OpenSCAD Steering Committee Charter

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This document creates the OpenSCAD Steering Committee (OSC), a governing body for OpenSCAD.

Goals

What are we trying to accomplish?
- Create a group with responsibility and authority to make conclusive decisions on proposed changes to OpenSCAD and its associated collateral, notably the openscad.org domain.
- It is not intended to replace discussion and consensus with rules and formality. Rather, this group is intended to step in when consensus is unclear or cannot be achieved, to ensure that in those cases all sides are heard and a conclusion is reached.

Rationale

Why is this group being created?
- An anarchy cannot make decisions, and in particular cannot make decisions on whether to include or exclude proposed changes.
- A single individual can make decisions. However, the burden on that individual is significant, that person can be a single point of failure, and having a single person responsible increases problems associated with (perceived or real) personal animus or personal or technical bias.
- A group can spread the burden of being the "bad guy" who says no, can represent multiple viewpoints, and can provide some resilience and handle succession.

Authority

The OpenSCAD Steering Committee has the authority to:
- Approve or disapprove proposed changes to the OpenSCAD software.
- Approve or disapprove proposed changes to the openscad.org domain, including its web site and mailing list(s).
- Approve or disapprove spending from OpenSCAD funds.
- In extremis, to ban disruptive members of the community from mailing lists and forums.
- Delegate that approval authority to individuals, subject to oversight.
- Select its own members, adding and removing members as required.

Responsibility

The OpenSCAD Steering Committee has the responsibility to:
- When required, make decisions in a timely fashion.
- Be attentive to the needs and opinions of all stakeholders.
- Explain its decisions.
- Manage its membership so as to maintain continuity.

Consent of the Community

- It is important to note that everybody involved in the process is a volunteer. Nobody can be forced to do anything. However, for the long-term good of the whole, individuals must sometimes "disagree and commit", accepting and implementing group decisions with which they personally disagree.
- In extreme situations in open source projects, individuals who disagree with group decisions always have the option to step away from the project or start their own fork.

Bootstrapping

Absent an existing governing body, a new body must simply declare its authority. There are a few key individuals who must approve:
- Marius Kintel, as the most recently active of the original authors of the program and the formal owner of the openscad.org domain
- Torsten Paul, as the current primary GitHub administrator
- Michael Marx, as the current mailing list administrator

Those three, plus any others who currently have write access to the github repository, should select a slate of five initial committee members from the community.

Membership Selection

The OSC maintains its membership by:
- Selecting replacement members as necessary due to retirement, incapacity, or removal.
  - A simple majority may select a candidate to fill an empty slot.
- Removing members as necessary.
  - A ⅔ majority (four of the initial five) may remove a member for any reason.
  - Specific grounds for removal:
    - Death or other incapacity.
    - Unexplained failure to respond to e-mail for several weeks.
    - Repeated failure to participate in decision-making.
- Adding membership slots as necessary.
  - A ⅔ majority may add an additional membership slot.

Development Processes

- The OSC should select one or more community members to act as gatekeepers for the various components of OpenSCAD - e.g., the primary program, associated libraries, the web site, any mailing lists and forums. These gatekeepers might or might not be OSC members.
- Gatekeepers are expected to make noncontroversial decisions on their own, referring controversial decisions to the OSC as a whole.
- Any OSC member, or any gatekeeper, may request that OSC rule on whether or not to accept a particular change. Note that this may take the form of a gatekeeper asking the OSC to make a decision, or an OSC member disagreeing with a decision that a gatekeeper has made.
- In general, discussions should take place in a publicly accessible mailing list, or at least in a publicly accessible chat room.
- A simple majority of the OSC may either approve or reject a proposed change.
- Decisions, and in particular decisions to reject a change, should normally be made before the change is merged into the primary repository. However, the OSC does have retroactive authority to back out a merged change - there is no "fait accompli" associated with a change being merged. The intent is that this authority would be used sparingly, and only when the OSC disagrees with the gatekeeper's decision, or when subsequent evidence shows that it was in error.
- Decisions should be explained. Rejections should include a rationale and, where applicable, recommendations on how the proposal might be changed to make it more acceptable.
- Rejections can be for any reason, as long as that reason is explained. Some key considerations might be:
  - The vision for the project ("this just isn't something we want to do as part of this project")
  - The architecture of the project ("this isn't the way this feature should fit into the project")
  - Technical aspects of the proposal ("this is implemented wrong")
  - Legal concerns ("licensing for this proposed addition is problematic")

Other Matters

In addition to changes to the software, the OSC has authority over
- Web site content, and in particular how various components and services are presented. For instance it might designate some libraries, mailing lists, forums, or chat rooms as "official" and others as merely "in case you are interested". (It isn't clear what weight "official" carries, but some might think it important.)
- Mailing list / forum implementation and policies.
- Spending OpenSCAD funds.

Decision Processes

- It should not normally be necessary to conduct a formal vote. After discussion, it should normally be obvious what the committee members' opinions are and "which way the wind is blowing", and that should normally be enough for the developer and gatekeeper to make a decision.
- However, after an issue has been raised and discussed, any OSC member may call for a vote. This call must be in an e-mail message with the word "vote" in the subject, with the only topic of the message being the call for a vote and a reference to the specific change being proposed.
- Any OSC member may respond to that message asking that the vote be deferred for additional discussion, specifying how much additional time they need.
- In the absence of a request for additional time, after one week (168 hours) after a call for a vote, or after all members have indicated their readiness to vote, the OSC member calling for a vote may post a call for votes. This call should be in the form of a reply to the original call for a vote, with the call for votes being the sole topic of the message.
- One week after the call for votes, or when all members have voted, the OSC member calling for the vote should post the results of the vote, with a list of members and how they voted.
- Failure to vote within the one-week timeline constitutes abstention.
- Voting must take place via e-mail in a publicly accessible mailing list, with votes attributed to individual committee members.
- A voting "thread" should not be used for discussion. (It may be appropriate to establish a separate moderated mailing list for voting. If so, the impending vote and its results should also be sent to the primary discussion mailing list.)
- The two one-week timers above are not intended to cause all votes to take two weeks. Rather, they are intended to ensure that all members have had an opportunity to have the discussion they need and have the opportunity to vote, with time allowed for real-world interruptions that might prevent immediate responses.

Reconsideration

- Any decision, once made, could be reconsidered and reversed by a subsequent decision.

Abuse

- As noted, the overall goal is consensus-based decision making. However, in the event that a formal decision must be made, there will be winners and losers. The winners should be gracious in their victory, and the losers gracious in their defeat. Requests for reconsideration should be based on good judgment and after additional discussion, not merely in the hope that repeated requests will change the decision. Committee members and gatekeepers should feel free to decline to sponsor requests for OSC

intervention when they feel that the matter has been adequately discussed and a conclusion reached, and that there is no new information that might alter the result.