
2. The Executive Board shall meet no less than monthly.

F. Meeting agendas for both the General Membership and the Executive Board shall be handled as follows:

1. The Chairperson is responsible for the agenda of Board meetings.
2. The Executive Board is responsible for the agenda of General Membership meetings.
3. Agenda for general meetings should be made available to the voting membership electronically and by public posting 48 hours before the meeting.

G. Motions and Voting: All bodies of the Party shall strive to seek consensus in their decision-making. Members shall strive to adhere to the spirit of consensus processes by debating issues respectfully, remaining open to compromise and maintaining awareness of the time they occupy during discussions.

1. Parliamentary Motions/Procedures : Voting will take place based on the rules specified for that motion, as governed by the Parliamentary Authority referred to in Article IX.

2. Policy/Proposal/Amendment Motions : The following rules of procedure may be waived per parliamentary authority.

- a. The mover of the motion has opening statements, not to exceed 5 minutes in length.
- b. Three rounds of stacking will be permitted. Each round will begin with a call, by the meeting facilitator, for the presence of objections.
- c. If there are no objections, the motion is passed.
- d. If there are objections, the round shall begin with a call for speakers on the motion. This list of speakers will be referred to as a 'stack'. Speakers will identify themselves and their position (pro or con) at this time. The mover may not be a speaker.
- e. During each round, each identified speaker is allotted 5 minutes to speak on the motion.
- f. Speakers may yield their time to another identified speaker during the round.
- g. When all speakers have concluded, the round is considered completed.
- h. At the conclusion of each round, the mover is entitled to amend his/her own motion and resubmit the amended motion, or to retract the motion altogether. Amended motions are not new motions and do not begin a new series of three rounds during the same meeting. The mover is, however, allotted five minutes of speech at this time.
- i. If three rounds have concluded, the facilitator will call for the presence of objections. Hearing none, the motion is passed. Otherwise, the matter will go to a vote.
- j. If a vote is taken, and at least 2/3 of the votes cast are in favor of the motion (as amended), the motion passes. Abstentions are not counted in the vote total.

3. Definitions of Decision-Making Procedures:

- a) Unmodified (regular) Consensus: All voting members present (except those who abstain) must agree in order for the proposal to pass.
- b) Modified Consensus: The procedure described in Article VII, Section G, Subsection 2.

ARTICLE VIII. AMENDMENTS

Amendments to the Bylaws may be introduced by any of the methods listed in Article VII Section D. Once the amendment proposal is placed on the calendar (agenda) it must stay on the calendar for a minimum of three general meetings. This period must be at least 3 weeks but not more than 17 weeks, in which case it must be either resubmitted or dropped.

ARTICLE IX. PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

- A. The Party will follow a (to be determined) parliamentary procedure, customized for the Fredericksburg Green Party, for the meetings and the handling of business. This protocol will be referred to as the "Parliamentary Authority". The initial Parliamentarian is responsible for such customization. Until such time as this Parliamentary Authority is adopted, Robert's Rules of Order shall be the Parliamentary Authority.

- B. At no time may the Parliamentary Authority supercede the provisions outlined in the Bylaws.
- C. The Parliamentary Authority shall be adopted by the Party following the procedure for proposals defined in Article VII, and may be amended by the body following the proper amendatory process.
- D. Copies of the Parliamentary Authority shall be provided to all members of the Party, and all amendments to said authority will be communicated to the members in writing.

ARTICLE X. SEVERABILITY

- A. All provisions of the Bylaws are deemed severable.
- B. In cases of conflict between the Bylaws of other affiliated Green organizations these provisions are deemed primary and shall govern all official actions of the Fredericksburg Green Party.
- C. In case of conflict among provisions of these bylaws, each relevant provision will be assessed against the following criteria, given here in decreasing order of precedence:
 - 1. Consistency with the remaining Bylaws,
 - 2. Subscription to the Ten Key Values,
 - 3. Subscription to the Code of Conduct,
 - 4. Consensus of the Executive Board.

ARTICLE XI. PARTY CORRESPONDENCE

Official correspondence from the Party shall be distributed to the Executive Board and the Media Committee prior to general circulation. The Executive Board and / or the Media Committee shall provide comment within five days. Shorter response times may be requested for time sensitive materials. Approval requires a positive response from at least half plus one of the members of the Board and Media Committee. Circulation may occur via email, a meeting of the General Membership or a Board meeting. At a minimum, correspondence shall contain the signature of the Chairperson, Treasurer, and/or Scrivener.

ARTICLE XII. CANDIDATES FOR PUBLIC OFFICE

- A. The Party shall first strive to run Green Party members for public office.
- B. Any candidate for public office who runs on the ticket of the Fredericksburg Green Party must agree to:
 - 1. Promote the Ten Key Values and the platform of the Party.
 - 2. Be solely responsible for all financial obligations incurred by the candidate's electoral campaign.
 - 3. Be solely responsible for compliance with all requirements of law for reporting campaign income and expenditures.
 - 4. Refuse any contribution from a corporate entity.
- C. In the event that no Green Party candidate is available, the Party may consider endorsing other candidates. However, the Party shall not endorse candidates from other parties.
- D. The issue of candidate selection and endorsements will be decided upon by the General Membership, on a case by case basis following the process established in Subsection VII/G/2 governing policy/proposal/amendment motions.