

Exhibit B

N Street Consensus Method

"I don't think consensus with unanimity works well for most intentional communities. In fact, I think using it can cause harm. When one or more people block proposals a lot, a community can experience form frustration, discouragement, dwindling meeting attendance, and low morale.".....*Diana Leafe Christian*

N Street Cohousing in Davis, California, has been successfully using a different consensus method for almost 25 years.

How N Street Cohousing Uses Consensus

- 1.** When the facilitator calls for consensus on a proposal and no one blocks, the proposal passes.
- 2.** If one or more people blocks a proposal, however, the person(s) blocking are obligated to meet with small groups of other members in a series of solution-oriented, consensus-building meetings. Their job is to think through the issues and mutually agree on a new proposal that addresses the same problem as the blocked proposal. They present the new proposal at the next business meeting.

The small groups are required to meet up to six times and in no more than three months after the proposal was blocked. They're not *required* to take six meetings or three months! In fact, in 25 years it's never taken them more than two meetings to do this step.

The people who supported the proposal can send representatives to these meetings, but they don't have to attend all of the meetings.

The person(s) blocking is responsible for organizing the meetings, and the meetings must take place.

- 3.** If a new, mutually agreed upon proposal is created in one of the meetings, it goes back to the whole group and is taken up as a new proposal.
- 4.** If the person(s) blocking and the other members cannot come up with a mutually agreed-on new proposal during the series of meetings — or if the meetings don't take place for some reason — the original proposal goes back to the next Association meeting to be reconsidered. But at this meeting, it can be passed by a 75 percent super-majority agreement of the members present.

(If more than just a few people block a proposal, depending on the size of the group, of course the proposal doesn't pass because it clearly doesn't have enough support, and the group does not invoke this process.)

Why the N Street Consensus Method Works Well

Respect. This method is effective, because it respects both the person blocking and those who support the proposal.

* It respects the person(s) blocking because it offers up to three months of informal opportunities — and up to six formal opportunities — to share his or her views with others in a more intimate setting, mutually create a new proposal, or persuade at least 26 percent of the people that the proposal should not be passed.

* It respects the people supporting the proposal because, if the small groups cannot build enough consensus to reach agreement, the later 75 percent super-majority agreement will ensure that the most number of people will get the most of what they most want. “Tyranny of the minority” isn’t possible.

Responsibility. This consensus method makes anyone who wants to block take more responsibility for the effect of their block on the group. “If you’ve blocked,” says Kevin Wolf, cofounder of N St. Cohousing and originator of this method, “you’ve got to be part of the solution. Anyone who wants to block has to ask themselves, ‘Do I oppose this proposal enough to go through all this?’”

Deterrence. While this method could seem like a lot of work and bureaucracy, N Street members believe it’s effective not only because it works well but also because it *exists*. It’s a deterrent to the kind of frivolous, personal blocking one can see in many intentional communities.

In the nearly 25 years since N Street was founded, Kevin Wolf estimates there have probably been about 12 blocked issues total. Of these, only two or three have invoked this process. Both times the blocking people and proposal advocates only reached a second small-group meeting before they mutually crafted a new proposal. Thus they’ve only held four small-group meetings in nearly 25 years to deal with blocks!

(The other 10 blocked proposals were resolved informally outside the meetings, by coming up with let’s-try-it new solutions that worked, or often because assumptions just needed more time to be clarified.)