

COUNCIL HANDBOOK

As stated in the Club Bylaws, Article I, Section 2, the Club's objectives are "To provide recreational and social functions for Bears, their friends and like-minded men who enjoy "bear culture" and to publicize this element of the Greater Cincinnati Gay Community, promoting its ideas and presence."

Keeping this in mind, here follows some guidelines to assist Council in the orderly achievements of these objectives.

COUNCIL MEETINGS

Article III, Section 3 states that "The proceedings of the meetings shall follow general principles as set forth in Robert's Rules of Order." Generally this means that no one addresses Council until acknowledged by the Chair, in most cases being the President. However, to allow for a freer exchange of ideas, this may be superseded providing that the speaker not interrupt a previous speaker and not go seriously off topic. It is suggested that a Process Coordinator (e.g.: the Vice President) by the mutual consent of Council perform the following:

PROCESS COORDINATOR:

1. Limit a speaker's time on the floor to allow more members opportunity to engage in debate.
2. Stop a speaker who has wandered from the topic and redirect him or advise him to bring the topic to the floor at a later time in harmony with the agenda.
3. Consult the agenda given by the meeting Facilitator (viz., the President) and the time limits assigned by him to ensure meeting harmony and progression.

FACILITATOR

The meeting should be led by a Facilitator, who by definition of the Bylaws be either the President or Chairmaqn as appropriate. The Facilitator serves as follows:

1. Forms the agenda of the meeting and allocates sufficient time to ensure the complete discussion and resolution of the item. The agenda should be distributed to the Council/Committee members before the meeting/
2. Directs the course of the meeting by bringing items on the agenda to the floor, forming questions for debate or vote, and resolving disputes within the group. Such resolutions of dispute should be considered final.

RECORDER

Proceedings of the meeting should be recorded in clear and detailed fashion by the Recorder, being the Secretary of Council or Committee appointee. It is the Recorder's responsibility to clarify disputes over misunderstandings of previous items of business at the present or prior meeting and to ensure that minutes of prior meetings were distributed to the members of Council or Committee.

Motivator

Knowing that any collection of humans will eventually disagree and hurt feelings result, or enthusiasm for a project will wane, each Council/Committee should have a Motivator to ensure that:

1. Whenever the enthusiasm of the team wanes, he takes steps to edify individual members or the team as a whole.
2. Should disagreement result in personal animosity or hurt, he endeavors to effect a reconciliation between affected members.

3. If the Council/Committee embark on a special project, he should as an additional duty ensure the members' focus and motivation.

COUNCIL APPOINTEES

At any time Council may appoint a volunteer member to serve the River Beagrs in any number of functions. This may include setting up a website, acting as contact with a bar or other establishment in setting up an event, publishing the Club Newsletter, or any other function.

DUTIES TO COUNCIL.

At no time will an appointee's actions be considered binding until the Council has either ruled on the arrangements or given the appointee the authority to make binding arrangements. The Council should limit the authority to a particular event and its details.

The appointee should regularly advise the Council of developments and arrangements as they arise.

DUTIES TO APPOINTEES

Likewise, the Council has a duty to support the appointee in his endeavours and not attempt to undermine them in any way. Volunteers are hard enough to come by and it is needless to scare them away.

DISPUTES

Should the appointee and the Council come to a disagreement, every effort must be made to effect an equitable agreement. If this cannot be done, the Council must resolve the matter by standard debate and election.

OPPORTUNITIES

If the appointee finds other opportunities for the Club, he is encouraged to bring them to the Council's notice. In fact, all the membership should be encouraged to do so. If the event is unable to fit into the schedule of events or the Council deems it undesirable to sponsor the event, it may still be possible to advertise the event in the newsletter at the publisher's discretion for the information to the membership.

ARRANGEMENT OF EVENTS

As noted above, if the event is scheduled by a Council appointee, every effort should be made by the Council to support the appointee's efforts.

BREAKING COMMITMENTS

When the Council has made a commitment either *de jure* by formal notice or motion in the Council or *de facto* by arrangements through Appointee or Council member, the arrangement should at all cost stand unless:

1. It has come to the Council's attention that some illegal activity or other undesirable action will take place at the event and cannot be prevented.
2. It has come to the Council's attention that the membership has a negative interest in the event.

FURTHER CONCERNS

It should be understood that if an individual Council member or Club member make arrangements for a Club event

without first receiving directions for the Council, he should keep in mind that if his decisions need Council ratification and could, due to circumstances unforeseen to him, be null and void.

The Appointee or Council member who has organized the event should make every effort to attend that event. Event details should be arranged by the Appointee or by the Council member arranging the event. If needed, a Committee may be organized to aid in planning (cf. Bylaws Article IV).

ELECTIONS AND VOTING

As with every organization, certain topics require a decision made by Council vote.

CLUB OFFICERS

Club officers are the primary example of decision making in the Club. To ensure all eligible Council members have an equal chance at an available office, the order of elections follow as such:

- 1, All Council members write his choice for the first office on a piece of paper.
2. A member of the old Council not on current Council tallies the votes and announces the winner.
3. The winner accepts/declines the nomination/election. If he declines, the members vote again, excluding his name from consideration.
4. The Council members do the same for the next office, excluding the winners of previous offices from consideration.

To some this method sounds familiar. Its model in the form of electing the Pope -- only he does not get the option of declining the honour.

CLUB DECISIONS

When an item comes to the floor for decision and the debate has been closed on the issue, the Facilitator of the group should formally ward the question for decision. When the question has been formulated, the Facilitator first polls for assenting votes, which are tallied by the Recorder, then for dissenting votes, also tallied by the Recorder. The names of the voters are not recorded except by specific request of the voter.

It is hoped that these guidelines can help the Council of the River Bears, Cincinnati hold efficient, effective meetings and foster goodwill and cooperation between Council and membership.