

# **Bylaws**

Arlington Green Party

## **1 - Purposes and Values**

We, the active members of the Arlington Green Party have come together to form a new Political Action Committee based on the 10 Key Values of the Green movement. The Arlington Green Party shall strive to understand and live the values of the Green movement in our electoral work, and shall promote the understanding and practice of these values in our communities, county, and beyond. The following Ten Key Values shall be embodied in the organization and actions of the Arlington Green Party, and shall guide all actions of the committee:

1. Ecological wisdom
2. Grassroots democracy
3. Social justice
4. Nonviolence
5. Decentralization
6. Community-based economics
7. Feminism
8. Respect for diversity
9. Personal and global responsibility
10. Future focus / sustainability

These values will be clarified through the ever-unfolding dynamics of study, discussion, and action.

## **2 - Membership**

### **2.1 Membership Definition**

2.1.1 Membership in the Arlington Green Party shall be open to all Arlington residents who agree with the Ten Key Values (Section 1) and the Political Practices (Section 3) as a framework for organizing and action. The Arlington Green Party reserves the right to grant special membership to those that have attended at least 3 meetings (in past 12 months) but are not residents of Arlington County.

2.1.2 Membership shall be renewable annually and shall be arranged in two categories:

2.1.2.1 Voting members are members in good standing who live in Arlington County, have attended at least three meetings in the last 12 months, and pay dues to the local committee.

2.1.2.2 Supporting members are people who wish to support the work of the committee without being an active member, or do not fit the above criteria.

2.1.3 All membership dues shall be reduced or waived upon request by a member with a financial hardship such as family income below a living wage.

2.1.3.1 No documentation or means testing is required to request or to grant dues reductions and waivers.

2.1.3.2 Dues waivers and reductions do not diminish members' rights. Such members have all the rights and obligations of dues-paying members.

2.2 Membership Standards Policies against the following shall apply to the Arlington Green Party. Violation by any individual Green may be cause for sanctions including (as appropriate) reprimand, suspension or loss of accreditation, recall, or expulsion.

2.2.1 Committing the Arlington Green Party to actions, endorsements, and other policy positions outside that body's decision-making process;

2.2.2 Misrepresenting the decisions and policies of any such Arlington Green body;

2.2.3 Financial irregularities with Arlington Green funds;

2.2.4 Acting to subvert the Green Party or its values, for example: advocacy or practice of racial, sexual, national or religious oppression; advocacy or practice of violent political actions by the Arlington Green Party; or acting as a strike-breaker, agent provocateur, or government or corporate informer.

2.2.5 Acting to willfully disrupt the freedom of speech, press or assembly of any individual or body of the Arlington Green Party; or

2.2. Violating the principles of grassroots democracy as embodied in Article 3 of the Bylaws.

2.3 Membership Review Process

2.3.1 The Arlington Green Party membership may sanction or exclude members who behave in a manner inconsistent with the membership standards of the Arlington Green Party as defined in Membership Standards above.

2.3.2 Charges of violation of membership standards against any member of the Arlington Green Party may be made by any member.

2.3.4 All charges shall be in writing. The accused and the accuser shall have the first option of seeking a resolution of the conflict through mediation if both parties agree.

2.3.5 All members charged with violations of membership standards shall have the right to appear, to bring witnesses, and to testify.

2.3.6 The burden of proof shall be on those making the charges. After hearing the statements by those making the charges and by those charged, the membership shall have the right to vote and sanction, including exclusion, by a 66 2/3% vote.

2.4 Dues shall be collected yearly by the Treasurer according to the following:

2.4.1 Active: \$25.00

2.4.2 Student, senior citizen, and low-income: \$10.00

2.4.3 Waiver: \$0.00 - By application to and approval of Treasurer

2.4.4 Continually failing, after receiving written notice, to renew Membership will result in removal from the active member list.

**3 - Politics** - The Arlington Green Party shall be organized and act in accord with the principles of grassroots democracy.

3.1 General Political Practices

3.1.1 Affirmative action shall be taken within all parts of the organization to reach goals of gender, racial and social diversity and balance in the allocation of responsibilities among members. Additionally, participation in the organization shall be open to all interested people of Arlington, with a special effort made to seek the membership and leadership of those people who belong to historically disempowered social groups.

3.1.2 There shall be strict accountability of the organization to the membership base. Any decision made by the organization can be rescinded or changed by the membership as a whole.

3.1.3 Decisions of the organization shall be made democratically and only after all points of view are fairly and openly heard. Members shall vigorously strive to reach decisions by consensus. If consensus fails, then a vote may be taken (see appropriate Voting sections in section 4, Structure).

3.1.4 Meeting minutes, financial records, membership lists and all other organizational records and materials shall be open to inspection by any member of good standing in the organization.

3.1.5 A full range of nonviolent strategies and tactics shall be considered desirable in pursuing Green social change, including but not limited to demonstrations, boycotts, strikes, lobbying, education, civil disobedience, direct action, electoral politics, and

building alternative institutions.

### 3.2 Electoral Political Practices

#### 3.2.1 Candidate Selection and Standards

3.2.1.1 Candidates shall be members in good standing of the Arlington Green Party.

3.2.1.2 Candidates shall publicly commit to Article 1, the Purposes and Values, of the Charter and include the 10 Keys Values on their campaign literature.

3.2.1.3 Candidates for public office shall be selected by the majority of the active membership.

3.2.1.4 Candidates, as elected leaders, shall be accountable to the Arlington Green Party membership.

**4 – Structure:** The Arlington Green Party shall be an independent Political Action Committee and an affiliated member of the Green Party of Virginia.

#### 4.1 Voting Process

4.1.1 Any member (voting member or supportive member) in good standing of the Arlington Green Party shall have the right to speak at meetings.

4.1.2 Any voting member in good standing of the Arlington Green Party shall have the opportunity to submit proposals to the membership. Proposals can be submitted verbally or in writing.

4.1.3 Decisions shall pass, after attempts to reach consensus have failed, by the following schedule:

4.1.3.1 75% of votes shall be required to approve any written draft amendments or changes to the Bylaws, to join or leave confederations and alliances, and to sanction members.

4.1.3.2 50%+1 affirmative vote shall be required for all other matters including candidate nominations, and IRV (instant runoff voting) shall be used to select the winning option when there are three or more options.

4.1.3.3 Abstentions shall not be counted toward percentage of votes.

### **5 - Leadership**

5.1 The Arlington Green Party will operate with a decentralized leadership. The only required elected positions will be the Treasurer and Facilitator.

5.1.1 Elections for Treasurer and Facilitator will be held annually in January or February at the regular meeting. If the standing Treasurer or Facilitator steps down mid-year, a special election will be held to fill the position until the next election cycle.

5.2 Any active member may contribute to the operations of the committee by overseeing membership applications, maintaining membership lists, taking minutes of regular business meetings, keeping and making available to members all non-financial records, and performing other general secretarial duties.

### 5.3 Treasurer

5.3.1 The Treasurer shall have charge of and be responsible for all funds, present financial reports at meetings, prepare and submit quarterly PAC financial reports, file annual taxes, and perform general treasurer duties under oversight of the membership body.

5.3.2 The Treasurer shall research and understand legal responsibilities of the position and keep accurate and up-to-date records that may be inspected by government or police entities.

5.3.3 Within ten days of being elected, the Treasurer shall under state law obtain and file an updated Statement or Organization form with the Virginia State Board of Elections.

5.3.4 The Treasurer must understand and complete all reporting requirements within legally specified deadlines as delineated in the Virginia Campaign Finance Disclosure Act manual published by the Virginia State Board of Elections.

5.3.5 The Treasurer shall report financial activity to the membership.

### 5.4 Facilitator

5.4.1 The Facilitator shall facilitate discussions at regular meetings to assure conformance with the bylaws, including the operation of consensus.

5.4.2 Before each meeting, the Facilitator develops and announces the meeting agenda.

5.4.3 If a note-taker does not step forward at a regular meeting, the Facilitator will take notes of (at least) the important decisions and actions agreed upon by the membership for historical record, and circulation to members.

5.5 While the Facilitator will try her/his best to keep the discussion moving forward in a fair and concise manner, it is the role of all meeting participants to ensure that all voices are heard in a timely manner at each meeting.

## 6 - Glossary

**10 Key Values** - The founding principles of the Green movement, which form the basis for all Green activity: 1) ecological wisdom, 2) social justice, 3) grassroots democracy, 4) nonviolence, 5) community based economics, 6) decentralization, 7) feminism, 8) personal and global responsibility, 9) respect for diversity, 10) future focus and sustainability

**Bylaws** - any of a set of rules adopted by an organization for governing its own meetings or affairs

**Community-based economics** - Greens seek a new economics based upon the natural limits of the Earth, which meets the basic needs of everyone on the planet, and is under democratic, decentralized community control.

**Decentralization** - Power and responsibility must be restored to local communities, within an overall framework of ecologically sound, socially just values and life-styles.

**Ecological wisdom** - The Greens recognize that the Earth sustains all life forms. Whatever we do to the web of life, we do to ourselves.

**Feminism** - The Green movement is profoundly inspired by feminism. The ethics of cooperation and understanding must replace the values of domination and control.

**Future focus** - Like the Iroquois Indians, Greens seek a society where the interests of the seventh generation are considered equal to the interests of the present. We must reclaim the future for ourselves and our children.

**Grassroots democracy** - The powerless suffer the most from resource exhaustion and toxic pollution. Greens believe in direct participation by all citizens in the environmental, political, and economic decisions that affect their lives. Grassroots democracy preserves political power at the lowest level by confederating to form higher levels of organization, mandating leadership, immediate recall of leadership, rotating leadership and term limits. Imperative mandate - same as "mandate"; officers and delegates are bound to act and vote according to the mandate Instant Runoff Voting (IRV) - a form of proportional representation used to preserve minority votes where there is only one possible winning option or candidate; guarantees a majority rather than a plurality

**Mandate** - the wishes of the membership expressed to an officer or a delegate as an order which must be followed Mandate of discretion - the wishes of the membership expressed to an officer or delegate as guidance, not as an order

**Nonviolence** - Greens reject violence as a way of settling disputes--it is shortsighted, morally wrong, and ultimately self-defeating. We are working to end war forever.

**Personal and global responsibility** - Greens express commitment to global sustainability and international justice both through political solidarity and personal lifestyles based on sufficiency and living lightly.

**Respect for diversity** - Greens honor the biological diversity of the Earth, and the cultural, sexual, and spiritual diversity of Earth's people. We aim to reclaim this country's finest ideals: popular democracy, the dignity of the individual, and liberty and justice for all.

**Social justice** - Greens find the worldwide growth of poverty and injustice unacceptable and are working for a world in which all can fulfill their potential regardless of their sex, race, citizenship, or sexual preference.

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