

MGP Bylaws Addendum A

Consensus Seeking Process

Adopted 3/23/2002

1) Proposal presentation

The sponsors of the proposal present the proposal as written, along with any background information they think is pertinent, so that the proposal does not exist in a vacuum (e.g., what situation prompted the proposal). There should usually be a 5 minute maximum on this. Facilitators may give longer if the proposal seems to require it.

2) Clarifying questions

Only questions that clarify the wording or meaning of the proposal are allowed. The sponsors answer the questions. If they need help, the sponsors may call on others with technical expertise, someone who was involved in the drafting of the proposal, or anyone else they feel can help. Opinions or concerns in the guise of clarifying questions are not allowed. The facilitator can decide on a reasonable time limit for clarifying questions.

3) Discussion of the proposal

A broad discussion by the group will bring up the issues and constraints involved in the proposal. This should be an exploration, as a group, of the dimensions of the proposal so that all aspects of the proposal and what it attempts to address are explored. Discussion is not a time to merely list concerns about how a proposal might go wrong in one way or another. Instead it is a time to present alternative ways of doing something or ask why the sponsors chose one way over another. To gauge the sense of the group and keep track of time, an initial 10 minute time period is allotted for discussion. Additional 10 minute extension periods can be allotted repeatedly by majority Straw Poll.

4) Call for consensus

After the discussion is over, the facilitator asks "Are there any concerns remaining?" Anyone with concerns that they believe still need to be addressed should say they have concerns. Concerns are all equal at this point. There is never a need to say one has a blocking concern. *If no concerns are voiced, then consensus is reached.*

5) Listing of concerns

People state concerns about the proposal and its proposed effects. This is not a time to resolve concerns or determine their validity. Each concern is written down. Concerns are grouped where appropriate to identify themes in the concerns. The facilitator can decide on a reasonable time limit for listing concerns.

6) Addressing concerns

The sponsors of the proposal attempt to address each group of concerns. Often someone's concern is a misunderstanding that can be cleared up by the sponsor. The sponsors can modify the proposal to address the concerns if they so decide, or can decide that a concern should have no effect on the proposal as it is being presented. The sponsors are free to accept or reject "friendly amendments" (proposal modifications) from the group that attempt to address concerns. An initial 10 minute time period is allotted for addressing concerns. Additional 10 minute extension periods can be allotted repeatedly by majority Straw Poll.

7) Call for consensus

After the concerns have been addressed there is the call for consensus. Before asking if there are any concerns remaining, the facilitator has the proposal read aloud with the new wording one last time. ***If the concerns have all been addressed to the satisfaction of the group and no one voices that a concern still stands, then consensus is reached.*** If anyone still believes the concern that they have has not been addressed, they may say so by saying that their concern still stands. The facilitator at this point asks the person with the concern to "stand aside" and allow consensus to be reached. ***If the person with a concern will stand aside, consensus is reached.***

8) Remaining concerns

At this point, the facilitator allows a small amount of time for the full group to address the remaining concerns. If the concerns cannot be addressed during this time period, the facilitator charges the persons with concerns to caucus with the sponsors of the proposal to see if they can come up with some way to resolve the concerns. While they meet, the meeting moves on to the next proposal. When the caucus comes back, they are put on the agenda immediately following the current proposal or agenda item. The caucus reports whether they have a solution. ***If a solution has not been found that addresses the concerns, then the process moves to a vote. If a solution is found, it is presented. If there are no more concerns to the reworked proposal, consensus is reached. Otherwise, the process moves to a vote on the proposal.***

9) Move to vote

If consensus is not reached, then under MGP bylaws on decision making, a vote is called on the proposal. A two-thirds majority vote is needed for a proposal to pass. In the State Committee, a three-quarters majority is needed to pass a proposal that changes bylaws.

Notes:

- A) At any time, the sponsors of a proposal can withdraw the proposal from consideration.
- B) If any decision is to be made that involves more than one choice, the MGP rules as specified in section 5.3 of the bylaws require that STV PR shall be used, provided that consensus cannot be reached.