Section One: The Basics (Procedures for Our Business)

Concept Three:

The NA groups delegate to the service structure the authority necessary to fulfill the responsibilities assigned to it.

1.1 Who We Are

A. Definition:

The South Vancouver Island Area Service Committee (ASC) is a committee made up of Group Service Representatives (GSRs), Area Service Officers ("the Executive") and Subcommittee Facilitators. It meets regularly to serve the specific needs of its member groups.

B. Geographical Boundary:

The geographical boundary of the ASC shall be defined in two ways: one for service responsibilities and one for group representation. Our service structure may be responsible for the southern portion of Vancouver Island, up to and including all points south of a line between Crofton and Port Renfrew. With regard to group representation, our outermost active groups will define our boundary. We serve groups west to Sooke and north to Cowichan including the Saanich Peninsula and Salt Spring Island. The boundary is flexible and will be updated as new groups attend the ASC.

1.2 What We Are

A. Purpose:

The purpose of the ASC is to support the NA groups in the South Vancouver Island Area in fulfilling their primary purpose, to provide a forum for them to meet and discuss issues, to help the groups address their unique needs and situations and to encourage the growth of our fellowship.

B. Guiding Principles:

The SVIASC conducts business according to a number of guiding principles. In all matters before the ASC, the *Twelve Concepts*, the *Twelve Traditions*, *A Guide to Local Services in NA*, *Guiding Principles: The Spirit of Our* Traditions, the *SVINA Guidelines* (this document) and *Consensus Based Decision Making (CBDM)* will be applied as appropriate as the Group Conscience sees fit."

1.2.1 Where We Are

A. Meeting Times:

The ASC will meet every month at a place and time decided at the close of each meeting. It has been standard practice to set the Area meeting on the same day of each month in order to ensure that ongoing business can be conducted. Conventionally, this is the 3rd Sunday of each month.

B. Changing Meeting Times:

If the need arises to change the date, time or place prior to the next Area meeting, the facilitator will notify all GSRs, ASC Officers and Subcommittee Facilitators by telephone, @gmail.com email accounts, and SVINA-approved private social media sites as soon as possible of the scheduling change..” A notice of the rescheduled meeting should be posted at the original location of the ASC meeting.

C. Refreshments:

Refreshments may be served at this meeting, provided for by individual contributions. A 7th Tradition should never be taken for this purpose.

How It Works - Deleted

ASC Agenda - Moved to Annex

1.2.2 Who Makes Decisions and How Do We Decide?

A. Decision-Making Eligibility:

a) The GSR or the alternate GSR for a group.

b) The respective group secretary, group treasurer, or other group member – only in the absence of an elected GSR or alternate GSR. That member must also have been asked by the group to represent them.

ASC officers and Subcommittee facilitators (except for PR, as per section (c)) are prohibited from making final decisions, in the spirit of tradition 9:

“*These boards and committees are established to serve only, not to govern. They are directly responsible for the groups and are always subject to the explicit direction of the groups*.”
- It Works, How and Why: Tradition 9, page 194.

c) The Public Relations facilitator, providing they have attended the group's business meeting and are carrying the group's conscience on a motion.

B. Making Decisions on Reports, ASC Policy, and Elections (voting in nominees) to the Service Structure:

The treasurer report, acceptance of the minutes and any other general committee business will pass with a consensus of the ASC body present; either by a show of hands or verbal assent (for reports, minutes, or proposals not required to be sent to groups.)

In the matter of elections of trusted servants, election by consensus proceeds as per section 2.2.1.

Proposals affecting *SVINA Guidelines* will pass with a consensus of the ASC body. These proposals must be taken back to the groups for one month for a group conscience prior to the decision.

Corrections to the *SVINA Guidelines* document with regards to grammatical errors, spelling mistakes, typographical errors, formatting, layout designs, inconsistencies with content or policy changes that were confirmed to have been approved by the groups by consensus, may be made as a Policy Committee decision, provided that the intent of the document is not altered.

C. Criteria and Design for Consensus Based Decision Making (CBDM):

The Consensus Based Decision Making (CBDM) Model is to foster unity amongst the ASC service body, when making decisions upon proposals. Proposals may already be prepared in advance to bring forth to the Area body (e.g.: Motions/Proposals stage of the agenda,) or proposals may form out of a group conscience during the Open Discussion/New Business stage of the agenda.

Although the Facilitator has full discretion to prioritize proposals and topics on the table (e.g.: financial-impacting or time-sensitive ones first,) it is usually beneficial to deal with them as they present themselves, so that the continual flow of ideas and "mental frame of reference" is not interrupted. It can be hard to retain and re-visit these ideas at a later time and can actually consume more time overall.

The approach for implementing the Consensus Based Decision Making model proceeds as follows:

● NOTE: The "ASC Body," for this purpose, is defined as the GSRs, ASC Executive Officers and Subcommittee Facilitators present for this process.

1: Introduction of topic

● Topics are raised (e.g.: during Open Discussion/New Business.) (NOTE: Proposals already prepared, can start at stage 5.)

2: Test for interest

● Topic is prioritized for discussion.

3: Discuss Topic

● Focus on the issue at hand.
● The ASC body achieves a thorough and collective understanding of the issue.

4: Brainstorm solutions, if required.

● If the topic is straight-forward, the group proceeds to the next step. If the topic is involved or open-ended, ideas are presented and developed into proposals. If this stage proves to be too time-consuming, it may be prudent to suggest a workshop or re-visit the ideas for the next area.

5: Clarify Proposal

● The Facilitator restates the proposal for clarity and the minutes.

6: Test for consensus

● 85% ASC body consensus, proceed with implementation.
● Less than 85% proceed to the next step.

7: Hear Dissent

● Dissenters present their viewpoints.
● Body discusses the dissent, seeking understanding and solutions.
● A small group discussion, or a break may be necessary.

8: Test for consensus

● 100% ASC body consensus, proceed with implementation.
● Less than 100% proceed to next step.

9: Delay – Consult - Inform

● If required, delay the decision to the next ASC meeting.
● Refer GSRs to the groups for consideration of the topic (not just the proposal).
● GSRs may want to consider forming a workgroup and seek more information.
● If the group conscience feels that none of these methods are necessary, proceed to step 10.

10: Test for consensus

● 85% support will reach consensus.
● 16% or greater BLOCK, consensus will not have been achieved.

● NOTE: this decision must also meet what is called the GSR Threshold. As per concept 2, "*because the groups have created the service structure, they have final authority over all its affairs*." Of this final decision, 85% GSR assent is consensus. 16% or more GSR block will block the proposal.

(D) Degrees of Dissent:

Assent

"Go for it!"
The ASC body is giving full assent to the proposal.

Assent with Reservations

"I think this may be a mistake, but I can live with it."

The degree is going along with the group so that we can move forward, but not fully on board. In short, not stopping what the group wants to do.

The assumption is that the reservations have been heard already, and you are simply noting that you can support the proposal and continue to have these reservations.

Stand Aside

"I personally cannot do this, but I will not stop others from doing this."

Basically, taking yourself out of the equation. You do not agree but will allow the group to move forward.

NOTE: a sizable number of Stand Asides (33% or more) of those GSRs present will indicate that a consensus to adopt the proposal is too weak. The proposal is then either dropped or delegated to the maker of the proposal or an Ad Hoc Committee for re-working. The content of the dissent will be recorded in the minutes.

Block

"I cannot support this or allow the group to support this, it is against our principles."

Blocking is a rare and extreme form of dissent taken only if you honestly believe that one of the Traditions or Concepts is directly violated by a proposal, or that some fundamental or moral position would be violated.

A participant who blocks must be able to articulate which and how a tradition, concept, policy, or spiritual principle fundamental to NA, is being violated.

A block must be based on a recognized principle, not a personal preference. Before a concern is considered to be a "valid" block, the group must have accepted the validity of the concern, and a reasonable attempt must have been made to resolve it.

Consider the following when considering a BLOCK:

- Blocking a proposal is a last resort and only done in rare and extreme cases
- Can I put aside my personal opinion to allow the rest of the group to move forward?
- Am I able to pass on making a point when someone else has already made it?
- Straw Polls are for information to assess where the body is. They are not votes.

1.2.3 Proposals

A: What is a proposal?

A proposal is an idea brought forth by eligible members of the Area Service Committee, to bring forward actions or changes affecting SVINA as a whole, that require the assent of the decision-making members of the Area Service Committee.

Such examples would be (but not limited to:)

-        Changes to the ASC Service Structure
-        Decisions to create or disband subcommittees
-        Decisions regarding management and allocation of SVINA funds
-        Changes to this SVINA Guidelines document.

B. Who is eligible to submit a proposal?

GSRs, subcommittee facilitators, and the officers of the ASC are eligible to submit a proposal to the floor. These proposals do not need to be "seconded" (i.e.: as per motions with the older *Robert's Rules of Order*) as consensus tests are used to determine the legitimacy of the proposal anyway. These proposals must be in written form. A proposal outline will be available at the Area table..

To prevent conflicts of interest and preserve efficient facilitation, the ASC facilitator can only bring forth a proposal if so recommended by another officer of the ASC.

Non-ASC Body Members:

SVINA members who are not members of the ASC body are, in most cases, prohibited from submitting proposals as it is assumed that these members are represented by their GSRs. This is because (as per concept 7) SVINA members are encouraged to fully participate at the home-group level; it would defeat the whole purpose of a GSR to begin with:

"Determining participation at the group level is fairly simple: if you're a group member, you may fully participate in the group's decision-making process. Determining participation in the decision-making processes of most service boards and committees is a little more involved, yet the same basic principles still apply."

- Concept 7– Twelve Concepts for NA Service.

However, there are exceptional circumstances where they may be allowed to submit a proposal, which can be determined by an 85% consensus of the ASC body on a per- case basis. Such exceptional circumstances are (but not limited to:)

-      The SVINA member is looking to contribute to the ASC service structure
          (i.e.: offering to host some SVINA-related event like the *Holiday Dinner*, establish an ad-hoc committee for this purpose, or propose a new service position that may benefit SVINA.)

-      The SVINA member's GSR is not actively present at, or may not have
           been regularly attending the current ASC meeting (said proposer may want to consider running for his/her home group's GSR position? It's worth asking.

- The SVINA member is attending the ASC with his/her GSR, and helping his/her GSR clarify and relay the proposal. This member is encouraged to sit beside his/her GSR at the main table during this time.

NOTE: The SVINA members can only participate by submitting the respective proposal. They cannot make decisions or test consensus on other unrelated proposals on the floor, or submit proposals for regular ASC business when their GSR is already present, etc.

C. How do we assess proposals?

Proposals are assessed as per the CBDM guidelines in section 1.2.4 (C). The acceptance of the treasurer's report and the ASC minutes (as per section 1.2.4 (B)) are not considered proposals.

The member submitting the proposal must be present for it to be accepted for consensus.

Proposals submitted prior to the ASC meeting or during the meeting are assessed as per the priority declared by the ASC facilitator, not necessarily by the order in which they are received.

For example: a proposal regarding financial changes for an immediate upcoming SVINA event may take priority over a general proposal requiring clarification and involved discussion (i.e.: creating another ASC subcommittee position).

1.2.4 Open Discussion and Time Management

A. What's the Difference?

Open discussion is dialogue that takes place when no proposal has yet been brought forth if one will even be at all. It is meant to share and bounce ideas off ASC members, which may, in turn, become proposals.

Decision-making, however, is an action that follows a proposal that has reached consensus as per the CBDM process in 1.2.4 (C).

To avoid confusion and to save time spent on ASC business, the following guidelines have been adopted. They are meant to guide the facilitator in executing the agenda and are not to be a device to serve the interest of individuals.

B. What Does This All Mean?

Discussion will occur at times such as in Old Business or Open discussion/New Business. The ASC reports, GSR reports, and Subcommittee reports are meant to be reports only.
Questions requiring clarification of ASC reports, or points of information are acceptable during this time period - these reports are meant to be only a maximum of 5 minutes each. The reason for this is simple math: 15 reports x 5 minutes each = one

hour and 15 minutes. We submit advance reports online so that we can take our own time to read them beforehand - this saves everyone time.

Although we do need to carefully consider all viewpoints (as per Concept 9,) service structure also needs to be upheld. Questions about a report that begins to lead to involved discussion, should be moved to Open Discussion/New Business.

"We understand that "ought never be organized" doesn't mean that we do what we do without any planning or predictability. Our meetings are at regular times and places;
We create and maintain meeting schedules, websites, and phonelines.
In order for us to grow and recover, we need some structure."

Tradition 9: Guiding Principles: The Spirit of Our Traditions

The facilitator will, at his/her discretion, lead and ensure that such open discussion takes place within our guidelines, and that it stays on topic. Note that open discussion is steps 1-3 on section 1.2.4 (C).

C. Time Management: How Long Does This All Take?

The goal is to keep the latter third of the ASC agenda (from "Old Business" to "Announcements" to one hour, or a maximum of 90 minutes in extreme cases. The facilitator's duty is to be mindful of this and take the appropriate action as outlined below.

The guidelines on time-management regarding open discussion are as follows:

The facilitator will announce how many topics are on the Open Discussion / New Business list. The facilitator will give an estimate of how much time this will consume (e.g.: "*We have 5 topics on the sheet. 5 x 15 minutes is one hour and 15 minutes. Please be mindful of the time.*")

As per section 1.2.5, the facilitator will prioritize the importance of the items on the list.

The eligible member (e.g.: GSR, Subcommittee Officer or ASC officer) bringing forth the topic of discussion speaks to this before the ASC.

NOTE: SVINA members who are not members of the ASC body are again (as per 1.2.5 (b)) encouraged to fully participate in discussion at the home-group level as it would defeat the whole purpose of a GSR to begin with. The same exceptions, however, can apply as per 85% consensus of the ASC body on a per- case basis.

For those GSRs, Subcommittee Officers and ASC officers who would like to speak on the topic, they must raise their hands before speaking. They must each take turns in

priority sequence and other members must not interrupt them. Only the facilitator can interject to inform speakers how long they've been actively speaking for.

The facilitator also has permission to prioritize the order of speakers if appropriate (e.g.: one member may have had previous service experience on such topic - that clarification may help answer pending questions and save time!!). Members who ask to speak during this time should be very conscious and aware of what's being discussed (for example: if someone else relays your exact concerns, you do not need to repeat them in excessive detail. You can simply say, *"I have the same concerns/beliefs as such-and-such member."*) The facilitator has the authority to confirm this with the member speaking.

After each logged member has been given the opportunity to speak, the facilitator asks the ASC body if they would like to continue discussing this topic and asks for another show of hands (e.g.: a "second phase" of discussion.)

TWO PHASES OF DISCUSSION (PER TOPIC) ARE CONSIDERED FULL DISCUSSION. If a third phase of discussion is desired, the facilitator will want to recommend the following on step 4 on 1.2.4 (B): "*If this stage proves to be too time-consuming, it may be prudent to suggest a workshop or re-visit the ideas for next area.*"

In this case, the facilitator should recommend forwarding the topic to old business (or ending the topic for discussion, if the topic has been prolonged over multiple area service meetings with no consensus. The facilitator should encourage the people who spoke to get together and discuss the matter (privately or informally) before the next Area Service meeting. HOWEVER, this decision to postpone or end the topic of discussion requires 85% consensus of the GSR Threshold. If 16% or more of the GSRs present wish to still discuss the topic at hand, they can declare this.

"Allowing everyone into the process means that we need to be able to explain how and why decisions were made without becoming impatient or intolerant of those who are asking. "Even so, when an issue has been raised and decided many times already, IT MAY NOT BE PRUDENT to revisit decisions if the circumstances and information haven't changed much."

- Guiding Principles, Tradition 9,
It should be noted that all NA members who are not currently serving at the ASC body, who have been authorized to speak at the ASC level, should be mindful of the questions below, and the facilitator has full authorization to ask these questions, if appropriate, for the sake of efficiency:

- *Have you consulted with your sponsor on this topic?*
- *What direction or guidance were you given?*
- *Have you consulted with your home group or service committee on this topic?*

- *What information are you not getting from these resources that you look to get from Area?*

- *Have you researched any of this information in our NAWS literature? (e.g.: A Guide to Local Service, or the Traditions in It Works: How and Why, or Guiding Principles?)*

1.2.5 Violent or Disruptive Behavior

ASC:

In the event of violence, physical outbursts, verbal threats, or other behavior such as: distracting the order of business, argumentativeness, disorderly conduct and/or sidetracking conversations, before, during or after the course of the ASC meeting that can threaten the respect and safety of the ASC members, the facilitator has authorization to take protective measures. Such protective measures are defined in the 7 strategies outlined in the NA Service Pamphlet: *Violent and Disruptive Behavior*. If at least one GSR objects to such measures as taken by the facilitator, a group conscience can be called at that moment to review the measure being taken and determine if it's appropriate.

If all other listed strategies fail, the group conscience can decide on the strategy, "Temporarily Suspending a Meeting," and decide if a special session of the ASC should be held to complete business not done because of the disruption. Any further protective measures (e.g.: suspending or removing a member from a service position) will then be moved to Open Discussion/New Business and decided upon by the Group Conscience.

Subcommittees:

In the event of a report of violent behavior, physical outburst, verbal threat, or other behavior that had (or could have) compromised the safety and security of a subcommittee's service body, that report will be forwarded to the ASC's Open Discussion/New Business. The reporter (e.g.: subcommittee chair or other subcommittee service member) will relay his/her report of the events that transpired. The Group Conscience can then make any recommendations or decisions on protective measures, if required.

"To give the NA groups the information they need to guide and support our services, NA leaders regularly distribute full, unequivocal reports. We do not want our trusted servants to inundate us with every fact and figure possible, though we do expect them to provide us with complete information on all their activities and discussions if we ask for it."

- *Concept 8,*

Review and Redress:

It should be noted that, whether such behavior takes place during the ASC or a subcommittee's service body, as per Concept 10, the person who has been reported to have exhibited such violent or disruptive behavior is entitled to petition the ASC for the redress of a personal grievance without fear of reprisal. Depending on the circumstances, the group conscience can declare how the petition is to be addressed, written or verbal, should the security and safety of the ASC or respective subcommittee still be a concern.

(Sample Guidelines: In cases where violent behavior is so obvious (e.g.: a member was punched by another member of the service body at the Area table, in front of other members) the petition can be received in the form of a written letter. In cases of hearsay (e.g.: "I heard rumors that this guy/gal is rather intimidating and unstable, I don't think he/she should have a position of leadership") it may be appropriate to invite the member to the ASC table to share his/her side of the story, so that an informed decision can be made, but the petitioner can still submit a letter if desired.)

Regarding the action of Protective Measures:

Concept 4 states that "any NA member can be a leader, and every NA member has the right to serve the fellowship." This right is clearly defined.

With regards to leadership positions, however, Concept 4 also states: *"Able leadership in the spirit of service does not drive by arrogant mandate, demanding conformity; it leads by example, inviting respect."*

If disruptive, abusive, or violent behavior is proven to have transpired in the service body, these factors should be weighed-in when deciding to elect, keep or remove trusted servants in positions of leadership.

Special Session of the ASC:

To hold a special session of the ASC, a petition needs to be submitted to the ASC facilitator. Due cause shall be determined by the ASC facilitator. The facilitator will contact the GSRs explaining the petition and conduct a vote of which 2/3rds approval is needed to hold a special session. The facilitator will set the location, date and time that is reasonable and prudent.