

Proposed Amendment to Article I. Section C (Membership)

of the Sevananda Cooperative Bylaws

(concerning member-owner ability to vote on issues using consensus)

PROPOSAL TO CHANGE SEVANANDA'S TRADITION OF CONSENSUS IN VOTING

Article I Section C.4:

Decisions before the membership shall be reached by consensus, whenever possible, meaning common agreement among all those present at a meeting. If a member opposes an issue, they may stand aside to allow the consensus to prevail, or may deny the consensus. If the member denies consensus, that particular issue cannot be decided until the next membership meeting, whether special or regular. If there is not consensus at the second meeting, then the question from the previous meeting, stated exactly as it was carried in the minutes of the previous meeting, may be called for a vote from the members present in which case it will require a two-thirds majority of those present to carry the vote.

Article I. C.4 Proposal:

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Why propose this amendment?

For several years one person blocking consensus has been used to keep Sevananda from making changes or slowing them down by six months. Most by-law changes and new by-laws now regularly take two membership meetings rather than only one. Many of these changes like electronic voting are needed to make the store run more efficiently and keep pace with competitors. The systematic blocking of by-law changes has created a new reality that has cast an anti-democratic pallor over membership meetings. This modification of consensus will maintain the original intent of the written by-laws, but will correct what has become a block to thoughtful change.

Further, the change to Article I. C. 4. Tracks the rationale of Governance Process; Policy Title: Governing Style; Policy II-2 7. B. in the board policy governance manual as amended 8/16/10. This amendment was accepted to allow the board to make changes more efficiently.

Member-Owner Co-Sponsors: Stephanie Coffin, Teddy Vaile, Phil Vaile, Patrick Edmondson,
Kathy Piselli, Tom Ferguson, John White