

STOCKBRIDGE DEMOCRATIC TOWN COMMITTEE
Stockbridge Massachusetts

BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of the Committee shall be the Stockbridge Democratic Town Committee (SDTC), hereinafter referred to as the Committee.

ARTICLE II – PURPOSES

The Committee is constituted for the purpose of strengthening the Democratic Party in the Town of Stockbridge, fostering and advancing the ideals and aims of the Democratic Party and working and organizing for the success of Democratic candidates of the Town, District, County, State, and Nation.

ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP

Membership on the Committee shall consist of not more than thirty-five residents of the town of Stockbridge who shall be registered Democrats and who shall have been elected by a majority of the membership and confirmed by voters of the Town of Stockbridge at the election called for this purpose.

A vacancy on the Committee created by any occasion shall be filled by an election by ballot of a registered Democrat. Announcement of the vacancy and election shall be included with the agenda for the meeting at which an election of a new member is to occur and the public shall be informed of the election. Associate members, if any, shall be the first candidates considered for filling the vacancies. If no person receives the majority of the votes, there shall be a run off election between the two persons receiving the highest number of votes.

There shall also be associate members who shall be registered Democrats and who shall have been elected by the members of the Committee at any meeting. Associate members shall be allowed to participate in discussions, to vote as members of subcommittees, but shall not have the right to vote in matters pending before the full committee.

There shall also be maintained a list of “SDTC Friends.” These would be Town citizens who either support the Committee or are interested in their functions but who do not wish to become members at

this time. These individuals will be advised of SDTC activities and given the opportunity to participate as appropriate.

ARTICLE IV - MEMBERSHIP PARTICIPATION

To maintain one's membership, every member is expected to make timely payment of the Annual Dues to the Committee Treasurer at the rate recommended by the Board of Officers and set by the Committee.

Members and Associate Members are expected to attend meetings and participate in Committee functions, discussions and activities. While it is recognized that schedule conflicts do occur, some degree of Committee participation is expected. Election to a Town office or serving other non-local Democratic Party capacities will also be considered as appropriate participation.

In the event a member chooses not to fulfill the participation guidelines cited above, their membership, at the recommendation of the Board of Officers, may come before the full Committee for review. The Committee may vote to suspend memberships.

ARTICLE V – MEETINGS

General Membership meetings of the SDTC shall be held at least twice each year. Additional meetings may be called as specified below.

Meeting schedules may be modified by vote of the Board of Officers and/or the membership.

Special meetings may be called at any time at the discretion of the Chairperson, a majority of the Board of Officers, or by the Secretary within two (2) weeks of receipt of a signed petition from no fewer than 20% of the membership of the Committee.

Notice of all regular and special meetings shall be either publicly posted or sent to each member and associate member by regular mail or e-mail at least seven days before the date of said meeting to the address as shown on the records of the Committee. To the extent possible, said notice shall include the agenda and shall designate any issue on which the Committee shall be asked to adopt a position.

Five members shall constitute a quorum at any regular or special meeting. Motions shall be carried by a majority vote of those present and voting at such meetings.

ARTICLE VI – CAUCUS

The caucus is a special meeting of all enrolled Democrats in the Town of Stockbridge, called for the purpose of conducting local Democratic Party business such as endorsing candidates, adopting resolutions, or otherwise as provided for in the call. To participate in a Stockbridge Democratic Caucus (either State or Town), the deadline for registration as a Democrat shall be any date prior to January 1 of that caucus year.

All caucus endorsement requests must be made by the primary subject of the endorsement, either in person at the caucus itself or in writing to the Chairman and received 24 hours before the call to order.

Caucuses may be called at the discretion of the Chairperson, a majority of the Board of Officers, or by the Secretary within two (2) weeks of receipt of a signed petition from no fewer than 20% of the membership of the Committee.

Announcement of a caucus will be published to the public and Committee membership no sooner than 30 days and no less than 9 days prior to the called meeting. Publication will include letters, posting on web sites, town bulletin boards and public media releases. Caucus location will be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

It shall be the policy of the SDTC to call only one caucus per event. Exception to this shall only be for extraordinary circumstances and shall require unanimous endorsement of the SDTC Board of Officers.

ARTICLE VII - OFFICERS

The officers of this committee shall consist of a Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson, a Treasurer, and a Secretary. These officers together shall constitute a Board of Officers.

The officers of this Committee shall be elected by a secret ballot at the regular organizational meeting of each even numbered year and shall serve for two years. No officer shall be eligible to succeed himself or herself in a given position after serving three consecutive full terms in office. In the event a vacancy shall occur in any office, a special election shall be held to fill the vacancy.

ARTICLE VIII – DUTIES OF OFFICERS

The Chairperson shall preside at all meetings and shall assist in the formation of the policies of the Committee. The Chairperson shall have the right to vote at all meetings of the Committee. The Chairperson shall be, ex-officio, a member of all committees. The Chairperson shall have signature authority with regard to all committee and accounts to be exercised in the absence of the Treasurer.

The Vice-Chairperson shall, in the absence or the inability of the Chairperson, assume the duties of the Chairperson. The Vice-Chairperson shall also be responsible for membership - developing strategies and activities to expand participation in the Committee. This includes insuring that the Democratic Party's Affirmative Action target groups are included and its goals are met.

The Secretary shall keep a true, accurate, and complete record of all the proceedings of the meetings. The Secretary shall issue written notices of all meetings of the Committee and shall perform such other duties pertaining to the office as may be required by the Chairperson. In the absence of a Secretary, a Secretary pro-tem shall be elected.

The Treasurer shall have the custody of all funds belonging to the Committee and shall pay all orders subject to the approval of the Chairperson and shall procure and file vouchers for all such payment. No expenditures of funds of the Committee shall be made by the Treasurer outside the regular activities or expense thereof except upon the approval of a majority of the Board of Officers. The Treasurer shall advise the Committee of anticipated disbursements at all regular meetings, and the Committee shall vote to approve such disbursements. The Treasurer shall also submit a financial report to the Committee at all regular meetings with a detailed report provided at least annually. Additionally, the Treasurer will file reports with appropriate state and local offices with regard to fund-raising.

The four officers together shall constitute the Board of Officers. Together they will be responsible for administering the by-laws, interpreting policy and proposing action to the membership. They will also function as a nominating committee seeking candidates to run for all offices.

The officers of the SDTC are expected to maintain open links of communication with Committee members, associate members and SDTC friends. This could include a published mail address, web page, email address, phone or other contact information as appropriate. Officers are expected to respond to all reasonable inquiries and requests in a timely fashion.

ARTICLE IX - CHANGES IN THE BY LAWS

These By-Laws may be amended or repealed at any regularly called meeting of the elected members of the Committee, provided such proposed change is in writing and is signed by the elected member proposing it and is delivered to the Chairperson before the call of the next meeting. The proposed by-law change shall be made available to all members with the announcement of the meeting. A majority vote of the Board of Officers and the Committee Membership is required for these By-Laws to be changed.

All SDTC By-Laws, activities and actions shall be consistent with state and national Democratic Party policy. Unless and until amended or repealed by the elected members, these By-Laws shall continue in effect from year to year and no formal motion shall be necessary at any meeting of the Committee in order that they continue in force.

Approval:

Approved unanimously at the General Membership Meeting of June 11, 2011 as stated in the minutes of that meeting and certified by SDTC Chairman Donald M. Chabon on 6/11/2011.



STOCKBRIDGE DEMOCRATIC TOWN COMMITTEE
Stockbridge Massachusetts

COMMITTEE RULINGS
(supplement to the by-laws)

Participation-Registration Deadline (9/8/16):

It was proposed that to participate in the town Democratic Caucus, the deadline for registration as a Democrat be any date prior to January 1 of

that caucus year. (The previous provision allowed Democratic registration up to Caucus day, but saw people switching parties back and forth just to influence our caucus and advocate for an individual.) This change makes us consistent with State Democratic Committee by-laws and State Democratic Caucus rules. The revision was discussed and unanimously approved.

Change in Meeting Frequency Wording (3/5/16):

It was proposed by the Chairman and accepted by the Committee that the wording in Meeting Frequency be changed to reflect Committee practice to hold two regular General Membership meetings per year, with other meetings being called on an ad. hoc. basis.

Modification of Procedures for Announcement of Meeting Rules (8/2/14):

It was proposed by the Chairman and accepted by the Committee that (as an efficiency measure) caucus and meeting rules governing participation and other items could be posted as opposed read at each meeting.

Review of Procedures for Committee Positions on Issues (8/2/14):

The following was reviewed and approval reaffirmed: The membership had previously held that the SDTC can take positions on issues. The agreed procedure is that a Member brings the issue to the Chairman who then seeks approval of a majority of the Board of Officers. The Member then frames the question which is then presented to the membership in an email straw-poll. Results are reported.

Review on Use of Membership Lists (1/26/13):

At the Officers Meeting on the above date the Chairman noted that other

town committees list their members but without contact information. The SDTC Officers were polled to see if this was advisable for us to do. The vote was unanimous that it was not and that we should continue as is - not listing members.

Update on Member Endorsements (6/9/12):

It is noted State Democratic Committee By-Laws indicate that a Democratic Committee Member cannot openly endorse or contribute to the campaign of someone opposing a Democratic Caucus Nominee. Nevertheless, the state leaves enforcement of this rule to individual town committees. The SDTC decision was made to first announce this policy at the caucus of February 2013 and urge compliance. Thereafter, deviations would be addressed by SDTC Officers on an ad hoc basis.

Update on Caucus Nominations of Unenrolled vs. Enrolled Democrats (6/9/12):

The issue is whether the Town Democratic Caucus should be allowed to endorse an unenrolled (i.e. independent) candidate for town office when that candidate is opposed by a registered Democrat (both candidates appearing before the caucus requesting endorsement for the same office). After debate and discussion the SDTC Membership voted in favor of endorsing an Independent in the caucus only if there was no registered Democratic candidate in opposition.

Update on the Election of SDTC Officers (2/25/12):

It was re-confirmed that SDTC officers would serve two year terms. Elections would be held in the annual summer meeting. The schedule for officer re-election would be staggered with a time table as follows - Treasurer and Vice-Chair in 2012. Secretary and Chair in June 2013. And every two years thereafter.

Update on Use of Membership Lists (4/20/11):

In response to recent inquiries on use of the SDTC mailing list the SDTC officers were polled:

The clear majority opinion was to exercise control over the list - i.e., not hand it out or permit general use. There is also the opinion to restrict list use for anything other than SDTC specific business. We take this restriction to mean that if someone has a function they would like published to our membership they should provide the SDTC Chair that information. The SDTC Officers will then review it, look to include it on our webpage, include it in one of our standard mailings to members and/or in the case of a special event initiate a separate mailing. However mailings to the SDTC membership list can only come from SDTC Officers.

It is recognize that SDTC members participate in many worthwhile activities and these members may wish to let others know of their projects. Nevertheless, there is also the need to balance this participation with the privacy and security of our members. It is our opinion that the policy outlined in the above paragraph strikes the best balance.



POSITION PAPERS

On local committee endorsements -

The following was an email received 2/3/2013 from Regional State Democratic Committee Member Lee Harrison:

"This morning I got an email from a local committee wondering if it's OK for local committees to endorse a candidate in a contested primary. I thought not, but I wasn't sure. So, I contacted state party chair John Walsh, who said:

It is completely at the discretion of the local committee. While very few do endorse in primaries, it's OK under the state party charter to do so. In some cities like Boston it is much more prevalent. My advice would be to only consider nominating if there is a very broad consensus on the

committee. In the end of the day very few voters care what the local committee thinks, but there have seen situations where these kind of things ripped the local committee to shreds for a long time. An equally (or in some cases more) effective model is to have people on the committee involved in both campaigns. That can provide a working relationship for the unity afterwards. Bottom line is that it is the local committee's call."