

Board Resolution

Johnson Creek Watershed Council

August 21, 2001

Consensus Decision Making

The Johnson Creek Watershed Council (Council) and its committees will strive to make its decisions and recommendations by consensus.

Consensus decision-making means that there must be no dissent by any Representative in order for the Council or its committee to be considered to have reached consensus. Representatives should not block or withhold consent unless they have SERIOUS reservations with the approach or the solution proposed for consensus. Consensus on an item for the Council does not mean that the item is everyone's first choice or favorite. It means that everyone is reasonably satisfied with or has no STRONG objection to that item being pursued or implemented by the council.

Consensus:

- 1) *Wholeheartedly Agree*, may/will take a lead in follow-up/implementation.
- 2) *Good Idea*, can/will bring resources toward.
- 3) *Supportive*, but not likely to provide resources.
- 4) *Reservations*, but will stand aside.
- 5) *Serious Concerns*, but can live with the decision.

No Consensus

- 6) *STRONG Objections - Cannot Participate in Decision*, will work to block it.

A Representative may recuse himself or herself from a decision due to a conflict of interest, this action will not effect consensus decision making.

When the Council agrees that it has exhausted all efforts to reach consensus on a particular issue, it has the option to either

- 1) table the item (for a period of time or until new information is provided); or
- 2) conduct a super-majority vote at the request of any representative present. (The group will strive not to resort to a supermajority vote until it has given serious effort and time to addressing the concerns of those not consenting.)

The super-majority vote requires agreement by 75% of the Council Representatives present. If the vote results in a majority position, minority reports to accompany the majority report shall be encouraged.

Resolution passed September 18, 2001

Guidance to assist in developing consensus

1. All consensus agreements are tentative until the Council Board moves to make them final.

2. Absence from a meeting will be the equivalent of NOT dissenting. It is the sole responsibility of the official member to have his/her alternate attend if s/he cannot be present. A representative may designate, in writing, a proxy in the event that neither the representative nor their alternate are able to attend. The Council Board should try to recognize known interests or concerns of representative not present. A member who missed a meeting should take responsibility to review and decisions made at the meeting.
3. Decision making process should include the following elements:
 - a. Issue/Item introduction with necessary background or supporting information.
 - b. Board discussion
 - i. Further questions about issue/item
 - ii. Products or outcomes
 - iii. Resources necessary
 - iv. Level of priority
 - v. Time sensitivity
 - vi. Other needed discussion
 - c. Straw poll – non-binding (is there consensus or is further discussion necessary to address concerns)
 - d. Further discussion – if necessary
 - i. Address concerns of dissenters or determine what further information is needed.
 - e. Motion for vote – see item 4
 - f. Official binding vote
4. Whenever consensus cannot be reached on an item proposed, that item will be scheduled for further discussion, drafting, information gathering, etc. as appropriate. The group will not resort to a supermajority vote until it has given serious effort and time to addressing the concerns of those not consenting.
5. The following principles will be applied in discussing issues to build consensus:
 - a. Focus on the Council issues and the objective(s) trying to be accomplished rather than on personalities and personal issues.
 - b. Genuinely listen, with respect, to understand one another's perspective on the issues – especially on the differences; share the discussion time with one another (no monopolizing the floor).
 - c. Look for agreement on the principles around the issues first, and then explore what these commitments mean in practice or actions.