

## **Acton Democratic Town Committee – Guidelines – March 1, 2021**

### **Approved April 2021 – New paragraph 15 not yet considered**

The Acton Democratic Town Committee (ADTC) works within the framework provided by its Bylaws. ADTC's Bylaws may be amended from time to time by the Members of the Committee through a formal process.

ADTC Bylaws are governed by the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the policies of the Massachusetts Democratic Party as set out in the Massachusetts Democratic Party's Charter and sample bylaws. The Bylaws contain information about the Committee's rights, responsibilities, conduct and operations, including processes by which the bylaws can be changed.

In addition to complying with the Bylaws as recorded, ADTC has adopted the following guidelines for the conduct of Committee business. The purpose of these guidelines is to provide additional insights into the practical application of the bylaws while maintaining some flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances. These Guidelines are not a formal document and in case of any disagreement between the Bylaws and these Guidelines, the Bylaws will take precedence.

1. Open to the Public. All ADTC meetings are open to the public. We welcome participation by members of the public and encourage those members of the public who are registered as Democrats in the Town of Acton to consider becoming Associate Members. Other individuals supportive of the values of the Democratic Party, Young Democrats not yet of voting age, non-residents of Acton, non-US citizens and others not eligible to vote are encouraged to attend our meetings as guests.
2. Quorum. ADTC meetings require a quorum of 9 members with the right to vote on Committee business.
3. Associate Members. Under the Bylaws, the Committee may authorize and select an unlimited number of Associate Members. Individuals registered as Democrats in the Town of Acton who attend two consecutive regular meetings qualify for consideration for selection as Associate Members. To be appointed as an Associate Member, ADTC requires approval by two thirds of the Committee Members present and voting at any meeting.
  - We welcome the contributions made by our Associate Members; although under the Bylaws Associate Members do not generally have the right to vote on Committee matters, we encourage their full participation (subject to

sensible time management and at the discretion of the presiding officer) in the activities of the Committee. Moreover, to encourage discussions on any topic we have adopted various mechanisms to solicit sense-of-the-meeting or straw-poll indications of Associate Member opinions prior to the Committee voting formally. It should be clear, however, that only Committee Members have voting rights.

4. Welcoming New Members. To make new members feel fully welcome we generally match a new member with an established member or Officer in the New Member Partner plan
  
  5. Fundraising and Expenses. The Committee engages in activities that cost money. Expenses include office and other costs (such as domain registration and web site fees), meeting costs (sometimes including venue and refreshment costs), expenses incurred for fundraising activities (such as our annual picnic and holiday party) and approved donations to candidates and causes. We ask each Member to pay annual dues of \$25 (subject to change by a two-thirds vote) to cover these expenses, but non-payment of dues (for any reason) shall not disqualify a member from voting or otherwise participating (as applicable) in the activities of the Committee.
  
  6. Organization Structure. The Bylaws envisage an organization led by a Chairperson or co-Chairpersons and a Vice Chairperson or Vice Chairpersons.
    - i. Currently, our structure includes a Chairperson and a Vice Chairperson
    - ii. We retain the flexibility to modify the current structure to accommodate member interest and/or address issues
    - iii. To comply with the Bylaws, the leadership positions will include different gender identities (to ensure diversity of opinion is reflected in the leadership)
    - iv. Currently, ADTC does not have an Executive Committee
  
  7. Election Status of Committee Members. Four categories of persons make up the Membership of ADTC (this excludes Associate Members), namely:
    - i. Those appearing on the Town ballot in presidential-election years and elected by the Citizens of Acton
    - ii. Those elected by members to replace members previously elected on the Town ballot whose positions have been vacated for any reason
    - iii. Members of the Democratic State Committee resident in Acton
    - iv. Members of the ADTC who have been members for 20 years or more.
- Under Mass General Laws, the number of persons in categories 1 and 2 above may not exceed 35
  - Members in all four categories above have the right to vote in all ADTC proceedings

- The quorum for ADTC meetings is nine (9) Members who have the right to vote in ADTC proceedings
8. Election of Members and Officers. Per article III of the ADTC Bylaws, Members of the Committee are elected at the Presidential Primary by Democrat voters of the Town of Acton for a period of 4 years. Following this election, the Committee must hold an Organizational Meeting to elect Officers. This organizational meeting must take place “within 10 days after the 30<sup>th</sup>. day next following the election of its Members” (usually – depending on the date of the Presidential Primary – some time in April of Presidential Primary years).
- Officers elected at the Organizational Meeting serve for 2 years at the end of which time new Officer elections are held
  - A simple majority of Members present and voting at a scheduled and announced meeting is required to
    - Elect officers at the Organizational Meeting and at the subsequent 2 year meeting
    - Fill vacancies that may occur (with first consideration going to Associate Members)
  - In the case of Officer elections, the Nominating Committee Chair (if appointed by the Chair) or other Committee Member entrusted with seeking candidates and placing them into consideration:
    - Announces the positions and candidates for each position
    - Distributes paper ballots to Members present
    - Asks Members eligible to vote to print and sign their names on their ballots then mark and return them to the teller
    - Tallies and announces the results (detailed voting records are available on request)
  - All Officers must be elected to their positions
  - Any current Full Member who can no longer attend the great majority of regularly scheduled meetings is encouraged to change status voluntarily to “Associate Member”, thereby freeing up a full membership position for someone able to be more consistently and actively involved.
9. Endorsements and Donations. The Committee will on occasions vote to endorse candidates for public office, indicate support for pending legislation or ballot initiatives and make donations to candidates and/or initiatives. Any Committee Member may propose such actions without notice but in case of candidate endorsements the announced agenda for the meeting must be published seven days in advance and must make specific mention of this intent. In accordance with the Bylaws, the majorities of Members present and voting required to approve formal action by ADTC are:
- i. 2/3 for candidate endorsements
  - ii. 2/3 for candidate donations and other donations

iii. 2/3 for statements of support for legislation and for ballot initiatives.

- Although not prohibited by our Bylaws, ADTC does not generally endorse one of two or more candidates running for State office in Democratic primaries.

10. Parliamentarian. The Vice-Chair fulfills the role of Parliamentarian as required at Committee Meetings unless the Chair elects to appoint a different Parliamentarian.

11. Verification: ADTC leadership will, on occasion, verify the status of committee members, for example, by

- i. checking that Members continue to be registered as Democrats on the voter rolls maintained by the Town of Acton
- ii. notifying Members if their meeting attendance falls below the one-half of regularly scheduled meetings in the previous 12 months

12. Position Descriptions: The Committee has outline job descriptions for each Officer position. These are designed to provide broad guidance for the incumbents and ensure that activities mandated by the Mass Democratic Party and Mass General Laws are not inadvertently overlooked.

13. Gender References: ADTC aims to be welcoming to persons of all gender identities and has adopted (to the horror of all grammarians) the pronoun “they” where a specific title is not applicable. Under our Bylaws, ADTC’s Chair and Vice Chair positions (including co-Chairs and additional Vice Chairs, if appointed) will be staffed so that no gender identity predominates.

14. Communications. The Publicity Secretary is primarily responsible for communication with the public and Members through Facebook, media publicity and the ADTC website. The Chair uses e-mail and a newsletter, as required, to ensure Members are informed of meetings, events and other relevant news items.

15. Members’ Corner. Included in newsletter, Members Corner covers information on topics of concern to individual members, submitted by a member:

- Topics:

- Something of genuine interest to ADTC audience that is likely to be subject to a vote at TM or Town Elections
- Acton Community service content that is appropriate to ADTC audience (so, much as we love to eat them, Girl Scout Cookies would not make the cut)
- Wider political movements aligned with ADTC interests that are not adequately represented elsewhere (i.e. don't want to simply repeat listings from Indivisible Acton Area)

- Word Limit for content:

- 100 words max (rigorously enforced – it's the authors' responsibility, not the Chair's)
- Please, please, shorter if at all possible (eyes reading emails glaze over quickly)

- Links:

- OK but no more than two (must be valid link destinations and non-commercial)

- Timing:

- No promises. Content will be carried in the "next" newsletter, whenever that is (which means content that asks for "tomorrow" ain't going to make the cut)

16. Scholarship Support. ADTC supports the Evelyn Olschewski Scholarship Fund that awards a \$500 scholarship annually to a graduating senior from Acton Boxborough Regional High School who has shown unusual enterprise in civic engagement. We suggest that all Members consider making a generous contribution to this fund.

17. Changes to these guidelines. ***These guidelines are not Bylaws***. They can be changed following discussion and informal agreement by a majority of Committee Members attending a regular ADTC monthly meeting. If desired changes are not consistent with the existing ADTC Bylaws but otherwise conform to state law and state Democratic Party requirements, steps must be taken to formally submit the proposed change(s) for consideration as changes to the Bylaws (specific process applies, including 30 day notice and 2/3 majority, described in Article XIII).