

Highlights of Major Changes to the USNC Bylaws, with Commentary

3.3.2 Neighborhood Council Board Structure

The first major consideration of the bylaws committee was whether the seat distribution and dedicated categories of USNC Board seats align as the original bylaws intended. The bylaws committee recommends the following adjustments:

- **Charitable/Religious/Educational/Advocacy Group or Organization:** the two seats dedicated to this category are eliminated.
 - o The Bylaws Committee participants were in broad agreement that this category did not provide the function that the Neighborhood Council Working Group (NCWG) has intended.
 - o No viable alternatives on how to approach this intent were identified, with all ideas being deemed as either too broad (as the interim bylaws were) or too restrictive.
 - o It was the determination of the committee that should a representative of a relevant group wish to run for a seat, that individual should run under another category and/or open seat and clearly declare his or her association with the organization in their candidate statement and in any other materials. It will also be stated on the ballot.
- **Union Square Homeowners:** to maintain a total of 15 board seats, one of the two seats eliminated above is added to the count for Union Square Homeowners, which aligns with the actual percentage of residential home ownership in Union Square.
- **Union Square Renters:** The other seat eliminated above was added to the count for residents of union square who rent their homes, as was an one additional seat, redistributed from the open seats, which were reduced from 5 to 4.
- **Union Square Business Owner and Worker:** the two seats are now separated, with one being set aside for a worker and one for an owner. Both are now specified as being for businesses with a physical presence in Union Square (“brick and mortar”).
- **Immigrant Seats:** Two seats are retained, but the definition is further refined to capture the intent of the perspectives to be provided by these seats:
 - o Having resided In the United States for fewer than 10 years
 - o First language other than English
 - o Earning a household income of less than 80% of the Average Median Household Income for the Boston Metro region.

3.3.3.2: Tallying of Votes for Board Members, paragraph B:

In order to meet the “Purpose” and goals declared under Article 2 of the bylaws, the bylaws committee had a goal of addressing the actual and/or perceived potential of a singular slate of 15 candidates to fully control the proceedings of the USNC. The intention is to ensure opportunities for non-aligned perspectives to be represented, even in the case of a dominant majority faction.

After much discussion, the committee recommends the third option, below:

1. Option 1: Retain as it is in the interim bylaws:

Voters will be given ballots that allow each voter to vote for a maximum of 15 candidates. Voters may cast one vote per candidate. Ballots that exceed 15 votes will be disqualified.

2. Option 2: Allow voters to cast ballots for 8 out of 15 (or 10 out of 15) seats:

Voters will be given ballots that allow each voter to vote for a maximum of 8 candidates. Voters may cast one vote per candidate. Ballots that exceed 8 votes will be disqualified.

3. Option 3: Multiple Votes for a Single Candidate (recommended by the Bylaws Committee):

Voters will be given ballots that allow each voter to cast a total of 15 votes. Voters may cast multiple votes for each candidate, if desired. Ballots that exceed 15 votes will be disqualified.

3.3.4 Resignation and Recall and 3.3.5 Filling Vacancies

The criteria for board member recall were relaxed to be both more flexible and reflective of the reality of the frequency of our meetings. The baseline trigger for a board member to be reviewed is to miss 50% of meetings over a 3 month period. It also allows for a letter to be submitted to the co-chairs outlining another “good cause” for a resignation or recall.

For filling vacancies, rather than calling for an election separate and apart from the standards of the annual board election, the updated bylaws now use the last board election results to determine the order of eligibility for past candidates to fill the newly vacated seat. The candidate who received the next highest number of votes within the same seat category will be offered the seat.

Requiring Past Attendance to Participate in a Membership Vote

Language was added to the two sections below to require a baseline level of participation by USNC members prior to casting a votes as a member. The requirement is having had attended one meeting in the past 12 months.

Section 5.10.D (Minutes)

Minutes shall capture the names of all of those in attendance, unless purposefully withheld. An attendance log shall be maintained and be used to inform an active membership roster indicating all members who have attended a meeting or vote within the previous 12 months.

Section 5.4: Voting

In order to participate in a membership vote, a member must have attended a minimum of one (1) prior meeting of the USNC in the previous 12 months, as recorded in the attendance log and active membership roster. (refer to §5.10.D, Minutes)