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Coordinating Committee minutes, October 7, 2013

Coordinating Committee members present (14): Victoria Ashley, June Brashares, Marla Bernstein, Maxine Daniel, Sanda Everette, Mike Feinstein, Parker Jean, Sasha Karlik, Tim Laidman, Jesse Moorman, Alex Shantz, Candice Yamaguchi, Rich Zitola

Coordinating Committee members not-present (5): Cindy Asrir

Quorum: Quorum reached at 7:35 with 10/14 present: Victoria Ashley, June Brashares, Marla Bernstein, Maxine Daniel, Sanda Everette, Mike Feinstein, Parker Jean, Sasha Karlik, Tim Laidman, Jesse Moorman, Alex Shantz, Candice Yamaguchi, Rich Zitola

Invited guest (1): Doug Barnett, GPCA Treasurer

Rich Zitola joined call at 7:37

June Brashares joined call at 7:41

Victoria Ashley joined call at 7:48

2) Roles

Facilitator: Alex Shantz

Minutes taker: Mike Feinstein

Time keeper: Maxine Daniel

Vibes Watcher: Tim Laidman

Approved by consensus

2) Roles

Facilitator: Alex Shantz

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3) Approval of Agenda

Proposal (Feinstein): Add "Sponsor placing for endorsement by the Standing General Assembly of the California Cannabis Hemp 2014 initiative" as new item #7

Approved by consensus

Approval of agenda as amended (Shantz)

Approved by consensus

4) Approve minutes

- Decision: Approve minutes, CC meeting, September

Approved by consensus

- Decision: Approve minutes, CC on-line vote: Green Party of California joining of AllCare Alliance

Proposal (Shantz): Approve text as posted to the CC list

Approved by consensus

- Decision: Amend minutes of August and September to reflect resignation of Lauren Clifford, who clarified that she had resigned on July 29th

Approved by consensus

5) Appointment: Appointment to Personnel Committee

Appointment: Jesse Moorman

Approved by consensus at 7:42

6) Decision: Approval of Draft Bylaws Interpretation to Establish Process for GPCA endorsements in June 2014 primary (twenty minutes) (Feinstein)

Proposal (Feinstein): That the Coordinating Committee approve the following statement of findings/bylaws interpretation:

Whereas the June 2014 primary elections are the first under which the Green Party is operating under the Top Two primary system for statewide office, a system under which it is highly unlikely that any Green Party candidate (or candidate from any other smaller, ballot-qualified party) will appear on the statewide general election ballot; and

Whereas the existing GPCA procedures governing endorsements in statewide races were passed at the June 2006 Ventura General Assembly (<http://www.cagreens.org/elections/endorsement-procedures>) and were designed for general election endorsements under the prior system, under which the Green Party primary election winner automatically appeared on the general election ballot; and

Whereas at the same time, these same procedures governing endorsements state that in special circumstances, the Coordinating Committee can approve a statement of findings to clarify under which special circumstances a primary election endorsement should be held, and that "an endorsement procedure would be brought before the GPCA."; and

Whereas while existing GPCA rules governing endorsements permit endorsing in Green Party primaries in special circumstances (<http://www.cagreens.org/elections/endorsement-procedures>), under the Top Two primary system, there is no longer a Green Party primary (or other party primary) but only a single non-partisan primary with candidates from all parties running against each other, meaning there will be no primary election held among Green Party members to choose the party's nominees; and

Whereas the December 2011 Los Angeles General Assembly passed an amendment to GPCA Campaign Fund Support policies (<http://www.cagreens.org/ga/2011-12/campaign-fund-support>), that states that "until such time as the Proposition 13 elections structure is suspended or voided, the Campaign Fund Support Committee may authorize distribution of GPCA donations to candidates for office upon the certification by the Secretary of State of the candidate's qualification to appear on the "Primary" ballot."; and

Whereas the criteria for awarding Campaign Support Funds (<http://www.cagreens.org/committees/campaign-support/criteria>) includes a requirement that any candidate to be considered for such fund must be endorsed by their county party (for a non-statewide race) or the state party (for a statewide race); and

Whereas endorsements of statewide candidates are made by the Standing General Assembly, according to GPCA Bylaws 7-6.2 Decision Items (http://www.cagreens.org/bylaws/2013-06-23#Section_7-6_Standing_General_A...) which state "The following decision items shall automatically be placed before the Standing General Assembly": 7-6.2(b) Endorsements of statewide candidates; and

Whereas GPCA Bylaws 7-4 Endorsements (http://www.cagreens.org/bylaws/2013-06-23#Section_7-4_Endorsements) state that "A GPCA position to endorse or oppose shall require 2/3."; and

Whereas the Napa General Assembly in June 2013 passed a resolution (<http://www.cagreens.org/resolution/gpca-candidates-2014-statewide-elections>) stating that "The GPCA General Assembly declares as a goal for the GPCA in 2014 that there is a unified and coordinated slate of Green candidates for California's statewide constitutional offices such as Governor, Lt. Governor, Secretary of State, Attorney General, Treasurer, Controller and Insurance Commissioner;

Therefore the Coordinating Committee approves this statement of findings and interprets GPCA Bylaws under 13-4 (http://www.cagreens.org/bylaws/2013-06-23#Article_13-3_Bylaws_Interpreta...) that the findings above establish the special circumstances under which the GPCA should make endorsements in the statewide races in the June 2014 Top Two primary election, and

Whereas there are no existing party rules governing specifically how and which candidates shall be placed before the Standing General Assembly for endorsement; and

Whereas in the case of the 2003 California gubernatorial recall election, where there was no party primary but only a single recall election and that under these circumstances, but without past precedent or internal rule or procedure, the Coordinating Committee chose to place Peter Camejo for endorsement via County Polling to the GPCA's County Organizations (from among four Greens running for that office); and

Whereas in the case of the party's presidential preference primary ballot - which is not a Top Two primary - under GPCA Rules and Procedures 1-5 (http://www.cagreens.org/rules#Section_1-5_Decision-Making), the GPCA's GPUS Delegation and the GPCAs Campaigns and Candidates Working Group may make recommendations to the GPCA General Assembly for approval by the General Assembly for recommendation to the California Secretary for State for inclusion on the GPCA's presidential primary ballot up to ten days before the General Assembly; and

Whereas it is GPCA policy that to be eligible to receive GPCA Campaign Fund Support funding, candidates must submit answers to a questionnaire about their campaigns; and

Whereas the Coordinating Committee authorized members of the Coordinating Committee and the Campaigns and Candidates Working Group to prepare such a questionnaire for candidates seeking the GPCA's 2014 statewide endorsement, and that the questionnaire has been made publicly available via the GPCA's web page on its front page, on its Facebook group and page, on its Twitter feed and has been sent by the Campaigns and Candidates Working Group to all individuals it is aware of who are seeking to run for 2014 statewide office as a registered Green;

Therefore, the Coordinating Committee finds that it is appropriate for both the Coordinating Committee and the Campaigns and Candidates Working Group to have the authority to recommend consideration of endorsement for one or more candidates for any/all 2014 statewide offices by the Standing General Assembly, among those candidates who have responded to the questionnaire and thus have formally indicated their interest in seeking the GPCA's endorsement; and

Whereas it is normally the case that once a proposal goes to the Standing General Assembly for a vote among candidates (such as for elections to the Coordinating Committee), no new candidates are added after the discussion period begins, it is possible that viable candidates for statewide office could join the race after the discussion period begins;

Whereas the next General Assembly shall be November 16-17, 2013 in Santa Rosa (Sonoma County) and this could present an opportunity for party members to hear directly from potential candidates seeking the party's statewide primary endorsement before that endorsement is made; and

Whereas GPCA bylaws specify that SGA voting period begin on a Monday, but the Coordinating Committee also meets on a Monday to make its recommendations and a delay of one day to begin the voting period would mean losing only one day out of six weeks of discussion; and Therefore the regular six week SGA discussion period will be timed to overlap the Sonoma General Assembly (<http://www.cagreens.org/announce/2014-statewide-endorsement-process>), beginning on Tuesday, October 8 and running through Sunday, November 17, with the voting to begin Monday, November 18 and run through Sunday, November 24; and the Coordinating Committee and/or the Campaigns and Candidates Working Group to recommend candidates for consideration by the Standing General Assembly up until November 8th. Following this round of endorsements, the Standing General Assembly may consider future endorsements upon a proposal of recommendation by the Coordinating Committee and/or the Campaigns and Candidates Working Group.

Approved by consensus at 7:51

7) Decision: Sponsor placing for endorsement by the Standing General Assembly of the California Cannabis Hemp 2014 initiative

Proposal (Feinstein): Sponsor placing for endorsement by the Standing General Assembly of the California Cannabis Hemp 2014 initiative, with a discussion period starting December 2nd, 2013.

Approved by consensus at 8:05

8) Decision: Nomination of candidates for consideration for SGA endorsement for statewide office (twenty minutes) (Feinstein)

Proposal: That the Coordinating Committee nominate for consideration and sponsor placing the following candidates before the Standing General Assembly

Governor: Deacon Alexander, Luis Rodriguez

Secretary of State: David Curtis

Controller: Laura Wells

Process Proposal (Shantz): Add ten minutes to item

Approved by consensus

Main proposal: Each candidate was nominated for consideration individually and approved by consensus at 8:44

9) Decision: Approval of proposal to put before Santa Rosa GA to host spring 2014 General Assembly (fifteen minutes)

It was reported that the Green Party of Orange County was no interested in hosting a General Assembly at the time identified by the Coordinating Committee in June 2014. Therefore no proposal was made.

10) Discussion: Review of Draft Plans to conduct GPCA County Council elections (twenty minutes) (Feinstein)

The attached plan at the end of these minutes were reviewed.

11) Discussion: Location of GPCA clearinghouse

Starlene Rankin reported on when she would be leaving California, that she had identified someone to go to the Post Office and that she had boxed up the materials and gave them to Sacramento Greens to bring to the Santa Rosa General Assembly.

12) Report: Treasurer (Barnett)

Doug Barnett made his report

13) Report: Committees

After 9:30pm the following reports were heard informally

Bylaws (Ashley)

Clearinghouse (Feinstein)

Finance (Laidman)
Media (Everette)
Information Technology Committee (Laidman)
Campaign Fund Support Committee
Fundraising Committee

14) Report: Working Groups

After 9:30pm the following reports were heard informally

Campaigns and Candidates (Moorman)
Green Issues (Laidman)
Grassroots Organizing (Shantz)

ATTACHMENT: Draft Plans to conduct GPCA County Council elections

The draft in the attachment at the end of this agenda was reviewed:

Timeline and Process:

Friday, December 27, 2013 (E-158) to Friday, March 7, 2014 (E-88): Declaration of candidacy/Gathering of nomination signatures

This timing will correspond to the opening and closing of the signature gathering period for state and federal office, so that signature can be gathered for those offices and for county council at the same time.

In order to minimize confusion, nomination petitions shall be either (a) scanned and emailed, or (b) postal mailed to a central location. If scanned, the email must be received by 11:59pm, Friday, March 7. If sent by postal mail, it must be post-marked on by March 7 (http://about.usps.com/handbooks/p0408/ch1_003.htm). An Elections Coordinator will be paid out of the GPCA's budget line for County Council elections receive these petitions and handle them as explained in the next section for March 8th-30th below.

The GPCA will design a petition that will include a space for signers to indicate their name, address, signature, email (optional) and date of signing, as well as a place for the circulator to sign. That petition will be available on-line at <http://www.cagreens.org/county-councils/2014>.

The same threshold for signatures shall apply as specified in GPCA bylaws 6-2.5 (http://www.cagreens.org/bylaws/2013-06-23#Section_6-2_Elections): "The number of sponsors which shall be required of a person to be a candidate for member of a County Council shall be either: (a) Not less than 20; or (b) Not less than 2 percent of the number of voters registered as affiliated with the Green Party in the County Council election district -- whichever is less."

However in the rest of 6-2.5, a bylaws interpretation will be made (explained in the appendix below) that the following sentence be changed for the purposes of elections conducted by the GPCA, from

"Each sponsor is entitled to sponsor as many candidates as there are seats in the district" to "Each sponsor is entitled to sponsor as many as one more candidate as there are seats in the district, but if a sponsor signs the nomination petition of more candidates than that, all of his/her nomination signatures shall be deemed invalid."

To ensure their accuracy, candidates are encouraged to go on their own to their own county registrar to check the signatures and party registration of the signers. With the extended time period to gather signatures, there should be opportunity enough to do this.

Saturday, March 8, 2014 to Sunday, March 30, 2014: Certification of ballot-qualified candidates

After all of the nominations are received in the central location by the Elections Coordinator, they will be collated by county, and within county by district as applicable, and scanned and saved for reference.

The GPCA will then pay a number of individuals who will travel in-person to county registrars offices to validate the signatures. The extended period is meant to allow a small number of validators travel to multiple counties. Having the scans in a central place will allow the central coordinator to send the scans via email to each of the validators.

The validation team will report their results to the Coordinating Committee and the Elections Coordinator, and Coordinating Committee will announce via email, the results to all candidates who submitted nomination petitions. Candidates who did not qualify for the ballot may appeal to the Coordinating Committee, which shall review the documentation and make a ruling.

Wednesday, April 9, 2014 to Tuesday, June 3rd, 2014: Voting period

A profile for each ballot-qualified candidate will be posted on cagreens.org, so any Green voting could review information about the candidates. Candidates may include links to videos, media, etc in their profile.

Voting will be by ranked-choice voting via a web-based voting page. The manner in which voting page will be established and the security codes/passwords etc. has not yet been worked out and is the primary outstanding task yet to be figured out. Paper ballots will be added manually to the voting page.

Where races are not contested, the race will still be on the ballot for party members to express their preferences, and voters can also vote NOTA (none-of-the-above), meaning not everyone will be automatically elected, even in an otherwise uncontested race.

County parties will be encouraged to provide an in-person option to vote at face-to-face, 'meet the candidate' meetings and events timed to coincide with regular county meetings and/or special meetings to hear the candidates. It is preferred that county parties provide means to vote on-line at these meetings and events, but a paper ballot option will be developed. However paper ballots will require on-site validation of the signatures at the county registrar post-election, and thus require more work and cost more to process. They then will have to be hand-entered into the on-line voting page.

Outreach: We are going to have to accept that we are not going to be able to reach every Green voter in 2014. We are not going to be sending snail mail to every party member. We are going to have to make a good faith effort to reach as many of our members as we can, utilizing resources already at our disposal, and that we can afford. The process should include

- Periodic emails to the over 10,000 members for whom we have email, and a concerted effort to identify the emails of more party members
- Include the voting page in all of our fundraising mailers to our members, that we will already be sending out
- Publicize the voting page through our social media on FB and Twitter, including on a county-by-county basis on Facebook
- Publicize the voting page on our state and county web pages
- Where a County Party puts out a voter guide, it can include the voting page
- County parties holding 'meet the candidate' and 'vote for county council' events open to party members
- Phone bank party members (and get their email addresses at the same time)
- Develop a press strategy that we are the first political party to conduct an on-line election in California, so that we get publicity in the press that will reach our members. Seek local as well as statewide press, to reach local Greens.
- Discussion with the Secretary of State's office that we may be able to have a listing in the Voter Guide stating that "the Green Party is going to conduct its own election and here is the web page to go for more info".
- Explore whether we can add the voting page as an attachment to our 200 word statement that gets included in the voter Guide and on the SoS's web page, rather than having it count as part of it.

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Appendix: Amending the number of nomination petitions a party member can sign

The question I have relates to how we are going to handle nomination signatures. Specifically GPCA bylaws 6-2.5 state that

"Each sponsor is entitled to sponsor as many candidates as there are seats in the district. Notwithstanding any provision of the Elections Code, as many candidates as there are seats in the district may have their names listed on a single sponsor's certificate, and the signatures thereon shall be counted toward the sponsor requirement of each and every candidate whose name is listed on the certificate."

The issue here is that with the county registrars, they have paid staff on hand every day to validate signatures as they come in. Therefore if a person signs eight nomination petitions, but there are only seven seats to be elected, only the first seven signatures turned in are valid towards a candidate reaching the signature threshold.

However with the GPCA doing the signature validation, the current plan is to only do a single validation after the close of the signature gathering period, where there would be people paid to literally go into the county registrar's office in every county in the state in which there is a county council candidate. There are simply not the resources nor the infrastructure to do ongoing signature validation.

Therefore, even if there is a space on the nomination petition to say when that person signed, that can't be trusted if it means invalidating the signatures of others, so the result is that either

(a) a person can only sign as many petitions as there are seats to be elected and if they sign more, all of their signatures would be invalidated
or

(b) a person can sign as many petitions as they want.

The problem with (b) is that especially combined with the ease of being able to list as many candidates as there are seats on a single petition, a person could sign multiple such petitions and a scenario in which there are dozens and dozens of people running for the same seats, few of which would be known to Green voters. This could be confusing at a minimum, could lead to many key party leaders being lost in the morass of dozens of candidates and/or make the party susceptible to infiltration - or some combination of all three.

Alternatively if we wanted to promote competitive County Council elections in counties where they traditionally do not exist, we could amend (a) to read as

(c) a person can sign up to one more petition than there are seats to be elected and if they sign more, all of their signatures would be invalidated

This is what is amended in this draft
