

Somerville DSA

Resolution for Formal Neighborhood Leadership

Whereas the Somerville neighborhood branch of Boston Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) has historically not had a formalized leadership structure,

Whereas active membership of the neighborhood branch has increased to a critical mass, rivaling or surpassing the size of the majority of the memberships of small DSA chapters,

Whereas the "tyranny of structurelessness" was identified by Jo Freeman and witnessed in mass organizations and unions across the country as costly to genuine democratic organizations, creating voids inevitably filled by unelected leaders often from the most empowered groups under racial capitalism,

Whereas there are a number of different recurring administrative responsibilities for Somerville DSA to continue to operate effectively every month, which are currently conducted ad hoc,

Whereas ad hoc and inconsistent fulfillment of responsibilities leads to ad hoc and inconsistent operations, which can be opaque and depress participation by new and active members,

Whereas the clear and consistent delineation of roles creates accountability that can lead to new member leadership development, from trainings to chances to participate in democracy,

Whereas the clear and consistent delineation of roles can streamline direct asks,

Whereas a formal neighborhood leadership provides the chance for current leaders wearing multiple hats to finally hang up some of those hats on the metaphorical coat rack, where they belong, goddamnit,

Whereas the vibes are simply better when a formal leadership structure, and vibes are of paramount importance to socialist organizing,

Therefore, be it resolved:

That Somerville DSA adopt a formal leadership structure that incorporates four separate leadership roles to be filled by five members that are each accountable to the neighborhood branch membership as a matter of principle and formally through a removal process defined in Article VIII, Section 4 of the BDSA Bylaws,

That Somerville DSA's formal leadership structure include two co-chairs, one secretary, one moderator, and one internal organizer, under whose responsibility falls all existing ad hoc roles, whose term of office lasts six months and that may serve no more than two years of consecutive terms in a five year period, elected to their positions under the rules outlined under the BDSA Bylaws for quorum and voting method,

That Somerville DSA's two co-chairs be responsible for:

1. Political leadership of the neighborhood branch, tasked with the primary responsibility of focusing on how to maximize Somerville DSA's success in building a local socialist movement within the confines of our material conditions and strategic circumstances,
2. Speaking on behalf of Somerville DSA to press or public, bound to the Workers Deserve More! program as the collective program of national DSA, and to any and all policy documents and local positions taken by the collective Somerville DSA membership,
3. Chairing or appointing someone else to chair general meetings held by the neighborhood branch, held on a minimum of a monthly basis,
4. Drafting and setting the agenda for Somerville DSA general meetings by 3 days before a general meeting of Somerville DSA,
5. Attending trainings on speaking to media organized by Boston DSA or Somerville DSA, whenever possible and offered,

That Somerville DSA's secretary be responsible for:

6. Taking notes or appointing someone to take notes during all general meetings of Somerville DSA,
7. Following up and marking results in the agenda on any action items assigned to Somerville DSA members before the next Somerville DSA general meeting,
8. Ordering food for Somerville DSA meetings if requested by membership,
9. Booking venues for in-person locations of Somerville DSA meetings or events,
10. Hold a special election according to the below guidelines in the case of a vacancy, or appoint someone to oversee a special election from within Somerville DSA, as well as the elections for officer positions at the conclusion of the term,

That Somerville DSA's moderator be responsible for:

11. Moderating all group chats and channels on Discord, Signal, or any other communications channel utilized for official purposes by Somerville DSA

12. Taking stack or appointing someone to take progressive stack during general meetings, ensuring the person assigned this responsibility is not the same as note-taker,
13. Making note of and reporting any personalized attacks or uncomradely behavior to the Harassment and Grievance Officers (HGO) of Boston DSA to reach out proactively, in order to mitigate the chances of un-generative conflict rising to the point of grievance detrimental to mass organization,
14. Ensuring equal access of remote and in-person participation in all Somerville DSA meetings, including Zoom access, closed captioning, and participation audio levels, through their own efforts or by appointing one or more members to facilitate in-person and Zoom access during meetings,

That Somerville DSA's internal organizer be responsible for:

15. Liaising with the Administrative Committee of Boston DSA,
16. Mobilizing Somerville DSA members to Somerville DSA meetings and events, utilizing list-building and individual outreach using phonebanking or textbanking,
17. Conducting or appointing someone to conduct one-on-one organizing conversations with new members of Somerville DSA when Boston DSA membership rolls update within two weeks of their joining the organization,
18. Flyering or appointing someone to flyer Somerville in advance of Somerville DSA events, targeting at minimum pedestrian traffic at Union Square, Davis Square, Ball Square, and East Somerville,

That Somerville DSA, in the event of a vacancy in any office, hold a special election to fill the unexpired term through election at the next neighborhood branch meeting. The person filling the vacancy will finish out the original person's term of office,

Officers may resign by written or live notice to the branch membership at a meeting or by official channels. Resignation shall be instant unless another date is specified in the resignation notice. Their replacement will be elected at the following branch meeting.

A member may make a motion with no fewer than two other members as co-signers for the recall of an officer for any reason, to be held by live/synchronous voting. If the motion receives a simple majority in favor, the named officer is recalled and a special election for a new one then held. The recalled officer may not be elected until after the date that their original term would expire, but otherwise suffers no loss of membership, standing, or rights within the branch,

Any branch member may declare a position of the leadership vacant if the officer in question misses three consecutive meetings of the branch. A new member will be elected to finish the term at the next branch meeting,

That Somerville DSA hold elections for these positions by February 2025, with formal leadership accountable for fulfillment of their responsibilities by the meeting of Somerville DSA membership in March 2025.

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