

PROPOSED REVISIONS TO MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE AND PROCESS

The following is submitted to the membership of the Off Sounding Club for their review prior to voting on its implementation at the Annual Meeting scheduled for April 5, 2008.

Objective:

To improve the Off Soundings Club membership process and to improve communication with guests, candidates and members by modifying and expanding the Membership Committee to be composed of Area Membership representatives who will be responsible for facilitating and communicating on membership matters within a specified geographic area.

Background:

Traditionally the OSC membership process has been somewhat secretive in that members of the Membership Committee other than the Chairman have been anonymous and have not acted openly in administering the membership process or in member communications. This may have been appropriate in former times when there was concern over undue influence in considering membership candidates; however, this is no longer the case. Secrecy is not appropriate to our times; open communication is more acceptable and practical.

Note that not the members, but the Membership Committee, elect new members. This practice remains the most practical approach for a 500 member organization that encompasses a large geographic area.

We also have been following an undocumented practice that is not consistent with the process described in the by-laws, i.e., having a membership review and comment period before pending members are accepted into membership. This seems to be a good contemporary practice that should be formally incorporated into the by-laws.

Recommendations:

- Expand the Membership Committee from four to five members, including the Chairman, each of whom will be responsible for assisting in the membership and guest invitation processes and provide an ongoing presence for communication in a specified geographic area.
- Make the Chairman a voting member of the committee.
- Make the committee's identities and functions publicly known and encourage their use as local membership contacts.
- Make additional supporting letters optional.
- Change the approved membership process to include the 30 day membership review and comment period prior to a candidate's election to membership by the Membership Committee, which is now being done by tradition.

Current by-laws:

The Off Soundings Club Constitution now reads as follows:

Article VIII Standing Committees, Section 2

The Membership Committee shall consist of four members, the Chairman of which will be the only member of the Committee whose name shall be made public. The Chairman shall have no vote. Voting members of the Committee shall elect to membership in the club such candidates as they deem desirable. Such election shall be by unanimous vote of the voting members of the Membership Committee. No rejected candidate may be eligible for membership within six months after rejection.

Article XI Membership, Section 2

Each candidate for active membership must be proposed in writing by one member, seconded by two members, and with these communications must be included two or more supporting letters from other club members. Application forms for membership must be executed by the candidate, and must state full name, age occupation, and give home and business address. All applications must be sent to the Chairman of the Membership Committee by the proposer for action who shall immediately transfer same to the Membership Committee, and they shall hand their decision to the Commodore and the Secretary, with as little delay as possible. Except the final action thereon all proceedings of the Membership Committee upon any proposal for membership, and all communications to them in reference thereto, shall remain confidential. Membership in this club shall be restricted to those who enjoy and participate in the sport of sailing.

Recommended revisions:

Article VIII Standing Committees, Section 2:

The Membership Committee shall consist of up to five voting members, the Chairman, and four area representative members who will be responsible for facilitating and expediting membership issues and communication in their geographic areas, including promotion, expediting guest invitations and assisting in the assembling and processing of membership proposal packages. The committee area members will be appointed by the Chairman with the approval of the Commodore.

The areas are: Eastern Long Island Sound (Watch Hill, RI to Madison, CT), Western Long Island Sound (Guilford, CT and west and NY State other than Eastern LI), Eastern Long Island (ELIYA), Rhode Island (RI east of Watch Hill), All Other Areas (Responsibility of the Chairman)

Article XI Membership, Section 2

Membership in this club shall be open to those who enjoy and support the sport of sailing. Each candidate for active membership must be proposed in writing by one member and seconded by two members. Supporting letters from other club members are encouraged. Proposal packages can be obtained from the Membership Committee by any member in good standing. The enclosed membership application form must be completed with full name, age, occupation, and home and business addresses, signed by the candidate, returned to the proposer. The membership application, proposal, seconding and any supporting letters must be assembled into a completed package by the proposer and sent to the Membership Chairman.

Copies of completed packages will be sent immediately to committee members for review. They may by unanimous vote recommend candidates to the membership for a 30 day period of review and comment. Recommended candidates shall be published in the next mailing to the full membership. Comments should be directed to the Membership Chairman only. When the review period expires the Membership Committee shall consider any comments received from members and by unanimous vote elect to membership any candidates that they deem desirable. No rejected candidate shall be eligible to reapply for membership within twelve months after rejection.

The Chairman shall hand the committee's decisions to the Commodore, the Secretary, the Treasurer, and the Race Secretary and notify the new member and his proposer with as little delay as possible. Except for the final action thereon all proceedings of the Membership Committee upon any proposal for membership, and all communications to them in reference thereto, shall remain confidential.