

**Grass Roots Venice Neighborhood Council
Bylaws Committee Meeting**

Minutes 01-03-06 (DRAFT)

1. Meeting called to order at 7:15 pm.
2. Bylaws Committee Members present – LJ Carusone (Committee Chair) presiding, David Buchanan, David Moring, Eileen Pollack Erickson, Greg Fitchitt, Ivan Spiegel, Jodi Gusek, Joe Murphy, Lisa M. Ezell, Marta Evry, Steve Freedman, Stewart Oscars, Susan Rennie, Thomas O’Meara. Absent – Colette Bailey. Also attending – CJ Cole, Sylviane Dungan.
3. Minutes from 12-12-05 meeting were not reviewed. The agenda was discussed and the chair, with a consensus of the committee, decided to entertain a motion regarding the definition of ‘Stakeholder’ first before following the order of the agenda. The motion was made by Marta Evry and seconded by Susan Rennie or Ivan Spiegel, as formulated by David Moring, that the committee retain the first sentence and delete the remainder of Article 3, Section A of the Bylaws (strike-through version is **Attachment A**). Discussion indicated that clarification of the scope of the definition could be established by the Rules and Elections Committee in the Election Procedures. Lisa M. Ezell asked who would be excluded by that definition and it was clarified that it would exclude a segment of volunteers in some organizations. The motion passed unanimously.

The chair then returned to the agenda as follows:

GRVNC BOARD COMPOSITION/DISTRICT MAKE UP/EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (ARTICLES IV, XI)

- a. **Each committee member will take up to five minutes to state his or her preferences and why.**
 - b. **Open discussion of different structures.**
4. Committee member statements of preference:

David Moring: Deferred to Greg Fitchitt

Greg Fitchitt (district & at large alternative*): Reviewed history and emphasized desire to see the GRVNC work, acknowledging that it has been dysfunctional. He believes that he understands why it hasn’t worked well and that the problem lies in plurality voting where ‘51% wins all seats’, thereby reducing representation of significant minorities. He supports a proposal (**Attachment B**) that he and several others (David Moring, Tom O’Meara) prepared calling for an equal number of district (IRV voting) and at-large (cumulative voting) positions with a streamlined executive committee also elected at large (cumulative voting).

* Also includes 4 to 5 at large executive positions requiring specific expertise and significant commitment, all at large positions to be elected by cumulative voting (ie, ranking of choices) and all district positions to be elected by plurality voting.

He acknowledged that the alternative 'all district' plan (previously presented to the committee by Marta Evry and David Buchanan) would address the '51% wins all seats' problem but believes that it creates other problems that outweigh its benefits in a way that cumulative voting does not.

David Buchanan (district only alternative):** Briefly reviewed the Evry/Buchanan proposal and then acknowledged agreement in principal with alternative voting methods (cumulative and instant runoff voting) but expressed 3 concerns about cumulative voting. He believes that:

- a. It would be unacceptably confusing to voters familiar only with plurality voting.
- b. It would require an educational effort that is not forthcoming.
- c. It would risk a need for review by the city Election Procedures Committee that, even with DONE and/or BONC support, would likely delay approval until after the currently proposed September GRVNC election. He referred to Deanna's (DONE's) recent communication (**Attachment C**).

**** Also includes 4 to 5 at large executive positions requiring specific expertise and significant commitment, all positions (district and at large) to be elected by plurality voting.**

Stewart Oscars: Supports 'district only' alternative. [He favors the at large election of President, Secretary & Treasurer.](#)

Susan Rennie: Supports 'district only' alternative. Urges that the Communication role be added to the list of executive positions since it also requires expertise (computer) and significant commitment. Believes that district representation facilitates surfacing issues of local concern.

Ivan Spiegel: Supports 'district only' alternative. Even with plurality voting, the last election resulted in ~ 5% disqualified ballots. He pointed out that DONE, at the 12/12/05 meeting in its handout, stated that it would not approve IRV; discussion clarified that this statement was reversed and clarified by DONE's more recent communication (Attachment B).

Joe Murphy: Supports 'district & at large' alternative but not certain about IRV & cumulative voting features. He believes that at large approach would produce broader perspective capable of more effectively addressing the long term threat of erosion of Venice values by insensitive (usually non-local) developmental forces. He also expressed interest in increasing the professionalism of the LUPC.

Lisa M. Ezell: Seemed to be supportive of 'district & at large' alternative. Expressed specific concerns about district alternative:

- a. The last election went pretty well → major changes not needed.
- b. What if representatives don't show up? 7 districts are larger than 1/19 of the pie and problems exist with participation. If we break it into 19 districts, is it possible that there will be even less participation?

She also expressed concern about excluding organizations from voting since that would reduce the number of participating voters. She also expressed a desire to tweak absentee voting to facilitate it.

CJ Cole: Supports at large election of executive positions and agrees with including the Communication position as one of them. But her primary recommendation was to keep the proposals as simple as possible.

Thomas O'Meara: Supports 'district & at large' alternative. He suggested that the committee might consider a new voting method for non-officer at large positions of allowing only 1 at large vote per voter rather than 1 at large vote per non-officer at large position. He believes that the 'district only' alternative would result in more uncontested candidates.

Steve Freedman: Supports 'district only' alternative. He believes that the greatest flaw of our neighborhood council is that the existing system of "geographic representation" is virtually meaningless – the seven district representatives neither represent Venice's neighborhoods nor provide effective representation for individual constituents. He believes that the proposal to have eleven district reps conforming to census districts would repeat the existing mistake with a new set of arbitrary boundaries without improving representation. The district approach would provide candidates more familiar with their respective neighborhoods and a better structure for identifying district issues. He also mentioned that the structure of the LUPC, the only aspect of our neighborhood council controlled by the geographic representatives, significantly restricts participation by some of our most highly trained and qualified community members.

Marta Evry: Supports 'district only' alternative. She feels that everyone wants the same result which is more effective representation which is not dominated by special interest groups. She asks everyone to take a look at Fitchitt's handout. She points out that the handout shows the only "independent" candidates to ever win a seat on the Board were District reps. All the At Large seats were won by candidates who were on one slate or another. The 'district only' proposal is comprised of districts ranging from 1100 to 2700 residents. While population was a consideration in drafting the 19 districts, neighborhood integrity was the most important consideration. The census tracts (proposed in the 'district & at large' alternative as the GRVNC districts), which she reviewed in helping prepare the 'district only' alternative, do not reflect the various neighborhoods very well. As to outside interests taking over the GRVNC, she feels it will be impossible to do so in the 'district only' approach. She also mentioned that she asked Greg Nelson (of DONE) to state that he would support IRV or CV if adopted by the committee and was not given a clear response.

Sylviane Dungan: Supports a 'district only' alternative but with 2 representatives per district (ie, reduce the number of districts to 9). She likes to know who she's voting for and therefore likes the twin ideas of districts and parties (slates). She is interested in various committees but finds herself, as a currently elected member of the GRVNC board, with a huge stack of emails to respond to – which erodes the amount of time she can dedicate to other committees. The workload should be shared. She was pleasantly surprised at the level of agreement reached by the current board.

Eileen Pollack Erickson: Supports 'district only' alternative. She did not want to vote for a slate but had a problem reviewing the candidates in the last election, which argues against at large approach.

Jodi Gusek: Supports 'district only' alternative. She feels that the current district representation is faulty (ie, districts are too big and it's hard to adequately represent them). Also, there is a lack of awareness of the GRVNC; converting to a district plan would help correct this. As to voting methods, she believes that it would be very difficult to educate people about it.

David Moring: Supports 'district & at large' alternative. 3 points:

- a. We don't currently function as districts and we're fractionalizing what we have if we convert to a 'district only' plan → disincentive to participation.
- b. GRVNC has to be diverse. No independent candidate ever wins → we need a way to get representation of independent candidates on the board. Plurality voting doesn't work → we need a new method to get minority representation on board. Changing the voting methods is a way to do this; the 'district only' proposal won't.
- c. We should not give up just because it's hard to make a voting method change. DONE welcomes experimentation.

LJ Carusone: Supports 'district only' alternative. At large candidates don't have to do anything to get elected.

5. Committee Discussion Begins – Steve Freedman makes a motion to keep plurality voting as the preferred voting method for GRVNC elections.

Sylviane Dungan: Urges that we move forward.

David Buchanan: Buchanan again expressed concern that DONE would have to forward any alternate voting method to the Citywide Voting Methods Committee, and that it would have to go through a process that could take up to a year to be approved. In the meantime, the bylaws adjustments would be in limbo, and we had agreed at the outset to craft adjustments that could be approved at the DONE level.

Steve Freedman: Motion regarding plurality voting overruled by chair to allow more discussion before making of motions.

Lisa M. Ezell: Reiterates concern regarding getting candidates for 19 districts.

Greg Fitchitt: Clarifies DONE statement and says that it is unlikely that support of cumulative voting would go to BONC. DONE will support it. This was followed by discussion by Ivan and Joe clarifying that the recent DONE communication corrected the miscommunication by DONE at the prior meeting.

Joe Murphy: Urges time be allocated for brainstorming options for making the LUPC more professional. He aired the idea of creating an at large 'urban design' position which met with immediate resistance.

Ivan Spiegel: Agrees with Lisa that it will be hard to get people to run, and he likes Sylviane's suggestion of 2 representatives per district – perhaps go to 14 rather than 19 districts. He also urges including the at large election of a Vice President to fill in when the President is absent.

David Buchanan: The purpose of 19 districts is not to reduce workloads but to increase them, citing a Disaster Preparedness Committee experience. He then reiterated several arguments supporting the district approach.

Thomas O'Meara: He likes Sylviane's idea of 2 representatives per district with the 4 to 5 at large officer positions.

Marta Evry: Opposes 5 at large officer positions as getting into political problems.

Committee Discussion Ends.

6. Consideration of Motions

Steve Freedman: Again makes a motion to keep plurality voting as the preferred voting method for GRVNC elections.

Susan Rennie: Seconds the motion.

Discussion on the motion

Greg Fitchitt: Plurality voting supports slate politics. Even in the district system, it will not get rid of slate politics.

Stewart Oscars: Favors sticking with plurality voting because people understand it. People get energized ...

LJ Carusone: Asks for brief clarification of IRV and Cumulative Voting.

Greg Fitchitt: Responds that IRV requires a voter to rank choices (ie, if there are 5 candidates for President, a voter would rank his first choice as #1, second choice as #2, etc); the more complex part is in tabulating the votes. Cumulative Voting requires a voter to allocate votes (ie, if there are 14 candidates for 7 at large positions, a voter could cast all 7 votes for one candidate or 1 vote for each of 7 candidates or any combination inbetween); tabulation is not complex.

Susan Rennie: The last election worked well. What happened in the past was the tactics of a radical agenda. Slate can instruct voters on how to vote.

Marta Evry: Concerned about vote and voter manipulation. Thinks cumulative voting will force people into slates.

Chairs calls the question. Vote on the motion:

9 in favor
3 opposed
2 abstain
Motion carries.

7. Committee decides to meet next on Tuesday Jan 10 or Wed Jan 11 at 7pm at the Extra Storage Space meeting room, the chair to select and provide notice of the specific date. The agenda for the next meeting, per consensus at the 01-04-06 meeting, is further discussion of board composition.
8. Motion to adjourn by chair is seconded by consensus and passed unanimously.

Attachment A

GRASS ROOT VENICE NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL Bylaws Committee

TO: Grass Roots Venice Neighborhood Council Board of Officers

FROM: GRVNC Bylaws Committee

SUBJECT: 2nd Proposed motion to change GRVNC Bylaws

The GRVNC Bylaws Committee met January 3, 2006 to review and discuss the “preparation of GRVNC bylaws changes for consideration of GRVNC Board approval and submission to DONE for ratification”, as the Committee mission statement requires.

By unanimous vote, the Committee requests that the Board utilize Article X, Section A of the GRVNC bylaws to make the following motion to change the definition of a GRVNC Community Stakeholder:

Proposed bylaws change (strikeout sections are the areas to be amended).

ARTICLE III — MEMBERSHIP

A. GRVNC Community Stakeholders. “GRVNC Community Stakeholders” are defined as individuals who live, work, or own property within the GRVNC boundaries. ~~In addition, Community Stakeholders shall be identified by participation in, among other things, educational institutions, religious institutions, community organizations or other non-profit organizations, block clubs, neighborhood associations, homeowners associations, apartment associations, condominium associations, resident associations, school/parent groups, faith based groups and organizations, senior groups and organizations, youth groups and organizations, chambers of commerce, business improvement districts, arts associations, political action groups, service organizations, park advisory boards, boys and girls clubs, cultural groups, environmental groups, codewatch, neighborhood watch, police advisory board groups, and/or redevelopment action boards.~~

Attachment B

Proposal for an Improved GRVNC Structure January 2, 2006

Introduction – the Problem

Since its certification in 2002, GRVNC has frequently experienced problems with its elections and its board. Elections have been very divisive, and the board has often been regarded as not representative of the community. This plan proposes bylaws changes to the GRVNC board composition and the voting methods by which the board is elected to address these problems.

In GRVNC's brief history, one or another group or faction, i.e. a "slate"¹, has been able to dominate the board by turning out a slim majority of voters in board elections. This is mainly due to the fact that 2/3 of the board seats are seats which, under the bylaws, are elected via plurality voting (i.e. one vote per seat, no cumulative voting and a majority is not required to elect board members) and are elected "at-large" (i.e. anyone in Venice can vote for these positions regardless of geographic sub-district).

Such a structure leads to the "51% wins 100%" problem, whereby if there are two competing groups, one side can win most or all of the plurality-elected at-large seats by turning out one more voter than the other side.

This structure has led to problems when the losing groups, who may have turned out 40-45% of the vote, have been largely excluded from having any voice on the board. The board composition has therefore often not represented the diversity of opinion within Venice.

Background and History

The problems with the current structure are illustrated by GRVNC's election history.

2005 Election

In the most recent election, there were two "slates", the "VPN" slate and the "Progressive" slate. A large number of independent candidates ran as well. All 21 board seats were up for election.

The results show the dominant and disproportionate influence of slates:

- By turning out approximately 50-55% of the vote, the VPN slate won 12 of the 14 plurality-elected, at-large seats (86%).

¹ For convenience, groups of candidates affiliated during a campaign are referred to as "slates". This may refer to an organized group which has a platform which all candidates have endorsed, or it may refer to an endorsement list which may or may not have an organized platform. In GRVNC's history, both extremes have played roles, and some candidates have been included on "slates" even though they have not sought any such endorsement, nor endorsed any "slate platform".

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- Although they turned out approximately 40-45% of the vote, the Progressive slate won only 14% of the plurality-elected, at-large seats.
- Although 16 independent candidates ran, none came anywhere close to being elected. No independent (non-slate-affiliated) candidate received more than 33% of the vote, including in all the district races. Most independents received between 5% and 20%.
- Slates dominated the district elections as well. All 7 district seats were won by slate-affiliated candidates, even though 11 non-affiliated independent candidates ran for the various district seats. The highest vote-getting non-affiliated candidate received barely 50% of the votes they would have needed to win. The VPN slate won 3 district seats and the Progressive slate won 3 (one district candidate was endorsed by both slates).

2004 Election

The 2004 GRVNC election was held in June, but was eventually invalidated by DONE. The election, which was organized by the slate which was in control of the GRVNC board at the time, was essentially boycotted by elements of the community who opposed this “slate”.

In this election, 13 seats were up for election, including all the district seats. Since only one “slate” participated, most of the races were won by 90% or more in the contested races. 7 of the 13 races were uncontested. Only one race was competitive (District 6).

This election keenly illustrates why the current system fails. The outcome of the previous (2003) election resulted in a board dominated by one “slate” and the exclusion of opposing voices, even though the opposition “slate” had turned out approximately 40% of the vote. Rather than participating within the GRVNC, these opposition forces worked against it. The result was a failed election and an organization which was eventually de-recognized, and thus unable to represent the community for about a year in 2004-2005.

2003 Election

In 2003, there were two slates, the “Progressive” slate and the “Team Venice” slate. 10 seats were up for election (3 executive officers and 7 at-large officers). All were plurality-elected, at-large seats.

By turning out approximately 60% of the vote, the “Progressive” slate won 100% of the seats up for election. This perfectly illustrates the “**51% wins 100%**” problem.

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Members and supporters of the “Team Venice” slate contested the election, resulting in a “limbo” period when the GRVNC could not meet or act on community issues for approximately 3 months.

Despite running an organized campaign and turning out approximately 40% of the vote, the “Team Venice” slate was completely shut-out of the GRVNC board seats. This lack of proportionality in representation is at the heart of the problem with the current bylaws.

Independent candidates were also shut out of the 2003 election by very large amounts, similar to other elections. 6 independent candidates ran, including many who were quite well known within the community, who had strong records of community involvement, and who ran aggressive campaigns. None, however, came anywhere close to being elected. The strongest non-slate-affiliated candidate received barely half of the votes required to win a seat.

2002 Election

In GRVNC’s first election in June 2002, the board elected actually was fairly representative. The “Progressive” slate ran 12 candidates, including 4 candidates for executive offices (elected at-large), 5 candidates for at-large offices, and 3 candidates for district representatives. The “opposing slate”, known as “Groovenik”, was primarily composed of an endorsement list circulated by Watchdawg editor Rick Feibusch, which endorsed candidates for 20 of 21 offices.

The “Progressives” won 8 seats, the “Groovenik” slate won 12 seats, and one independent won (in an uncontested district race).

The fact that this election’s results were more balanced is probably a function of a few factors:

- It was early in the organization’s history (and “factions” or “slates” had not had so long to coalesce).
- Many candidates were known to many of the voters independent of slate affiliation, since many of the voters had participated along with the candidates in a formation process over a period of more than a year.
- Many of the contests (a total of 9) were not contested between the two slates, again probably owing to the fact that it was early in the organization’s history and the relevance of slates to electoral success was less well understood.

Nevertheless, the power of the slates is still shown clearly in this election, in two ways:

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- No independent candidate won except in one uncontested race, although 12 independent candidates ran.
- The Progressives won all 5 of the plurality-elected at-large non-executive offices they ran candidates for. Had they fielded a full slate of 7 candidates for these offices, they probably would have won all 7. This again demonstrates *the “51% wins 100%”* problem.

Vote totals and candidate slate affiliations for each GRVNC election (2002-2005) are attached in Exhibit A.

Proposal

To fix the problems of the current structure, the following structure is proposed.

- 3 Executive Officers, Elected via Instant Runoff Voting
 - o President
 - o Treasurer
 - o Secretary
- 11 District Representatives, Elected via Instant Runoff Voting
- 11 At-Large Representatives, Elected via Cumulative Voting

Reasons for Proposed Structure

This board composition, along with the recommended voting methods, would effectively address the problems with the current structure outlined above. Some benefits of the overall structure include:

- Reducing the risk of unintended consequences resulting from an untested structure by using a balance of differing systems (i.e both district-based and cumulatively-elected at-large). By utilizing a balance of different systems, the risks of potential faults of any one system are mitigated.
- Completely eliminating the plurality-elected at-large seats which have been at the root of most of the past GRVNC problems (a.k.a. eliminating the *“51% wins 100%”* problem).
- Incorporating board composition and voting method elements advocated by a broad variety of Venice stakeholders over the past 5 years.

Following is a discussion of the reasons why the specific elements of this structure are proposed and how they address the past problems.

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District Representatives

Many Venice stakeholders, most recently through the stakeholder initiative organized in late 2004/2005, have expressed a desire for increasing the number and proportion of district representatives.

Arguments for this include:

- Making board members more accountable to their constituents (since they would be geographically closer).
- Reduction of the influence of slates (by deflecting the “51% wins 100%” problem).
- Increasing outreach (by increasing the importance of door-to-door and neighborhood-based outreach by candidates).
- Assuring that neighborhood voices and concerns are addressed by the GRVNC.

Arguments against include:

- Reduction of stakeholder representation (since stakeholders would only be voting for a single representative on a board of 20 or more).
- Reduction of incentives and opportunities for community-wide organizations to participate (since most or all board seats would be elected by constituents in small, specific areas rather than by the community as a whole).
- Decreased participation (since smaller geographies tend to have smaller turnouts looking at city, state or federal elections).
- Failure to support independent candidates (as historically no contested GRVNC district race has been won by a non-slate-endorsed candidate).
- Risk of becoming focused on only small neighborhood concerns at the cost of community-wide concerns (since representatives are would only be accountable to their immediate neighbors, not anyone outside their district boundaries).

The proposal contained here would increase the number of districts from the current 7 to 11. The 11 districts would be based on the 11 census tracts already existing within the Venice 90291 and 90292 zip codes. The proportion of the board composed of district representatives would be increased from 33% to 44%.

Benefits of this proposal include:

- Increasing the number of districts in response to the desires expressed by many stakeholders.
- Advancing the goals outlined in the “arguments for” listed above, including deflecting the disproportionate influence of slates and creating smaller districts, thus increasing the geographic proximity between a district representative and the stakeholders they represent.
- Providing an objective basis for district boundaries (federal census tracts) which is by necessity of law reasonably balanced in terms of population.

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Executive Officers

Various options for the Executive Officers have been discussed in recent months and years. One option is allow the board members to elect the Executive Officers, rather than direct election of the Executive Officers by the stakeholders.

This “indirect election” option, which is employed by many organizations including some other neighborhood councils in Los Angeles, would allow the board to match board members to leadership positions according to their interests and abilities. However, there are at least two significant drawbacks in such a scenario:

1. If any “slate” controlled 51% of the board seats, they could appoint all of the Executive Officers, effectively excluding other voices from the agenda-setting Executive Committee. This would present a new version of the “**51% wins 100%**” problem we have already seen in GRVNC’s brief history.
2. By removing the stakeholders’ ability to directly vote for and elect the leadership positions on GRVNC, such a proposal risks alienating stakeholders. People strongly prefer to vote directly for the leadership positions of an organization they belong to, rather than having them elected by proxy.

The proposal contained herein suggests retaining direct election by stakeholders of Executive Officers, while reducing their number from 7 to 3. The 3 Executive Officers (President, Treasurer and Secretary) would be elected by Instant Runoff Voting (IRV), rather than by the plurality method, as is the case today.

This structure avoids the potential “**51% wins 100%**” slate problem inherent in having the Executive Officers elected by the board. Furthermore, it encourages positive campaigning and consensus-builders among Executive candidates due to the use of IRV.

With IRV, candidates must appeal not only to a factional “base”, but also to independent and “swing” voters, since second-choice votes are likely to prove decisive if more than two candidates run for these leadership positions. Independents are encouraged to run with IRV as well, since independent and moderate candidates are more likely to prevail with IRV than with the current plurality system, where 34% of the vote can win if 3 or more candidates run for an office. IRV requires true majority support of a candidate for them to win, and it also eliminates the “spoiler effect” best illustrated by the 2000 election slogan that “a vote for Nader is a vote for Bush”².

² In the 2000 presidential election, the argument was presented that Nader supporters who voted for their preferred candidate were effectively voting for Bush, rather than Gore, because voting for Nader would likely mean a vote taken away from Gore. For example, if 41% of the electorate’s first choice was Bush, 40%’s first choice was Gore, and 19%’s first choice was Nader, then under a plurality system, Bush would be elected, even though if we assume that most Nader supporters would have preferred Gore to Bush, then 59% would have preferred Gore be elected to Bush’s 41%. Thus the slogan “a vote for Nader is a vote for Bush”, a.k.a. the “spoiler effect”.

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This proposal has the further benefit of retaining direct accountability to all the Venice stakeholders of these key elected positions. With this proposal, the head of the organization (President), the person responsible for handling the money (Treasurer), and the person responsible for keeping an accurate record (Secretary) are all directly elected by all Venice stakeholders. The candidates elected to these positions must know, must be committed to, and must effectively request their official responsibilities before they are elected, rather than having them “forced” upon them by other board members after the stakeholder election.

At-Large Officers, Cumulatively Elected

This proposal revises the method of election for the at-large representatives from the current “plurality” method (the source of the “**51% wins 100%**” problem) to cumulative voting, and increases the number of these offices to 11 from 7. This structure maintains a balance between officers with community-wide accountability (i.e. the “at-large” representatives), and those who are accountable to stakeholders within a distinct geographical sub-district (the “district” representatives).

Most importantly, this structure and voting method change fixes the “**51% wins 100%**” problem that has plagued GRVNC almost from its inception. Under this structure, slates will likely still run candidates, however they will not win seats disproportionate to the percentage of voters they turn out.

This structure also encourages independent candidates with community-wide support who, despite strong support across Venice have no chance to win a seat under the current system. Such candidates can win one of the 11 at-large seats under the proposed structure, if they have very strong support from a significant minority of stakeholders.

Under the current system, a voter casts up to 7 votes for up to 7 different candidates, however the voter can not cast more than one of their 7 votes for a single candidate. Thus, if a voter only supports one of the field of candidates, their voting voice is severely diluted, because their other 6 votes are thrown away.

With Cumulative Voting, every voter’s voice carries equal weight. If you really want to see 3 particular candidates on the board, split your votes between those 3. If you like 5, split your votes among those 5. And if there’s one single voice or viewpoint that you feel is very important to be heard, even if it’s only one seat out of 11, then cast all your votes for that one candidate. Cumulative Voting permits every voter’s preference to be fully expressed.

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Cumulative Voting for the at-large seats also eliminates the “51% wins 100%” problem. Under the current plurality system, “slates” are encouraged to run a candidate for every single at-large seat, since 51% of the vote is enough to carry every seat.

Example of Cumulatively-elected, at-large election

Under Cumulative Voting for the at-large seats, a slate which runs more candidates than it has support for within the community risks diluting its support and winning fewer, or even no, seats. The effect will be for “slates” to run a number of candidates roughly in proportion to the percentage of support they believe they can turn out in an election.

This is best illustrated by an example. Under the proposed structure, there would be 11 cumulatively-elected, at-large seats. Assume that Slate A, overconfident, runs a full slate of 11 candidates. Slate B estimates its support at 45% of the electorate, runs 5 candidates, and asks its supporters to cast all their votes amongst these 5 candidates. There are also 4 independent candidates who are well-known throughout segments of the Venice community and who have strong support within these segments.

If 1,000 Venetians vote, based on historical GRVNC voting patterns, we could expect 40% to vote for Slate A, 40% to vote for Slate B, and 20% to vote for primarily independent candidates with a mix of some Slate A candidates and some Slate B candidates. Election results would then likely appear close to as follows:

<u>Slate A:</u>	<u>Slate B:</u>	<u>Independents:</u>
Candidate 1: 500 votes (elected)	Candidate 12: 880 votes (elected)	Candidate 17: 550 votes (elected)
Candidate 2: 450 votes (elected)	Candidate 13: 880 votes (elected)	Candidate 18: 525 votes (elected)
Candidate 3: 400 votes	Candidate 14: 880 votes (elected)	Candidate 19: 500 votes (elected)
Candidate 4: 400 votes	Candidate 15: 880 votes (elected)	Candidate 20: 475 votes (elected)
Candidate 5: 400 votes	Candidate 16: 880 votes (elected)	
Candidate 6: 400 votes		
Candidate 7: 400 votes		
Candidate 8: 400 votes		
Candidate 9: 400 votes		
Candidate 10: 400 votes		
Candidate 11: 400 votes		

Total Votes: 11,000 (1,000 voters x 11 at-large offices)

Therefore, with this system, a group which organizes a “slate” is wise not to overestimate its support within the community, for risk of winning far fewer seats than it could if it chooses to run a more modest number of candidates.

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Furthermore, this system encourages candidates to appeal across “slate lines”, since additional votes from independent or “non-slate” voters can be the extra edge required to win a seat.

This system provides:

- The best opportunity for independent candidates to win a seat,
- Elimination of the “**51% wins 100%**” problem, and
- Full expression of each stakeholder’s voting preference.

This system also provides an opportunity for community-wide organizations and voices to gain a seat on the board with a Venice-wide campaign, as opposed to winning only through a campaign based on a very specific sub-district of Venice. This enhances accountability to stakeholders on issues of community-wide concern, as opposed to solely neighborhood-based concerns.

Conclusion

The proposed board composition and voting methods would address the past problems of GRVNC, while mitigating the risk of unintended consequences. District representation would be increased, and the “**51% wins 100%**” problem would be eliminated. The GRVNC board would include a broad diversity of opinion, fitting to the diverse Venice community. Individual neighborhoods would have increased representation on the board with the smaller districts, while community-wide concerns would have representation as well. Leadership positions would remain elected directly by the stakeholders, but positive campaigning and consensus building would be encouraged by the use of IRV. Overall, GRVNC should become a more stable organization while also becoming more fully representative of the entire spectrum of the Venice community.

Exhibit A – Past GRVNC Election Results

2002 Elections

President:

Tisha Bedrosian - 416 Groovenik
(unopposed)

Vice President:

Greg Fitchitt - 396 Groovenik
Geri Lewis - 23 Independent
(Dr.) John Michel - 74 Independent

2nd Vice President:

Chris Wood - 283 Progressive
Jeff Miles - 259 Groovenik

Secretary

Elena Popp - 298 Progressive
John Davis - 248 Independent

Treasurer:

Mark Van Gessel - 262 Groovenik
Andre Delattre - 251 Progressive

Comm. Officer:

Chris Bedrosian - 285 Groovenik
James Smith - 236 Progressive

Gov't Relations Off.

John Caldwell - 260 Groovenik
Mindy Meyers - 210 Independent

At -large (7 elected)

Laddie Williams - 315 Progressive
Sheila Bernard - 302 Progressive
Phyllis Des Verney - 271 Progressive
Lydia Ponce - 237 Progressive
Yolanda Miranda - 235 Progressive
Rick Feibusch - 200 Groovenik
Barbara Gibson - 190 Groovenik
Carolyn Ward - 189 Groovenik
Nancy Silverman - 182 Groovenik
John Kertisz - 173 Groovenik
Ed McQueeney - 167 Groovenik
JR Dzubak - 158 Independent
Amy Nation - 124 Independent
James Murez - 110 Independent
Dave Shebby - 46 Independent
Jeremiah Day - 38 Independent
Sheila Borders - 19 Independent

District 1
North Penmar area
David Moring - 18 Independent
(unopposed)

District 2
North Beach/Rose Ave.
Bonnie Cheeseman - 59 (Tie-breaking coin toss won by Cheeseman) Groovenik
Bridgett Gonzalez - 59 Progressive

District 3
Oakwood
Naomi Nightingale - 67 Groovenik (unopposed)

District 4
Penmar South
Chris Williams - 60 Groovenik
Pete Savino - 32 Progressive

District 5
Milwood, Central Venice
Kelley Willis - 30 Groovenik
Jamie Schwartzman - 13 Independent

District 6
Oxford Triangle
DeDe Audet - 20 Groovenik
N Challis Macpherson - 12 Independent

District 7
Canals, Peninsula
Alice Stek - 104 Progressive
Diane Bush - 47 Groovenik

2003 Elections

Secretary

Elena Popp - 676 Progressive
Carolyn Ward - 396 Team Venice
Sonjia Eshell Mata – 28 Independent

Treasurer

Jim Smith - 658 Progressive
Jeff Miles - 476 Team Venice

Comm. Officer

Tom O'Meara - 684 Progressive
Chris Bedrosian - 466 Team Venice

At -large (7 elected)

Laddie Williams – 727 Progressive
Sheila Bernard - 700 Progressive
Sabrina Venskus - 649 Progressive
Peggy Lee Kennedy - 629 Progressive
Lydia Poncé - 623 Progressive
Elinor Aurthur - 618 Progressive
Suzanne Thompson - 617 Progressive
Barbara Gibson - 439 Team Venice
Rick Feibusch - 429 Team Venice
Phil Raider - 429 Team Venice
Marta Evry - 413 Team Venice
Clabe Hartley – 320 Independent
Amy Nation – 228 Independent
Jataun Valentine – 227 Independent
Phyllis Des Verney – 119 Independent
Stephanie Reich - 85 Independent

June 2004 Election (subsequently rejected by DONE)

Office/Candidate Votes

President

Suzanne Thompson 357 Progressive
Jennifer Carson 44 Independent
Write-ins 5

Vice President

Alice Stek 359 Progressive
Write-ins 6

2nd Vice President

DeDe McCrary 363 Progressive
Write-ins 6

Government Relations Officer

Sheila Bernard 335 Progressive
Write-ins 6

Secretary

John Davis 359 Progressive
Write-ins 7

At-Large Member

Francisco Letelier 346 Progressive
Richard Myers 25 Independent
Larry Smoot 7 Independent
Write-ins 4

Geographical Representatives:

Dist. 1

Deborah Krall 90 Progressive
Rick Selan 2 Independent

Dist. 2

Bonnie Cheeseman 25 Independent
Write-ins

Dist. 3

Bridget Graham 63 Progressive
Write-ins 2

Dist. 4

Dennis Hathaway 30 Independent
Will Yeager 2 Independent

Dist. 5

Emily Winters 115 Progressive
Howard Saxe 3 Independent
Kelley Willis 8 Independent

Dist. 6

Michael McGuffin 27
John Raphling 20

Dist. 7

Zoe Garaway 34 Progressive
Write-ins 2

2005 Elections

GRVNC 2005

Final Official Canvass of Votes

September 14, 2005

	<i>votes</i>	<i>elected</i>
President (1)		
Leila Jean Levi	58	
DeDe Audet	581	<i>elected</i>
Jim Smith	480	
Vice President (1)		
Naomi Nightingale	772	<i>elected</i>
2nd Vice President (1)		
Don Geagan	435	
Yolanda Gonzalez	601	<i>elected</i>
Levi Meir Clancy	55	
Government Relations (1)		
L J Carusone	583	<i>elected</i>
"Dr." John R Michel	60	
Alan Ross	221	
Secretary (1)		
Phil Raider	618	<i>elected</i>
Alice Stek	477	
Treasurer (1)		
Edward Ferrer	499	
CJ Cole	592	<i>elected</i>
Communications (1)		
Richard Myers	607	<i>elected</i>
Erin Grayson	472	
At Large (7)		
Stewart Oscars	378	
Rick Selan	192	
Colette Bailey	576	<i>elected</i>
Joseph Gross	410	
Melanie Berry	191	
Diana Pollard	516	<i>elected</i>
Vessy Mink	436	
Lisa Ezell	451	
Lowell Safier	448	
Linda Lucks	645	<i>elected</i>
Rob Stone	56	
Kelley S. Willis	521	<i>elected</i>
Michael King	481	<i>elected</i>
Peter R. Force	471	<i>elected</i>
Rebecca E. Tafoya	456	<i>elected</i>
Karl Abrams	447	

	<i>votes</i>	<i>elected</i>
District 1 (1)		
Ingrid Mueller	69	<i>elected</i>
District 2 (1)		
Susan Papadakis	53	
Jan Sproull	57	<i>elected</i>
Gwen Howard	9	
Jamie Cantor Ginsburg	22	
District 3 (1)		
Amber Hartgens	82	
Tom Chou	16	
Brian O'Connell	26	
Stan Muhammad	97	<i>elected</i>
Edward Dabbs	7	
District 4 (1)		
Mindy Taylor-Ross	80	<i>elected</i>
Jill Prestup	65	
District 5 (1)		
Sylviane Dungan	112	<i>elected</i>
Howard Saxe	36	
Cynthia McGuineas	7	
District 6 (1)		
Howard J. Wiggett	48	
Jeffrey J. Fritz	14	
Challis Macpherson	67	<i>elected</i>
District 7 (1)		
Sunny Bak	2	
Brett Miller	87	<i>elected</i>
Nicole F. Midwin	6	
Junius (Jerry) Browne	46	

	<i>Sat</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>Total</i>
Registrations	323	711	1034
Pre Registrations	41	19	60
VBMs received in mail			61
VBMs in person			35
Provisionals verified/counted			15
Total			1205

Ballots Counted			1204
Ballot destroyed by voter			1
Provisionals NOT verified/counted			15

<signature>

Jerry Kvasnicka, IEA

14-Sep-05

date

Attachment C

Dear L.J. and GRVNC Bylaws Committee Members:

In order to clear up any confusion or misinformation regarding alternative voting systems and Instant Runoff Voting, I want to assure you that the Office of the City Attorney sees no problem with any neighborhood council using an IRV voting system. This is because it is a method of tabulating votes and determining winners -- something that isn't addressed in the new citywide election procedures.

Also, I spoke with the General Manager of the Department about the larger issue of alternative voting systems. He indicated that our department is very interested in exploring alternative voting systems, including IRV, cumulative voting, and others.

A couple of years ago, some hard-working Venetians produced an excellent body of information on alternative voting options. The department took that information and asked a group of students at USC to analyze alternative voting methods with a citywide perspective. We asked them to pay special attention to those systems which might help ensure that the diversity of stakeholders within a neighborhood council area is represented on the board, and that one side can't easily "take it all."

If a neighborhood council wishes to experiment with alternative voting systems for the purpose of increasing public participation, helping to ensure diversity, and helping prevent one interest group from dominating the elections -- all concerns mentioned in the rules that govern us -- our department would not hesitate to recommend an amendment to the citywide election procedures if there were the appearance of a conflict with those procedures.

I hope the information I have provided here helps clarify some of the concerns that have been expressed within your community.

Deanna Stevenson
Project Coordinator