

Consensus Decision-making Process

Lupinewood Collective

05-21-2026

Consensus decision-making is a horizontal process that prioritizes addressing the concerns of everyone involved in a decision before moving forward.

Formal Consensus Process

A formal consensus process starts when a collective member declares a formal proposal, or asks the facilitator to instead use the formal consensus process for an informal proposal we're discussing. During the process the facilitator uses stack and other consensus tools (see Glossary on page 4).

- a)** The member(s) making the proposal explains it thoroughly to the rest of the collective.
- b)** The collective asks clarifying questions of the member(s) about their proposal.
- c)** The collective discusses the proposal thoroughly.
- d)** Members in the collective make amendments to the proposal from ideas that came up during discussion as needed. The member(s) who made the proposal accepts or rejects these amendments as they are presented.
- e)** The facilitator does a “temperature check” on how the collective is feeling about the proposal. At that point the member who made the proposal may choose either to vote on the proposal or to table it for future discussion.
- f)** If the proposal makes it to a vote, the facilitator asks first who consents, then who stands aside, and finally who has blocking concerns for the proposal (more on these stances below). Using a show of hands, the facilitator tallies the votes of members, which are in turn notated by the notetaker.

To pass, a proposal can have up to two stand asides, assuming the rest of the collective

is consenting. A proposal is not passed if there are more than two stand asides, or any number of blocks.

Tabled and Blocked Formal Proposals

A proposal that has been tabled or blocked may be re-proposed at a future meeting. If a proposal doesn't pass for whatever reason, the member making the proposal must work to address the issues that led to it not passing, making a modified proposal to the group at a later date.

If a proposal has been blocked in a formal consensus process three times over the course of one month, then passing requirements drop to a three-quarter majority rule -- meaning if three quarters of the collective consents to the proposal with no stand asides then it passes regardless of any remaining blocks.

Informal Consensus Process

Most decisions are made using informal proposals which are decided on through discussion and active facilitation.

When an informal proposal is made by a collective member, the facilitator makes space for discussion of the proposal. After talking it through the facilitator asks for a temperature check, wherein each collective member indicates their agreement, neutrality/mixed-feelings, or disagreement through hand gestures. If everyone in the group responds with agreement, then the informal proposal has passed. Otherwise, more discussion is needed before it can pass, either then or at a future meeting.

Glossary

To **consent** means anything from 100% enthusiastic agreement to feeling complicated but still thinking a proposal should move forward.

To **stand aside** means disagreeing with a proposal personally but being willing to stand aside because of how it could benefit the collective as a whole.

To have **blocking concerns** means a proposal runs contrary to the fundamental character and intentions of Lupinewood, threatens the ability of the collective to continue the project, or creates an intolerable situation for the member as an individual. A blocking concern is voiced when a member feels that they would be likely to leave the group if the proposal moved forward without their concerns being addressed.

Facilitator refers to the person chosen to facilitate the meeting or discussion at hand. They are responsible for following up with absent members to seek their consent, or to share important information from the meeting.

Notetaker refers to the person chosen to take notes about the discussion, decisions, and action steps of a meeting.

Stack is the facilitation technique of keeping track of who is speaking next so as to make sure everyone gets a chance to talk in group discussions. Members raise their hands to get on stack in between other people's turns so as not to interrupt them. Then, one by one, the facilitator runs down the order of speakers until stack is empty. Members can get on stack any number of times in a given discussion.

Hand gestures are used in Lupinewood's consensus decision-making process as an aid to group communication:

-Agreement is signaled by raising one or both hands, palms out and in an upright position while fluttering your fingers.

-Neutrality/Mixed feelings is signaled by putting one or both hands in front of your body, palms down while fluttering your fingers.

Disagreement is signaled by putting one or both hands in front of your body and dropping them towards the ground, palms facing back towards you while fluttering your fingers.

Clarifying Question is a gesture made by holding up one hand in the shape of the letter

“C”. It interrupts stack, and at times someone speaking, in order to ask a question that they need answered in order to understand what’s being said.

Point of Information is a gesture made by holding up the index finger on one hand. It interrupts stack, and at times someone speaking, in order to relay facts that are missing from something that's being said.

Point of Process is a gesture made by holding both hands in front of your body, palms out and in an upright position, and thumbs and forefingers touching each other, forming a triangle shape. It interrupts whatever is happening and gets used to address problems with the process, such as something breaking down or not being attended to by the facilitator, or to name when a conversation is drifting too far off topic.