

Constitution, By-laws, and Committee Guidelines

As last amended May 25, 2005

The D.C. Federation of Civic Associations was organized November 10, 1921, and incorporated April 17, 1941. It received US 501 (c) (3) tax-exempt status on October 24, 2001, and a certificate of exemption from DC sales and use tax on January 28, 2002.

Preamble

We the citizens of the District of Columbia who believe that community betterment is based upon first, the recognition of the interdependence of individuals and organizations existing in our city, and second, the cooperation of all residents in the task of making better citizens and a better community, have joined together in local civic associations for our mutual self-interest. We have, by our vote, affiliated each of our local associations with the District of Columbia Federation of Civic Associations, Incorporated, which is guided by the objectives of, and derives its authority from, this Constitution, which we, the organized citizens who are interested in community betterment, do ordain.

CONSTITUTION

Article I. Name

This organization shall be known as the District of Columbia Federation of Civic Associations, Incorporated.

Article II. Objectives

The objectives of the Federation shall be as follows:

1. To consider and act upon any matters affecting the civic interest and general welfare of the residents of the District of Columbia;
2. To provide a strong vehicle through which member organizations may participate in the shaping of their community life;
3. To act as an official civic body assisting

District officials in the development, publication, and implementation of citywide programs in the interest of the citizenry;

4. To determine the city's important needs, to seek solutions and relief of community problems through research and study, and to carry out plans agreed upon by community consent;

5. To serve as a channel through which plans and projects of citywide public and volunteer agencies may be disseminated for support and adaptation to neighborhood programs;

6. To promote cooperation with other organizations and agencies whose aims are to raise the standards of the community, and to secure adequate laws for the protection and well-being of all citizens;

7. To interest, develop, and prepare citizens as workers and leaders in civic and community programs;

8. To encourage member organizations to sponsor, train, develop, and encourage young people in civic work and to organize junior civic associations; and

9. To organize and support a Federation of Junior Civic Associations.

Article III. Membership

Section 1. The Federation shall be composed of nonpolitical, nonsectarian civic organizations which have individual memberships and which are established for, and are devoted to, the improvement of the civic interest and general welfare of residents of the District of Columbia.

Section 2. All organizations admitted to membership in the Federation shall meet the following criteria:

(A) Have objectives in line with those of the Federation, as stated in Article II, above;

(B) Have a minimum of fifty (50) financial members who are residents of, or who have interests in, the District of Columbia;

(C) Hold regular meetings of their general membership;

(D) Hold regular elections at least every two years of the principal officers, one of whom should be president;

(E) Have a democratic constitution properly ratified by the membership; and

(F) Submit an application including its constitution, documenting criteria (A) through (D), and including current dues to the Federation.

Section 3. Civic Associations which have definite geographical boundaries not conflicting with the boundaries of present member associations may be admitted by the majority vote of delegates present and voting.

Section 4. Other organizations which have no definite boundaries, or civic associations whose boundaries conflict with those of member associations, may be admitted by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of delegates present and voting; provided:

(A) That the applicant meets a community need in its area or field which no present member organization effectively addresses; and

(B) That in the event there is an unresolved boundary dispute with a member association, the Membership and Credentials Committee has determined:

(1) That the applicant has tried unsuccessfully to interest the member association in its needs, and

(2) That negotiations between the parties have failed.

Section 5. A member organization may be suspended from the Federation for the failure to maintain any of the criteria stated in Section 2 of this Article, or for other causes deemed prejudicial to the Federation, upon recommendation by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Executive Committee and ratification by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of delegates present and voting in the Assembly at the next regular meeting after the month in which the Executive Committee made its recommendation; provided:

(A) That charges have been submitted in writing by no fewer than three delegates from three different member organizations at a regular meeting of the Executive Committee;

(B) That copies of the charges shall have been mailed by the Executive Committee to delegates of record of the member organization within one week of submission of charges;

(C) That the delegates bringing the charges deliver or mail copies of the charges to all members of the Executive Committee within two

weeks of bringing charges;

(D) That the charges be considered at the next regular meeting of the Executive Committee;

(E) That if the suspension is recommended, that it be reported in the notice of the Assembly meeting that will consider the recommendation; and

(F) That the member organization be given reasonable opportunity to be heard and to answer all charges brought against it at the Executive Committee and Assembly meetings considering the charges.

Section 6. A suspended member organization may be readmitted by the same procedures as are currently applicable for admission.

Article IV. Representation

Section 1. Each member organization of the Federation shall be entitled to six delegates, one of whom shall be its president, and one of whom shall be a representative of its junior civic association. If the organization does not have a junior civic association, then it may send a youth representative from the parent organization. For a youth to be a voting delegate, he or she must be at least 15 years of age and attending school (in 10th to 12th grade). Youths not meeting these criteria may represent their Junior Civic Association or their parent organization as nonvoting representatives in the Federation Assembly. Nonvoting youth representatives shall have the basic right to attend meetings, speak in debates, and participate in other nonvoting activities of the Federation.

Section 2. Each member organization may designate six alternates (one a youth, who meets the criteria for voting delegate as defined above) who shall be entitled to vote when its delegates are absent.

Section 3. The Federation may, upon majority vote, elect as delegate-at-large for life anyone who has served as president of the Federation for at least one year. Such delegates-at-large may have a voice and a vote in all deliberations as long as they are members of active member organizations.

Section 4. Delegates who have been properly certified by their member organizations, and delegates-at-large shall constitute the Assembly, which shall be vested with all powers of the Federation, expressed and implied, provided for in this Constitution and By-Laws.

Section 5. A member organization may

withdraw any of its delegates or alternates at any time by written certification to the Federation.

Article V. Officers

Section 1. The elected officers of the Federation shall be: President, First Vice President, Second Vice President, Third Vice President, Recording Secretary, Assistant Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary, Assistant Corresponding Secretary, Financial Secretary, and Treasurer.

Section 2. The appointed officers of the Federation shall be Chaplain, Parliamentarian, Archivist, and Sergeant-at-Arms.

Section 3. All officers shall be delegates or alternates to the Federation at the time of their election or appointment.

Section 4. The duties of the various officers shall be such as usually pertain to their respective offices. In addition, the Vice Presidents shall coordinate the work of committees of the Federation as designated by the President.

Section 5. Officers may be removed for causes prejudicial to the Federation upon recommendation by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Executive Committee and ratification by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of delegates present and voting in the Assembly at its next regular meeting after the month in which the Executive committee made its recommendation, subject to the same provisions for written charges, advance notice, and reasonable opportunity to be heard and answer charges as apply to suspension of member organizations in Article III, Section 5, above; except that charges must be brought by action of three member organizations.

Article VI. Elections

Section 1. The election and installation of officers shall be at the Annual Meeting on the second Friday in December.

Section 2. Officers shall assume office at the close of the Annual Meeting in December and shall serve for a term of one year or until their successors shall be elected, or appointed, and installed.

Section 3. Any officer shall be eligible for re-election to succeed himself if he is a duly qualified delegate or alternate, but no President after 1985 shall be eligible to hold office for more than two terms successively.

Section 4. If a vacancy shall occur in the office of the President, the First Vice President shall immediately assume the duties of the

President, the Second Vice President shall assume the duties of the first Vice President, and the Third Vice President shall assume the duties of the Second vice President.

Section 5. If vacancies shall occur in other elected offices, the Executive Committee shall elect officers to fill the unexpired term.

Article VII. Unfinancial Status

A member organization that has not paid its dues by April shall be deemed unfinancial. Delegates of unfinancial member organizations shall have no vote in the Federation, and delegates which have been unfinancial for one full year shall not be entitled to receive notices or other services from the Federation.

Article VIII. Assembly Meetings

Section 1. The Assembly shall hold regular meetings on the fourth Wednesday of each month except July, August, and December. A regular meeting of the Assembly may be suspended or rescheduled upon a two-thirds (2/3) vote of delegates present and voting at the meeting immediately preceding the meeting to be suspended or rescheduled. The President may cancel a regular meeting of the Assembly if a state of emergency has been declared for the District of Columbia.

Section 2. The Annual Meeting of the Assembly shall be the second Friday in December.

Section 3. Special meetings of the Assembly may be called by the President when deemed necessary.

Section 4. Special meetings shall be called by the President if he is requested in writing to do so by at least one delegate from each of at least ten financial member organizations.

Section 5. All calls for special meetings shall be made by written communication to all delegates, and no business shall be considered at such meeting except as has been expressly mentioned in the notice. If the special meeting is called to substitute for a canceled Assembly meeting, however, the published agenda for the cancelled meeting shall constitute the agenda for the special meeting.

Article IX. Executive Committee

Section 1. There shall be an Executive Committee composed of the elected officers of the Federation and the chairs of the standing committees of the Federation.

Section 2. Chairs of special and ad hoc

committees of the Federation, as well as other delegates and resource persons, may be invited at the discretion of the President to attend meetings of the Executive Committee on a nonvoting basis.

Section 3. The Executive Committee shall hold regular meetings approximately two weeks before the Assembly meeting at a day, time, and place designated by the President.

Section 4. Special meetings of the Executive Committee may be called by the President when deemed necessary; and shall be called when requested by four members of the Committee, or by presidents of ten member associations.

Section 5. Matters of general concern to the Federation shall, if time permits, first be referred to an appropriate committee or the Executive Committee for consideration and recommendation to the Assembly.

Section 6. The Executive Committee shall have the responsibility and authority to take action within the scope of policies established by the Assembly, in order to carry them out.

Section 7. Any member of the Executive Committee may ask, upon a point of order, when the report of the Executive Committee to the Assembly has been made, for a report on any action by the committee which the member believes has been improperly omitted from the report.

Article X. Amendments

The Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote at any regular meeting of the Assembly; provided that the proposal shall have been submitted in writing at a previous regular meeting, and that the proposed amendment shall have been mailed to each delegate at least fifteen (15) days previously.

BY-LAWS

Article I. Assembly Meetings

Section 1. The Assembly shall meet at 7:00 p.m., or at such other time as may be designated by the President or determined by the Assembly.

Section 2. Meetings shall be held in a convenient, centrally located place as may be designated by the President or determined by the Assembly.

Article II. Elections

Officers shall be elected by written ballot, by

a plurality vote at the Annual Meeting.

Article III. Quorums

At least one delegate or at-large delegate from each of at least ten financial member organizations shall constitute a quorum for the Assembly. Seven members shall constitute a quorum for the Executive Committee, provided that three of them are officers, one of whom is the President or a vice president.

Article IV. Dues

Section 1. Annual dues for each member organization shall be forty (40) dollars, payable in January of each year.

Section 2. Each member organization that fails to pay the annual dues by April 1 shall be listed as unfinancial and be so notified, and shall remain unfinancial until full payment of dues and a penalty of \$5.00 shall have been made.

Section 3. A member organization that has been unfinancial for more than one year may be reinstated upon payment of a year's dues, provided that it remains in full compliance with Article III, Section 2, of the Constitution.

Section 4. When a member organization is admitted after May of any year, the Membership and Credentials Committee may recommend prorating the initial dues.

Article V. Committees

Section 1. The following standing committees shall be appointed by the President: Amenities, Auditing, Awards Program, Awards Selection, City Planning and Economic Development, Constitution and By-Laws, Education, Environmental Services, Federation Budget, Health and Human Services, Housing, Legislative, Membership and Credentials, Public Relations and Web Site, Public Safety, Public Utilities, Recreation, Scholarship, Transportation, and Ways and Means. The power of the President to appoint Standing committees carries with it the power to appoint the Chair and the members of each committee and to fill any vacancy that may arise in the committees.

Section 2. An Administration Committee shall consist of the five elected secretaries and such other members as the President may appoint. The President shall designate the chair of the committee.

Section 3. A Legislation Committee shall consist of a chair appointed by the President, the chairs of standing committees with pending legislative business, and such other members as the President may appoint.

Section 4. The President may appoint such ad hoc committees as the business of the Federation shall require.

Section 5. A Nominating Committee of seven members, no two of whom shall come from any one member organization, shall be elected at the September Assembly meeting. The President shall appoint a convener of this Committee, which shall elect a chair at its first meeting. The Committee shall meet in person or by conference call, and shall make its report of a slate to the October Assembly meeting. It shall conduct the election of officers at the annual meeting.

Section 6. All standing, special, and ad hoc committees shall be staffed by delegates and alternates certified to the Federation. Nondelegates may be appointed in a nonvoting capacity if approved by the Assembly.

Section 7. The President shall be an ex officio voting member of all committees except the Nominating and Auditing committees.

Article VI. Committee Guidelines

The Constitution and By-Laws Committee shall prepare Committee Guidelines for each standing and special committee of the Federation that shall take effect upon adoption by a majority of delegates at any Assembly meeting, provided that they have been submitted in writing to each delegate at a previous regular meeting, and that due notice is given in the call to the meeting. Such Guidelines may be amended upon the recommendation of the Executive Committee on the same conditions as they were originally adopted.

Article VII. Reports

Except upon unanimous vote of the Assembly to the contrary, all reports of all committees shall be submitted in writing.

Article VIII. Rules of Order

Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern in all proceedings of the Federation in the absence of any other rule to the contrary adopted by the Assembly.

Article IX. Order of Business

The order of business at each Assembly meeting shall be:

1. Invocation
2. Roll Call of Member Organizations
3. Reading of the Minutes
4. Reading of Communications
5. Report of Treasurer
6. Recommendations of Executive Committee
7. Concerns of Member Organizations
8. Reports of Standing Committees
9. Reports of Special Committees
10. Unfinished Business
11. New Business and Announcements
12. Adjournment

Article X. Amendments

These By-Laws may be amended in the same manner as the Constitution may be, as set forth in Article X of the constitution; but the By-Laws may be temporarily suspended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of delegates present and voting.

COMMITTEE GUIDELINES

General Committee Guidelines

1. Unless otherwise stipulated in the Constitution or By-Laws, the chairs and Members of Federation committees are appointed by the President from among delegates and alternate delegates. The President shall be an ex officio voting member of all committees except the Nominating and Auditing committees. Nondelegates may be appointed in a nonvoting capacity, provided that the proposed appointment is reported to and approved by the Assembly. (*By-Laws Article V, Sections 1, 5, & 6*)

2. The president shall either assign responsibility for coordinating the work of each committee (except the Nominating Committee) to one of the vice presidents, or take such responsibility him- or herself. (*Constitution Article V, Section 4*) The responsible vice president or the President shall call each committee before each Assembly meeting to ascertain if reports need to be placed on the agenda.

3. Each committee concerned with general public matters shall actively monitor the issues within its purview, including programs, policies,

and pending actions of public agencies with responsibilities in the field. It shall notify the Federation and member associations of important issues, recommend courses of action, and prepare responses for the Federation in the form of letters, testimony, etc.

4. All committee reports containing recommendations shall be in writing except upon unanimous vote of the Assembly to the contrary. (*By-Laws Article VII*)

5. Each committee chair shall submit a written report of the activities of his or her committee at the December Annual Meeting.

6. All funds received by any committee shall be referred to the Financial Secretary for transmission to the Treasurer and deposit in a Federation account, and no expenses shall be reimbursed except by a check drawn upon an account of the Federation. The Assembly may, however, authorize specific sums as advances toward specific programs.

7. No committee except the Awards Selection Committee (for general awards) and the Scholarship Committee (for scholarships) is authorized to select recipients for any award. All awards in the name of the Federation shall be recommended by the Awards Selection Committee and approved by the Assembly. (The President may, however, present special presidential awards and citations at his discretion.)

Guidelines for Individual Committees

Administration Committee consists of the five elected secretaries and such other members as the President may appoint. The President shall designate the chair of the Committee. (*By-Laws Article V, Section 2*) It shall make sure that the routine activities of the Federation are carried out, offering assistance where needed on matters such as preparation of delegate lists and mailings. The president may on occasion assign to this Committee matters that are normally the responsibility of committees for internal affairs that are currently vacant. The Committee shall from time to time conduct delegate orientation seminars.

Amenities Committee shall express the

sympathy and concern of the Federation to individuals and families regarding illness, death, or other misfortune befalling delegates, former delegates, and influential friends of the Federation. It shall also announce such misfortunes so that other delegates may offer their own sympathy. Families of deceased officers and former officers who served for more than one year may be sent flowers or contributions in lieu of flowers.

Auditing Committee shall audit the financial records of the Federation each year, as soon after the Annual Meeting as possible.

Awards Program Committee shall conduct the program at which the principle awards and honors of the Federation are presented. This program shall normally be on the last Saturday in October. A principal consideration in the conduct of the program is to raise funds for the general purposes of the Federation.

Awards Selection Committee shall develop criteria for awards or honors offered in the name of the Federation. No award or honor (other than scholarships and presidential awards and citations) may be authorized without prior recommendation of this Committee. The Committee is authorized to conduct an annual review of awards and honors, including awards such as Grass Roots Awards that may be selected by member associations for presentation at Federation programs. Changes in the terms and criteria of awards and honors shall be reported to the Executive Committee, and must be approved by the Assembly before taking effect.

Awards Selection Committee shall have exclusive power to select recipients for all city-wide awards and honors given in the name of the Federation (with the exceptions just noted). The chair of any program at which a Federation award or honor is presented shall be an ex officio voting member at the meeting of the Committee that selects the recipient for that award.

City Planning and Economic Development Committee shall consider planning, zoning, development, and historic preservation issues, and the agencies responsible for them. It shall study the economic needs of the community, evaluate proposed economic developments, and insure preservation of community and historic values. It shall also take the lead in providing Federation support in resolving planning and development

problems of member associations.

Constitution and By-Laws Committee shall consider proposals, including those of its own members, to amend the Constitution and By-Laws of the Federation. It may also consider or propose Guidelines for the conduct of Federation business, and make recommendations to the Executive Committee.

Education Committee shall develop policies regarding public schools, current education issues, and educational agencies in the District; and take the lead in bringing them into effect. It shall encourage participation in elections for members of the Board of Education by conducting candidate forums, promote respect for education and scholarship, and take all possible measures to motivate students, parents, and educators to work together for better public education.

Environmental Services Committee shall consider matters relating to water supply, sanitation, public space, and the environment. It shall work to promote a clean, healthy, and beautiful city.

Executive Committee is composed of the elected officers of the Federation and the chairs of the Federation' standing committees, and holds its regular meetings approximately two weeks before the Assembly meeting, at a day, time, and place designated by the President. Chairs of special and ad hoc committees as well as other delegates and resource persons may be invited to attend meetings of the Executive Committee on a nonvoting basis. Matters of general concern may be referred it (if they not more suitable for another appropriate committee) for consideration and recommendation to the Assembly. It shall have responsibility and authority to take action within the scope of policies established by the Assembly. (*Constitution Article IX*)

Federation Budget Committee shall prepare a budget for all officers, committees and activities of the Federation, based on past expenditures and projected activities.

Health and Human Services Committee shall consider public health, social welfare, and related social service issues, including issues related to senior citizen and youth affairs. It shall work to insure adequacy of services and respect for the dignity of recipients, and to promote wholesome living conditions and healthy lifestyles.

Housing Committee shall consider housing

problems in all their ramifications, and follow policies and programs of agencies addressing housing issues. It shall work to increase the supply of affordable housing, promote sensitive renewal and rehabilitation, reduce the problem of economic and racial discrimination, and moderate conflicts between landlords and tenants.

Legislation Committee shall include the chairs of standing committees with pending legislative business, as well a chair and such other members as the President may appoint. (*By-Laws Article V, section 3*) It shall consider legislative and budget proposals before the Council of the District of Columbia and the Congress of the United States, making sure that each issue is addressed by the appropriate committee. It shall be especially watchful for consumer issues, pending emergencies, and issues that have been neglected by inactive committees. It shall alert the Federation and member associations of important issues, and shall help prepare testimony and publicity to further Federation policies.

Membership and Credentials Committee shall handle applications for membership in the Federation in accordance with Article III of the Constitution.

Nominating Committee is elected at the September meeting of the Assembly. It shall report a slate of candidates for office at the October Assembly. (*By-Laws Article V, Section 6*) It shall conduct the election and installation of officers at the December Annual Meeting. (*Constitution Article VI, Section 1*) Election shall be by written ballot, and by a plurality vote. (*By-Laws Article II*)

Public Relations and Website Committee shall publicize the work of the Federation through press releases, news conferences, media programs, and other means, utilizing the President, other officers, committee chairs, and presidents of member associations whenever possible. The content of publicity shall be subject to supervision by the President. A major project of the Committee shall be publishing a Website for distribution information to delegates and friends of the Federation.

Public Safety Committee shall consider police, fire, corrections, and related judicial activities. It shall work to promote safety, crime and fire prevention, civil rights, good police-community relations and general good order in the community. It shall also consider matters

related to homeland security and emergency management.

Public Utilities Committee shall consider issues concerning electric, gas, and communications utilities, including all cases before the Public Service Commission. It shall work to promote fair rate structures, efficient services, and environmentally sound development of utilities.

Recreation Committee shall consider matters of recreation, parks, and cultural activities. It shall work to promote wholesome and stimulating activities for all age groups, especially for youth.

Scholarship Committee shall promote competition for Federation scholarships among students in District of Columbia public and charter schools who have demonstrated academic excellence, leadership, and financial need; select recipients to receive Federation scholarships; and solicit contributions to the scholarship fund.

Transportation Committee shall consider issues relating to streets, bridges, highways, and public transportation. It shall work to promote convenient and affordable transportation for all classes of people.

Ways and Means Committee shall recommend and conduct fund-raising projects, and shall lend support to the ongoing fund-raising endeavors of other committees.