

GRVNC Bylaws Committee Background

Prepared by
GRVNC Bylaws Committee
Chair – LJ Carusone

WHY?

Resolve Competing Bylaws Changes!

- In 2001, the original Bylaws were drafted and the GRVNC was certified.
- Today the GRVNC continues to operate under this same set of Bylaws.
- Broad concern and criticism of the Bylaws resulted in two sets of separate and competing bylaws changes in 2004:
 - One set of bylaws was initiated by Venice stakeholders
 - The other set was initiated by the GRVNC board
 - Both sets were submitted to DONE for approval
 - When the GRVNC lost its quorum in November, 2004, DONE chose to hold the bylaws changes until GRVNC held a new election and regained its quorum
- On December 12, 2005, representatives from DONE met with the Bylaws Committee. DONE communicated that it intended to approve ***all the submitted bylaws changes*** that did not violate the “Plan for a Citywide System of Neighborhood Councils” ***regardless of conflicting language or intent.***

WHY?

Resolve Competing Bylaws Changes!

- If enacted, the conflicting bylaws would not immediately prevent the GRVNC Board from functioning; however, over time, unresolved conflicts over such basic issues as stakeholder definition and voting eligibility requirements would prevent it from conducting another election.
- DONE representatives offered the GRVNC an opportunity to submit bylaws revisions in Spring 2006 in time to prepare for the next election.
- In December, the GRVNC Board voted to make one bylaws change, which was to move the month of the election of the Board of Officers from June to September effective 2006.
- In January, stakeholders ratified the Board's vote and it was submitted to DONE.

Background and Process

The Bylaws Committee

- In October, 2005, GRVNC formed an ad-hoc committee to address issues and concerns with the existing GRVNC bylaws.
- Its mission, the “preparation of GRVNC bylaws changes for consideration of GRVNC Board approval and submission to DONE for ratification”.
- In November, 2005 GRVNC appointed Government Relations Officer LJ Carusone to Chair the Bylaws Committee.

Background and Process

Committee Process

- Formation of the Bylaws Committee included broad outreach to all segments of the Venice community and currently consists of 14 voting members.
- The Committee established goals and priorities at its first two sessions.
- The Chair received input from Committee members and created Agendas for each session of the Committee.
- The Chair posted Agendas broadly, following the Brown Act.
- Additionally, the Communications Chair posted meeting dates and times with the Argonaut and Venice Paper.

Background and Process

Committee Process

- The Committee determined from the outset that a roundtable discussion format was the best way to encourage consensus and public comment.
- The Committee was open and solicitous of public input.
- All bylaws proposals were thoroughly discussed by the Committee before voting on any recommendation.
- No votes were taken until it was evident that a general consensus had been reached.

Bylaws Committee Goals

- 1. More diversity on the GRVNC Board**
- 2. Minimize slate politics to encourage independent candidates and reduce divisiveness in the community**
- 3. Improve outreach and encourage stakeholder participation and involvement**
- 4. Streamline and simplify bylaws**
- 5. Enhance Board efficiency**

**Bylaws Committee Proposals
For Venice Neighborhood Council
Voting**

What We Have Now: The Current System

21 Members

- 7 Officers elected at-large
- 7 Members elected at-large
- 7 Members elected from Districts

Stakeholders have 15 votes:

- 14 At-large seats
- 1 District seat

Pros:

- Provides mix of at-large and district (geographic) representation

Cons:

- Allows slates to establish super majority control (2/3)
- Districts are too large for effective representation and outreach
- Districts are unequal in population
- Redistricting may be required in 2011 (next Census)

7 Districts - 2 Reps Per District

21 Members

7 Officers elected at-large
14 Members elected from 7 Districts

Stakeholders have 8 votes:

7 At-large votes (Officers) +
1 District seat (address-based)

Pros:

- Increased potential for outreach
- No immediate redistricting required

Cons:

- Allows slates to establish super majority control
- Districts are too large for effective representation and outreach
- Districts are unequal in population
- Redistricting may be required in 2011 (next Census)
- Difficulty in attracting District candidates (2 reps per District)
- No defined division of responsibility or accountability between the two representatives in the same district

14 Districts – 1 Rep Per District

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14 Members elected from Districts

Stakeholders have 8 votes:

7 At-large votes (Officers) +
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Pros:

- Less susceptible to slate control than current system
- Representation of smaller neighborhoods
- Facilitates outreach
- Fosters accessibility

Cons:

- Slates can still establish super majority control
- Districts are unequal in population
- Redistricting may be required in 2011 (next Census)
- Difficulty in attracting District candidates (14 Districts)
- Drawing new district boundaries is contentious

Recommended Proposal: All At-Large System

21 Members

**7 Officers elected at-large
14 Members elected at-large**

Stakeholders have 8 votes:

**8 At-large votes (7 Officers +
1 at-large member)**

Pros:

- **Least susceptible to slates gaining majority control**
- **Increases the opportunity for non-district-based interests to be represented**
- **Broader-based constituencies increase the opportunity for the representation of community-wide interests**
- **No issues with drawing district boundaries**
- **No issues with balancing population among districts**
- **Does not restrict neighborhoods from organizing**

Cons:

- **Neighborhoods may not have a local representative**
- **Narrow or singular interests may be more represented**

Bylaws Committee Proposal Comparison And Recommendation

7 Districts - 2 Reps Per District

Vote for 7 Officers + 1 District Rep

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