

# **Village Independent Democrats Constitution**

## **PREAMBLE**

Because we believe, with Adlai Stevenson, that the true direction of political activity is the ceaseless examination and evaluation of local and national goals in the light of our democratic faith, and because we were inspired by the principled and humane leadership exemplified by Mr. Stevenson in his 1956 campaign for the Presidency, we, former Village Stevenson for President Committee, have chosen to establish a permanent organization to satisfy a need in this community for a Democratic political organization that will represent and be responsive to the majority of voters in the area.

## **ARTICLE I**

The name of the Club shall be: VILLAGE INDEPENDENT DEMOCRATS.

## **ARTICLE II**

### **PURPOSES**

The purpose of the Club shall be:

- a) To provide an independent, vigorous, liberal Democratic organization in the Greenwich Village area of New York;
- b) To promote the basic principles of the Democratic Party on the national, state and local levels;
- c) To encourage the participation of all people in the affairs of the Democratic Party;
- d) To seek and support candidates for public and party office of ability and integrity who are dedicated to public service, to promote measures designed to serve all the people, and to encourage the appointment of qualified public officials and employees without regard to political sponsorship;
- e) To further the interest and participation of all citizens in the civic affairs of our community;
- f) To eliminate services, favors or contributions to a political party as a factor in the making of an appointment or assignment by a public officer, whether executive,

legislative or judicial, and to eliminate the practice of permitting party officers to exert control over such an appointment or assignment.

## **ARTICLE III**

### **MEMBERSHIP**

Qualifications. Any person who subscribes to and desires to further the purposes of this Club as set forth in Article II hereof shall be eligible for membership.

Classes and privileges. There shall be four classes of members:

- a) Regular members in good standing, who shall enjoy all the rights and privileges of membership. Any eligible person may become a regular member in good standing on payment of the annual dues prescribed for such members in this Article.
- b) Sustaining members in good standing, who shall enjoy all the rights and privileges of membership. Any eligible person may become a sustaining member in good standing on payment of the annual dues prescribed for such members in this Article.
- c) Sponsoring members in good standing, who shall enjoy all the rights and privileges of membership. Any eligible person may become a sponsoring member in good standing on payment of the annual dues prescribed for such members in this Article.
- d) Honorary members, who shall enjoy the right to participate in all the activities of the Club, but shall have no vote and shall not be entitled to hold office or to be a member at large of the Executive Committee. Honorary members shall be selected by the President of the Club, by and with the consent of the Executive Committee, and shall pay no dues.

Dues. Dues of regular members shall be \$30.00 per annum, except that for full time students at recognized educational institutions and for persons 65 years of age or more the dues shall be \$15.00 per annum. For persons of limited income the dues shall be \$15.00 per annum. Dues of sustaining and sponsoring members shall be such amount per annum as shall be determined by the Executive Committee.

The period of membership covered by per annum dues shall begin immediately on payment and shall extend through 12 full calendar months after that date. Dues for renewal of membership shall be payable as of the date of expiration of the membership

period, except that a member shall be allowed 30 days for such payment, and that during these 30 days the member remains in good standing.

Membership occurs on the day that either the President or the Membership Chairperson receives a member's application and full payment of dues.

A member in default of dues for one year or less may cure this default by paying both overdue and current dues, and on such payment the member shall regain all rights and privileges of membership.

## **ARTICLE IV**

### **OFFICERS**

The officers of the Club and the order of their succession to the Presidency shall be (a) President; (b) 3 Vice-Presidents; (c) Treasurer; (d) Recording Secretary; (e) 2 Corresponding Secretaries; (f) Campaign Committee Chairperson. The Vice-Presidents shall, at the direction of the President, or the Executive Committee in the event the President fails to act, supervise the activities of the standing committees and special committees of the Club, and shall perform such other and additional duties as the President or the Executive Committee shall from time to time direct. In the event of the temporary absence of the President, he/she shall designate one of the Vice-Presidents to serve as Acting President.

Elective Offices. Each office except that of the Campaign Committee Chairperson shall be elective.

Non-elective office. The Campaign Committee Chairperson shall be appointed in the manner prescribed in Article VI for the appointment of all committee chairpersons.

Term of Office. The regular term of each elective office shall be one year commencing with the Annual Meeting.

Vacancy. If the office of the President shall become vacant during the regular term, the Secretary shall call a special meeting of the Executive Committee for the purpose of selecting one of the Vice-Presidents to be Acting President until an interim election is held to fill the vacancy pursuant to Article VIII. Any officer so elected shall serve until the next Annual Meeting.

Re-election of officers. The President, Vice-Presidents and Treasurer shall not serve more than 2 consecutive regular terms. If the President has served 2

consecutive regular terms, he/she shall not be eligible for the office of Vice-President at the election held upon the expiration of his/her 2 regular terms as President.

## **ARTICLE V**

### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

There shall be an Executive Committee which shall serve as the administrative and governing body of the Club. Any action of the Executive Committee may be rescinded by the membership and any power of the Executive Committee may be exercised by the membership.

**Members.** The Executive Committee shall consist of all of the officers of the Club, 15 members at large, and past elected Presidents of the Club shall automatically become members of the Executive Committee, and shall have all the powers and rights of members of the Executive Committee, for 2 years following the completion of their term of office. Any person elected District Leader as a candidate of the Club shall be an ex officio member of the Executive Committee so long as he/she remains a member in good standing.

**Political Action Questions.** The Executive Committee shall study and recommend questions involving political action. Such questions shall include but not be limited to Club endorsements of candidates, nominees, judicial appointees, and legislation, the Club position on Primaries, and controversial public questions. All recommendations of the Executive Committee on political action questions as defined above shall be referred to the general membership. The Club shall take a position on a political action question only by a majority vote of the members of the Club voting in a general membership meeting. However, when in the opinion of the Executive Committee it becomes necessary to take immediate political action and it is not feasible to await a general membership meeting before taking such action, the Executive Committee shall have the power to take such action , but in no instance shall the Executive Committee delegate to another group or to any person the power to take such action. Endorsement of candidates can never be deemed an emergency, but the membership can delegate this authority to the Executive Committee.

**Vacancies.** If there is a vacancy on the Executive Committee during the regular term, the Executive Committee shall have the power to fill the vacancy until the next regular membership meeting, and persons elected to the Executive Committee to fill such vacancy shall have the power to vote as Executive Committee members. At the next regular membership meeting, the vacancy shall

be filled by election; nominees shall automatically include the person previously designated by the Executive Committee to temporarily fill the vacancy.

Expenditures. No expenditure, other than ordinary and necessary expenditures for rent or utilities, in excess of \$100.00 shall be made without the prior approval of the Executive Committee. The Treasurer shall render periodic reports to the membership. The membership at its Annual Meeting shall receive a financial report of the last year's activities.

## **ARTICLE VI**

### **COMMITTEES**

Campaign Committee. There shall be a Campaign Committee which shall consist of Election District Captains and other personnel at the discretion of the Chairperson of the Campaign Committee, subject to the disapproval of the Executive Committee.

Audit Committee. There shall be an Audit Committee which shall examine and audit the books of the account of the Club within 30 days following the election of a Treasurer, and at such other times as the President or the Executive Committee shall direct. A report shall be submitted to the Executive Committee at the first meeting following such audit.

Standing Committees. There shall be Standing Committees consisting of the Campaign Committee, Audit Committee and other committees as from time to time shall be designated by the Executive Committee.

Special Committees. The President, subject to the disapproval of the Executive Committee, may create such other committees as may be deemed necessary.

Committee Chairpersons. Chairpersons of all committees shall be appointed by the President, subject to the disapproval of the Executive Committee.

## **ARTICLE VII**

### **MEETINGS**

#### **General Membership**

- a) Annual Meeting. There shall be 2 Annual Meetings of the membership, one to be held in the first half of December, and the other to be held in the first half of the following January. At the December Annual Meeting the membership shall elect a

President and 3 Vice-Presidents. At the January Annual Meeting the membership shall elect a Treasurer, a Recording Secretary, 2 Corresponding Secretaries and the 15 Members-at-large of the Executive Committee. All Executive Committee Members-at-large elected at the January Annual Meeting shall serve until the next January Annual Meeting.

- b) Other meetings. Meetings of the general membership may be called at any time by the President, the Executive Committee, or upon the written request of 25 members in good standing. There shall be at least 10 meetings of the general membership, including the Annual Meetings, throughout the year, and there shall be at least one such meeting called every second calendar month.
- c) Notice. All members shall be given at least 7 days written notice of all meetings of the general membership. Notices shall state time, place and proposed agenda of the meeting.
- d) Quorum. Twenty-five members in good standing or 25% of the general membership, whichever is less, shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.
- e) Voting. All questions, except as otherwise provided in this Constitution, shall be decided by a majority of those voting. Every member in good standing shall be entitled to one vote, which must be cast in person and not by proxy. All members in good standing shall be eligible to vote on all questions provided that they have been members for at least 90 days preceding the meeting date (including the date of joining and excluding the date of the meeting).

#### Executive Committee

- a) Meetings. There shall be at least one regularly scheduled meeting a month on dates to be determined by the Executive Committee. The President may call special meetings of the Executive Committee. He/she must call such meetings immediately upon receipt of a petition for a meeting signed by at least 10 members of the Executive Committee.
- b) Open Meetings. All meetings for the purpose of transacting business shall be open to the general membership.
- c) Quorum. One third of the membership of the Executive Committee shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

- d) Voting. All questions, except as otherwise provided in this Constitution, shall be decided by a majority of those voting. Every member of the Executive Committee shall be entitled to one vote, which must be cast in person and not by proxy.
- e) Automatic Loss of Membership. Any member of the Executive Committee who is absent from 3 consecutive regularly scheduled meetings shall forfeit his/her membership on the Executive Committee.
- f) Other Obligations. Every member of the Executive Committee must, in addition to regular participation at meetings of the Executive Committee, belong to and participate regularly in the work of at least one other Standing Committee.

## **ARTICLE VIII**

### **ELECTIONS**

Regular Elections. The elective officers of the Club and the members-at-large of the Executive Committee shall be elected by the General Membership as set forth in Article VII, paragraph a., Annual Meetings. Candidates of the Club for public or party office shall be endorsed by the general membership at any membership meeting on the agenda of which the Executive Committee shall have determined to include such endorsement.

Interim Election. Interim elections shall be held at the earliest possible regularly scheduled meeting of the general membership to fill any permanent vacancies then existing in the elected offices of the Club, provided that prior written notice of the holding of such interim election at such meeting shall have been given to the membership.

Nominations. Nominations for all elective positions shall be made from the floor at the meeting at which the election is to be held.

Members entitled to vote. All members in good standing who shall have been members in good standing as of 90 days preceding the meeting date (including the date of joining and excluding the date of the meeting) are entitled to vote. Members should be given notices of their prospective loss of membership one month prior to their cut-off date.

Any member of the Club who is also a member of another Democratic Club, organization or association may not vote on any election, endorsement or political action question at the Club if that member has voted or plans to vote on such election, endorsement or political action question at such club, organization or association.

Voting. Voting shall be by secret written ballot. Except for the 3 Vice-Presidents, there shall be a separate ballot for each office, in the order listed in the Constitution, and there shall be a separate ballot for each public or party office, other than the party office of member of the Democratic County Committee, as to which candidates of the Club are to be endorsed. The 3 Vice-Presidents shall be elected by a single ballot, in which ballot each member shall be permitted to vote for a maximum of 3 nominees. The 3 nominees receiving the highest majority of votes shall be declared elected. In the event that there are not 3 nominees receiving a majority of the votes cast on the first ballot for Vice-Presidents, there shall be additional ballots to fill the unfilled offices among no more than twice as many nominees as there are unfilled offices, said nominees to be those receiving the highest number of votes.

Qualifications and Eligibility [*Amended Dec. 8, 2016*]. All officers and members-at-large of the Executive Committee must be members in good standing of the Club. No person shall be eligible for nomination as an officer or member-at-large of the Executive Committee unless at the date of nomination he/she shall have been a member in good standing for 3 months. No person shall be eligible to become VID President, Male or Female District leader, or Male or Female State Committeeperson, who shall accept any compensable appointment or assignment made by a public officer, whether executive, legislative or judicial, other than an appointment or assignment as an Inspector of Elections or made pursuant to law from a civil service or jurors list, except for those judicial appointments made pursuant to a list based on merit under which selection of appointees is made on a rotating basis.

## **ARTICLE IX**

### **REMOVAL AND EXPULSION**

The expulsion of any member of the Club, the removal of any officer or the removal of any member-at-large of the Executive Committee, for conduct inimical to the best interest of the Club or contrary to the purposes of the Club, may be proposed by a petition enumerating the reasons therefor, signed by at least 5 members of the Executive Committee or 25 members of the Club and submitted to the Recording Secretary. The Recording Secretary shall present the petition at the next meeting of the Executive Committee. At that meeting the petition may be dismissed by majority vote of the full membership of the Executive Committee. If the petition is not so dismissed, the proposal shall be tabled until a subsequent meeting of the Executive Committee to be held not less than 2 weeks thereafter. The Recording Secretary shall give the person in question at least 10 days notice by registered mail of the time and place of such meeting, the charges against him/her, and his/her right to make a statement in person or in writing to such a meeting. A vote of at least 2/3 of the full membership of the Executive Committee shall be required for expulsion or removal. A decision unfavorable to the

person in question may be appealed by said person or by any other member at the next meeting of the Club, provided that such person or such other member notifies the Recording Secretary or the President of his/her intention to make such an appeal. If such appeal is taken, the determination of the Executive Committee shall be inoperative unless and until ratified by a majority of the members present at such meeting.

## **ARTICLE X**

### **AMENDMENTS**

Amendments to this Constitution may be proposed by the Executive Committee or by written petition signed by 40 members or 25% of the membership, whichever is less, and submitted to the Secretary. To become effective, any amendment so proposed must be approved and adopted thereafter by the majority of the members present at two consecutive meetings of the Club which shall be at least one week apart. The substance of the change to be effected by such proposed amendment or amendments must be included in the notice of each of the aforesaid consecutive meetings, and the notice of the second meeting shall further state that final action will be taken upon amendment or amendments to the Constitution. Said amendment or amendments shall become effective as a part of this Constitution upon the date of the final approval and adoption or on such other date as the amendment or amendments shall specify.

No amendment may be adopted by the Club which does not comply with the rules and regulations of the Democratic Party.

## **ARTICLE XI**

Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the parliamentary procedure, the duties of the officers and other aspects of a legally constituted organization in the absence of specific provisions in this Constitution or in the by-laws of this Club to the contrary.

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**Special Rule: A. Upon payment of initial dues, each member shall be given a copy of the Constitution with any amendments attached.**

April 9, 1985