

The Coordinating Committee asked the Bylaws Committee to clarify the distinction between business and procedural questions on the one hand and policy questions on the other.

A lengthy discussion ensued on the Bylaws list. A summary of the resulting ideas is presented below as a status report on our progress.

Concept #1 - Definitions

POLICY:

The content of the GPCA Bylaws and the GPCA Platform shall be considered policy. These documents officially define the direction and priorities of the GPCA.

PROCEDURE:

A method by which a policy (as defined above) of the GPCA is implemented shall be considered a procedure.

POLICY

1) a way of management, a plan of action

PROCEDURE

1) a way of proceeding; method of doing things

2) the customary manners or ways of conducting some business: parliamentary procedure, legal procedure

POLICY

- A statement of position, advocacy or endorsement of a public issue.
- All substantive changes to the official bylaws and platform.
- A decision that sets a binding precedent for subsequent decisions.

BUSINESS

- Allocation of resources for approved projects.
- The methods and processes by which an approved project is implemented.
- Internal decisions that do not affect public positions of the GPCA or relationships with other organizations.
- Not specifically designated as a policy decision by existing policy or bylaw AND that are either...
 - specifically authorized by existing policy or bylaw,
 - OR
 - are obviously "routine" decisions necessary to administer a specific policy or bylaw or to perform a general function authorized by policy or bylaw.

Concept #2 – Ignore Policy v Business classifications

The fact is, you can't really have a procedure that doesn't in some sense set policy. My suggestion is to try to get away from that distinction (those words), and say that rules & procedures implement policies and directions in the bylaws.

Alternative:

We have two bodies of decisions, never mind whether they're bylaws or policies or procedures or business decisions. Call them the 2/3 decisions and the 4/5 decisions.

Any proposal that's approved by 4/5 becomes a 4/5 decision (this isn't rocket science). If it's approved by between 2/3 and 4/5, it becomes a 2/3 decision.

4/5 decisions have the force of bylaws, and can amend bylaws.

2/3 decisions must conform to all extant 4/5 decisions, but can override previous 2/3 decisions.

Concept #3 – Default all decisions to Policy

All decisions are policy decisions unless...

1. designated otherwise by existing policy or bylaw

or

2. are obviously "routine business decisions" necessary to perform or administer a specific function authorized by existing policy, bylaw, or directive from the GA

Routine business decisions would be defined, in general, as those that can reasonably be inferred as included within the understandings and expectations of the body which approved the relevant policy, bylaw, or directive.

... it's clearer to define policy decisions as those that are intended to constrain or govern later decisions or actions.