Draft First Parish Cambridge Bylaws

Featured Highlights as of 1/15/2017

## Reasons changes are needed at this time

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Reason | Example |
| Having two sets of bylaws is not good fiduciary or legal practice. | n/a |
| No longer how we “do church.” | Calling a Minister requires ⅖ quorum of “all members living within a 100-mile radius.” |
| Change is indicated. | Size of Standing Committee; or, fixed 25 person quorum requirement for business meeting. |
| Outdated practice. | Deacons “shall be the custodians of the Church silver.” |
| Current best practice requires some new sections. | Defining what happens to First Parish assets if it is dissolved; or, what’s required to purchase or sell capital property. |

## MEMBERSHIP

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| TOPIC | EXISTING BYLAWS | PROPOSAL |
| Age for Voting Membership | 18 years | 15 years |
| Honorary Membership | Silent | New category for those unable to participate actively |
| Expectations | Silent | Clarifies common expectations: participation, annual contribution |
| Removal | Removing from rolls required congregational vote | Sets clear definitions for easily maintaining member database |

## CONGREGATIONAL BUSINESS MEETINGS

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| TOPIC | EXISTING BYLAWS | PROPOSAL |
| Frequency | Mandates 2 per year | Mandates 1 per year  Allows additional meetings called either by Standing Committee or Member request |
| Quorum | Fixed number of voters | % of membership (to respond to growth or decline) |

## STANDING COMMITTEE, MINISTER AND STAFF

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| TOPIC | EXISTING BYLAWS | PROPOSAL |
| Minister Title | Senior Minister | Lead Minister |
| Staff Responsibility | Silent | The Lead Minister is head of staff & responsible to Standing Committee for the success of all staff and programs.  The Congregational Administrator is operations director, overseeing day-to-day operations. |
| Calling vs. Hiring Ministers | Silent | Lead Minister is called, additional ministers, if any, are hired. |

## ELECTED POSITIONS ELIMINATED

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| --- | --- | --- |
| TOPIC | EXISTING BYLAWS | PROPOSAL |
| Deacons | Description of role and responsibility | Eliminated |
| Leadership Development or Nominating Committee | Description of role | Eliminated  No longer a need to nominate Deacons and Leadership Development Team members.  Nominations for Standing Committee assumed by Standing Committee’s Governance Advisory Committee with provision for congregation to nominate by petition. |

## QUORUMS

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ACTION | EXISTING QUORUM | PROPOSED QUORUM | Number of Members at Current FPC Size (approx 200 members) |
| Business meeting (elections, budget approval) | 25 Members | 20% of membership (higher) | 40 |
| Call Minister | 40% of membership | 50% of membership (higher) | 100 |
| Terminate Minister | 40% of membership | 50% of membership (higher) | 100 |
| Loan or Withdrawal from Endowment | 25 Members | 50% of membership (higher) | 100 |
| Purchase or Sale of Capital Property | Silent | 50% of membership | 100 |
| Amendment of bylaws | 25 Members | 30% of membership (higher) | 60 |
| Dissolution of First Parish | Silent | 50% of membership | 100 |

## VOTING

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ACTION | PROPOSAL | CURRENT VOTE REQUIRED TO PASS | PROPOSED VOTE REQUIRED TO PASS |
| Call Minister | Higher | 80% of Members present and voting | 90% of Members present and voting |
| Purchase or Sale of Capital Property | Add | Silent | Requires discussion at two consecutive business meetings, with a vote taken at the second. Meetings must be announced with ample prior notification of the discussions and vote. |
| Dissolution of First Parish | Add | Silent | Requires discussion at two consecutive business meetings, with a vote taken at the second. Meetings must be announced with ample prior notification of the discussions and vote. |
| Withdrawals from the endowment | Change | 66% of voting members present affirmative vote at two consecutive meetings | Requires discussion at two consecutive business meetings, with a vote taken at the second. Meetings must be announced with ample prior notification of the discussions and vote. |
| Loans from the endowment | No change | 66% of voting members present | 66% of voting members present |

## NEXT STEPS

January 2-31, 2017: Congregational Review and Feedback on Draft Bylaws

January 15, 2017: Congregational Conversation #2 on Draft Bylaws

January 17, 2017: Standing Committee discussion of feedback received thus far.

February 2017: Congregational Conversation #3 (if needed)

March 19, 2017: Special Congregational Meeting to vote on new bylaws

## Questions, comments or other feedback?

Peggy Kraft, Chair of Standing Committee

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