

SARASOTA COUNTY GREEN PARTY

Bylaws

ARTICLE I. NAME

The name of this organization shall be the Sarasota County Green Party (SCGP).

ARTICLE II. PURPOSE AND VALUES

2.1 Purpose Statement

The purpose of this organization shall be to work toward a Green society as represented by the Ten Key Values of the Greens:

- 1) Ecological Wisdom - The Greens recognize that the Earth sustains all life processes. Green ecology moves beyond environmentalism by understanding the common roots of the exploitation of nature and the exploitation of people.
- 2) Social Justice - Greens oppose systems which create and perpetuate poverty and injustice, and are working to end oppression based on sex, class, race, citizenship, age or sexual orientation.
- 3) Grassroots Democracy - Greens believe that the power concentrated in big business and corporate government must be returned to the people. We believe in direct participation by all people in the environmental, political and economic decisions which affect their lives.
- 4) Nonviolence - Greens reject violence as a way of settling disputes; it's shortsighted, morally wrong and ultimately self-defeating. We are working to create a world where war is obsolete.
- 5) Decentralization - Power and responsibility must be restored to local communities within an overall framework of ecologically sound, socially just values and ways of living.
- 6) Community-based Economics - Greens seek a new economics based upon the natural limits of the Earth. A Green economy would

meet the basic needs of everyone on the planet and be under democratic, decentralized community control.

7) Gender Equity – The Green movement is profoundly inspired by principles of gender equity. The ethics of partnership and understanding must replace the systems of domination and control.

8) Respect for Diversity – We honor the biological diversity of the Earth and the cultural, sexual and spiritual diversity of Earth’s peoples. We seek to promote this country’s finest ideals: popular democracy, the dignity of the individual and liberty and justice for all.

9) Personal, Local and Global Responsibility – Greens are committed to such responsibilities through political solidarity across all borders and life styles, and to ways of living based on ecological principles which respect our bioregions.

10) Future Focus – Like the Iroquois Nation’s “Principle of the Seventh Generation,” Greens seek a society where the interests of future generations are considered as important as those of the present generation. We must reclaim our future for our children and ourselves.

2.2 Methods

The Sarasota County Green Party may use any and all non-violent methods for achieving social change including, but not limited to: direct action, community organizing and education, personal empowerment, issue-oriented campaigns, ballot initiatives and electoral campaigns.

ARTICLE III. STRUCTURE

3.1 General Meetings

All General Meetings shall be open to the public.

3.2 Sessions of the General Meetings

The Membership shall meet monthly. Notice and agendas of upcoming General Meetings shall be made available to all Members at least three days in advance of each meeting.

3.3 General Powers of the Membership

The Membership shall have final approval over all SCGP policies and financial decisions. It may elect or recall the Secretary, the Treasurer and at-large members of the Coordinating Council; it may also re-direct the efforts of Standing Committees and working groups and amend the bylaws as necessary.

3.4 Coordinating Council Purpose and Duties

The Coordinating Council (Council) of the Sarasota County Green Party shall facilitate work between General Meetings, oversee press and media activities and serve as a primary liaison body with other organizations. The Council shall make endorsements and statements only in keeping with policies set forth in these bylaws. When necessary, the Council shall serve as the legal board of the organization. In addition, the Council shall complete a fiscal audit on an annual basis. All Council decisions are subject to review and revision by the Membership.

In all matters, the Council must bear in mind that they are merely elected to serve the SCGP Membership, and therefore must act in accordance with the Ten Key Values. No Member shall be placed in a position of unqualified authority over others. In all actions, the Coordinating Council shall be answerable to the Membership as a whole.

3.5 Coordinating Council Meetings and Decision Making

The Coordinating Council shall meet at least once a month. The time, place and agenda shall be set by the Council and publicized to all SCGP Members. Council meetings shall be open to all Members and those whom the Council chooses to admit.

Consensus decisions are encouraged, but in the event that a vote is required, a two-thirds majority is sufficient to decide the issue at hand.

3.6 Composition of the Coordinating Council

The Council shall be composed of the Secretary and the Treasurer, who are elected by the Membership. Each Standing Committee must also select a representative to the Council, subject to the approval of the Membership. In addition, a maximum of three at-large representatives may be selected by the Membership to serve. Locals, if any, who meet the requirements of Article VII shall be afforded fair and proportional representation on the SCGP Coordinating Council.

3.7 Coordinating Council Terms of Service

The Secretary, Treasurer and at-large Members will serve terms of one year each. Standing Committee Members shall serve terms of six months each.

3.8 Membership Involvement in Another Political Party

Coordinating Council Members shall not serve on another political party's decision making body. Further, if they decide to do so, they shall immediately disclose such membership and remove themselves from the Council.

3.9 Secretary

The Secretary shall be responsible for notifying the Membership of upcoming meetings, taking and publishing minutes of General and Coordinating Council meetings, and keeping accurate records, including a current membership list. The Secretary shall exercise special care to make all records, announcements and other important communication easily accessible to all Members, especially those without Internet access. The Secretary's duties shall also include maintaining a SCGP post office address and telephone. If the Treasurer is unavailable, the Secretary is authorized to write and sign checks on behalf of the SCGP.

3.10 Treasurer

The Treasurer shall keep well-documented accounting records, prepare yearly budgets, monitor ongoing expenses and make monthly reports to the Coordinating Council and the Membership. The Treasurer is authorized to write and sign checks on behalf of the SCGP.

3.11 Suspension or Removal

Any Member of the Coordinating Council or Membership may be suspended or removed for reasonable cause by a three-quarters vote of the Council. The vote shall be approved by the Membership, and is subject to appeal (see section 3.12). The term of suspension or removal shall be determined by the Council and be subject to Membership review.

A suspended Member may not participate in consensus decision-making, voting or electronic communications. A removed Member is restricted in the same manner as is a suspended Member, and additionally may not attend Council meetings.

3.12 Appeals

Any Member who is suspended or removed may appeal. Appeals may be made to the Coordinating Council or directly to the Membership. One appeal may be submitted per term of suspension or removal. Appeal decisions made by the Council must be approved by the Membership.

3.13 Standing Committees and Working Groups

The Membership may establish Standing Committees and other working groups as necessary to initiate and coordinate the activities of the SCGP. The Coordinating Council may establish such bodies on an interim basis, pending review and confirmation by the Membership.

Proposals for new Standing Committees and working groups must be supported by at least three Members in good standing, and must clearly define the purpose of the proposed new body. Working groups shall not have representation on the Council.

ARTICLE IV. MEMBERSHIP

4.1 Application for Membership

Membership in the SCGP is open to anyone, regardless of gender, race, age, color, national origin, spiritual belief, sexual orientation, economic status or physical challenge. An applicant shall sign a statement affirming that s/he is in general agreement with the Ten Key Values and the bylaws of the Sarasota County Green Party and/or become a Registered Green in Sarasota County.

4.2 Powers and Duties of Members

Membership in the SCGP is open to anyone, regardless of gender, race, age, color, national origin, spiritual belief, sexual orientation, economic status or physical challenge. An applicant shall sign a statement affirming that s/he is in general agreement with the Ten Key Values and the Bylaws of the Sarasota County Green Party and/or become a Registered Green in Sarasota County.

Membership in this organization is based on mutual respect. Members are encouraged to embrace the principle that Green success is based

on integrity, unity and placing the harmonious well-being of the SCGP ahead of personal ambition and self-interest. Members must participate in good faith in discussion and decision making, and resolve conflicts peacefully. Members shall refrain from abusive and/or disruptive behavior. Any Member who fails to fulfill these responsibilities may be subject to suspension or removal (see section 3.11).

ARTICLE V. DECISION MAKING METHODOLOGY

The Sarasota County Green Party shall seek consensus on all decisions, open-mindedly hearing all views and concerns in full. This provision shall be subject to reasonable time constraints. Where consensus cannot be reached, decisions by all bodies of the SCGP shall be approved by a two-thirds vote. The SCGP shall always honor and respect the minority opinion and ensure its expression in an appropriate manner. Subsequent to all Membership votes, Members shall have an opportunity to request, and have the right to receive, reconsideration of the decision.

ARTICLE VI. BYLAW AMENDMENTS

6.1 Procedure for Amendment

Proposed bylaw amendments must be submitted in writing to the Secretary no later than three weeks prior to the General Meeting at which the proposed amendments will be considered. In order to be considered, an amendment must have the support of three Members in good standing.

6.2 Notification

At least two weeks in advance of the General Meeting at which an amendment or amendments to these bylaws are to be considered, the Secretary shall notify all Members of: a) the date and time of the meeting, b) the complete text of the proposed amendment(s), and c) the complete text of the provision being considered for amendment.

6.3 Ratification

At General Meetings, the Membership may adopt bylaw amendments through consensus, or in the absence of consensus, by three-quarters majority vote.

ARTICLE VII. SCGP LOCALS

SCGP encourages the establishment of Green Party Locals throughout Sarasota County for the purposes of promoting municipal and local elections, supporting specific issues, reaching diverse societal groups and providing the grass roots foundation of the Sarasota County Green Party.

A Local may be officially recognized by petitioning the SCGP, and such recognition shall be acknowledged when a Local meets the following qualifications:

- a) The Local shall consist of at least five (5) active individuals who are enrolled as Members of the Local and/or become Registered Greens in Sarasota County.
- b) The Local shall have regular meetings.
- c) The Local shall be formally organized by having approved and constituted bylaws which conform to the Ten Key Values, consensus seeking decision-making and principles of decentralization.
- d) The Local shall clearly affirm its commitment to respect and abide by all local, state and federal laws and regulations pertaining to political parties, organizations and elections.
- e) All Local Members shall be considered Members of the SCGP and the Green Party of Florida, as long as they meet the minimum Membership requirements of the County and State Green Parties.
- f) The Locals shall be afforded fair and proportional representation on the Coordinating Council of the SCGP.

ADOPTED February 1, 2001, and as AMENDED, by the General Membership of the Sarasota County Green Party.

