

Silver Sage Village Community Association
Revised Decision Making Process
January 23, 2017

Intent

To have a process for the Silver Sage Village Community to make decisions that balances several needs, including the need for thoughtful consideration and broad acceptance of community policies and actions by the entire community; the need for ideas of all members to be expressed, heard and considered; the need for decisions to be made in a timely manner to sustain community energy; and the need to use our decision making process to strengthen our relationships with each other and the community as a whole.

Principles

All community members are responsible for the quality of our decisions, our decision making process, and our relationships.

Good decisions are more likely when people whose lives are affected are involved in the decision making.

Group decision making benefits from community members' willingness to listen to each other and to share their own ideas, questions and concerns with the group. Our combined knowledge, perspectives and experiences, and our openness to new ideas contribute to better group decisions.

Decisions affecting Silver Sage Village as a community should be based on the community's collaborative discernment of what is the best way forward, at this time, for the community as a whole.

It is important to stay aware of time spent on community decisions in order to maintain a high level of community energy.

In particular, as we age, we need to remain mindful of our differing capacities for hearing, seeing, processing and retaining information. We strive to be compassionate with one another to accomplish the business of the community.

Team Decisions

1. Each team should have a clear job description. Standing teams are empowered to make decisions that are within their defined scope of responsibility as outlined in their team job description. The community through the Steering Team can also empower standing teams or ad hoc committees to make final decisions about matters not normally within their scope of responsibility. Teams may decide on their own decision making processes, respecting the community's values of participation and using our agreement on communication guidelines.

2. Standing teams will inform the community on a regular basis through community meetings, and/or email about the decisions they are working on so that interested people can participate.
3. Under our delegated decision making process, community members are encouraged to bring matters within the scope of a team's responsibility to the team rather than directly to the community.
4. Community members are encouraged to give teams input on team decisions within the deadline the team provides.
5. After each team meeting, the team lead will post its minutes in a timely manner and inform the Steering Team if there are issues the team wants to bring to the community. The team will specify whether the agenda item is for information, discussion or decision and provide relevant background materials.
6. If two or more households raise objections to a decision made by a team within its scope of responsibility, or that a team has failed to address a matter, the team will consult with the Steering Team for procedural guidance.

Community Decisions

Silver Sage Village Community will use the consensus process described below for decisions that are considered by the community as a whole. The Steering Team, through its agenda-setting process, will recommend matters for full community consideration.

Consensus is a process used by groups to make decisions that commit to discovering and addressing the interests, insights and concerns of all. Consensus is reached when all participating members agree that they can live with a decision. There may be varying levels of enthusiasm for the proposal, but everyone feels they have been heard and understood. Consensus does not mean that everyone is in complete agreement, but that the decision can be accepted as the best the group as a whole can come up with at that time.

A. For community decisions other than the **HOA budget, reserves income and expenditures, and amendments to the Declarations and the Bylaws**, which are covered in the next section, the following process will be used:

1. Issues brought to the community for decision should first be considered by the appropriate team. The team will bring a statement of the issue/problem and recommended solution; if the issue is controversial or complicated the team may also prepare an analysis and describe the options considered.
2. The Steering Team will formulate agendas for community meetings in consultation with other teams. Each agenda item will include a notation of whether the item is an informational report, a request for discussion, or a recommendation for decision.

Steering will consider whether a decision item might benefit from consideration at two or more community meetings and may recommend a specific process for deliberation.

3. For items requiring a group decision, the team representative will present the background of the issue and its recommendation. The facilitator will then ask for clarifying questions. Following Q&A, the facilitator will solicit discussion, encouraging participation. If the discussion appears to favor the team recommendation the facilitator will take an informal straw poll where members present at the meeting or represented by proxy indicate support (thumbs up) or that they are not ready to approve the proposal (thumbs down). Following the straw poll, all members or their proxies who did not support the proposal will be asked to explain their reservations. The facilitator will ask the group to discuss these concerns and seek ways to address them.
4. Following discussion, the facilitator will test whether the original recommendation or alternative wording that has emerged from the discussion is acceptable to the community. At this stage each household present at the meeting or represented by proxy has one voice. A member may indicate discomfort with the proposal and be recorded as “standing aside,” a statement that the member prefers a different outcome but can accept the desire of the rest of the community to move forward with the decision and will accept its implementation.
5. If, after expressing reservations and considering the community attempts to address those reservations, a member present at the meeting believes that the proposal under consideration will cause significant harm to the community, s/he may state this opposition by saying “I BLOCK” and the proposal will not be adopted at that time. This step should be taken only in rare situations where the community has not been able to reconcile the member’s reservations.
6. If a member blocks, the facilitator or community members will suggest a process for the community to deal with the issue. This may include sending the issue back to the presenting team, a special community meeting, a special task force, a request for research, carrying the issue forward to the next community meeting, or other procedures commensurate with the importance of the issue and time constraints. The community at the meeting, or the facilitator or Steering, will determine a process appropriate to the importance of the issue and time constraints.
7. Following the process used by the community to develop a proposal that addresses concerns of the blocker, the presenting team, or Steering Team will bring a second proposal to the community for consideration. At this meeting, the facilitator will then ask for clarifying questions. Following Q&A, the facilitator will solicit discussion, encouraging participation. If the discussion appears to favor the recommendation, the facilitator will take an informal straw poll where members present at the meeting or represented by proxy indicate support (thumbs up) or that they are not ready to approve the proposal (thumbs down). Following the straw poll, all members who did

not support the proposal will be asked to explain their reservations. The facilitator will ask the group to discuss these concerns and seek ways to address them.

8. Following discussion, the facilitator will test whether the original recommendation or alternative wording that has emerged from the discussion is acceptable to the community. At this stage each household present at the meeting or represented by proxy has one voice. A member may indicate discomfort with the proposal and be recorded as “standing aside,” a statement that the member prefers a different outcome but can accept the desire of the rest of the community to move forward with the decision and will accept its implementation.
 9. If a member present at the meeting blocks the proposal, the community will conduct a formal vote, with each household present at the meeting or represented by proxy having one vote. If at least eighty percent of the households present at the meeting or voting by proxy agree, the proposal will be adopted.
 10. All agreements approved at community meetings will be restated by the recorder following their adoption and entered in the minutes of the meeting.
- B. For community approval of the **HOA budget, reserves income and expenditures, and amendments to the Declarations and the Bylaws,** the following process will be used.
1. The presenting team will bring a statement of the issue/problem and recommended action to three community meetings.
 2. At the first community meeting, the team representative will present the background of the issue and its recommendation. The facilitator will then ask for clarifying questions. Following Q&A, the facilitator will solicit discussion, encouraging participation by all members.
 3. At the second community meeting, the presenting team will again bring its recommendation and any additional information. The facilitator will solicit discussion. If the discussion appears to favor the recommendation the facilitator will take an informal straw poll where members present at the meeting or represented by proxy indicate support (thumbs up) or that they are not ready to approve (thumbs down). Following the straw poll, all members or their proxies who did not support the proposal will be asked to explain their reservations. The facilitator will ask the group to discuss these concerns and seek ways to address them.
 4. Following the second community meeting, the presenting team will invite the community to discuss any unresolved questions or concerns. The team will prepare a final recommendation based on this consultation.
 5. At the third community meeting, the presenting team will bring its recommendation. Following discussion by the community, the facilitator will then test if the community can accept the proposal. At this stage each household present at the meeting or represented by proxy has one voice. A member may indicate concern with the proposal

and be recorded as “standing aside,” a statement that the member prefers a different outcome but can accept the desire of the rest of the community to move forward with the decision and will accept its implementation.

6. If a member present at the meeting believes that the proposal under consideration will cause significant harm to the community, s/he may state this opposition by saying “I BLOCK” and explaining the reasons. The community will consider, in good faith, the concerns of the opposing member and may revise the proposal to address them. If there is still opposition to the proposal, the community will conduct a formal vote, with each household present at the meeting or represented by proxy having one vote. If at least eighty percent of households present at the meeting or voting by proxy agree, the proposal will be adopted, notwithstanding the block. The member(s) blocking or otherwise expressing concern, may register her or his concerns in the minutes of the meeting.

C. If a member cannot physically attend a community meeting where a decision is on the agenda, the member is encouraged to participate in the meeting in one of the following ways:

- Electronically, preferably through the use of Skype. The member should notify the facilitator at least three days in advance of the meeting of his or her desire to participate electronically.
- Discussion with team lead or submission of written statement. If a member does not participate electronically, he or she is encouraged to discuss the issue with the team lead prior to the meeting, and/or to submit a written statement of his or her views to be read at the meeting.
- By Proxy: Our Bylaws at Article 5.5 permit members to vote by proxy. Proxies may be submitted in writing to any member of the community prior to the meeting at which the recommended decision will be presented. The member giving a proxy must notify the Steering Team in writing that he or she has given a proxy and to whom. Individuals submitting proxies are strongly encouraged to participate in discussions about the proposed decision prior to designating a proxy.

Under our consensus decision making process, a proxy may support the recommended decision presented to the community, share any reservations or concerns the person giving the proxy may have about the recommended decision, and work with the members present to achieve a decision that reflects the absent member’s views. A proxy may support or stand aside on any decision reached at the community meeting, but may not block that decision from going forward.