

Western Ontario Waterways TRANSITION COMMISSION MEETING
Wednesday, February 20, 2019
(Supporting, Connecting, Transforming)

The Western Ontario Waterways Transition Commission was called to meet on Wednesday, February 20, 2019 via teleconference (ZOOM).

PRESENT

Executive Minister	Cheryl-Ann Stadelbauer-Sampa	Hamilton Conference Representatives	Gord Dunbar Heather Leffler Tim Reaburn
Presbytery Representatives	Rod Coates (Bruce) Ann Harbridge (Northern Waters) Margaret Krauter Mark Laird (Waterloo) Laurie O’Leary (Huron-Perth)	London Conference Representative Executive Assistant	Brent Caslick

Guests: John Neff (Minister, Congregational Support and Mission), Diane Blanchard (Minister, Pastoral Relations)

1. Welcome / Gathering / Check-In

Chair Laurie O’Leary welcomed everyone participating and called the meeting to order at 10:15 AM.

2. Acknowledgement of Territory (Mark Laird)

Mark Laird stated that the region represented by our commission is located on unceded territory of several First Nations, and that we acknowledge with respect the culture, traditions & stewardship of the land represented by those peoples.

3. Worship (Mark Laird)

Mark Laird led us through a “CCS breaths” exercise to prepare and centre us for the meeting. The practice involves three intentional breathes – Calming, Centering, Still (CCS) - to hear voice of God amongst us.

4. Approval of Consent Docket

Upon discussion and update, the Consent Docket was approved as amended by consensus. Consent Docket details are in Attachment #1.

5. Business Arising from Minutes

(a) Consensus Model of Decision Making and Decision Making in General

Tim Reaburn provided some additional information regarding the consensus model proposal he had circulated prior to the meeting, noting that everyone does not need to

agree for consensus to be reached. He said that there can also be a mixed model, where voting is an option for specific issues, and that consensus can tolerate conflict of interest. This discussion broadened to consider definitions of conflict of interest, vested interest, and bias.

Gord Dunbar asked if we should approve Tim's document or if we should live into it, and it was agreed that we should receive the document presented by Tim, live into it, and expect to eventually arrive at a purpose statement which defines what consensus means to us.

Tim Reaburn said it would be useful for us to assign the role of a consensus monitor at our meetings in order to provide oversight – e.g., are we providing enough space for discussion and the hearing of dissenting opinions.

The proposed Consensus Model is included as Attachment #2.

(b) Selection of Website Design

Laurie O'Leary said three different website design proposals have been presented, essentially the same content with different backgrounds. It was agreed that our council's website background colour should be blue to align with "Waterways".

Responding to a comment regarding including worship resources on the website, Cheryl-Ann suggested there be a link provided to those materials on the General Council website, adding that more work with linking other websites will evolve with time.

(c) Covenanting Service - Ken Whiting

Brent Caslick said that there has been no communication yet regarding the covenanting service.

6. Correspondence

(a) Correspondence by the Huron-Perth Resource Centre to Presbytery contacts & responses – for information

Laurie O'Leary noted the correspondence and referenced it to our reading.

(b) Calvary United Church, Dashwood - Closure

Laurie O'Leary referenced an email from Kate Crawford regarding their trustee motion requesting approval to close the Calvary United Church Dashwood due to all closure requirements being met. By consensus it was agreed that the Western Ontario Waterways regional council agrees to disband Calvary United Church, Dashwood effective immediately and give thanks for their ministry. The regional council requests that it be notified in writing of the following - who is holding the financial records for 7 years and confirmation of when the 2019 Charitable Tax Return has been filed. Brent Caslick said that the Treasurer (Charlene Edwards) is holding the required records and Charitable Tax Return has been filed.

Rod Coates noted that the financial records for closed congregations should be held with the regional council, and not with individuals. Cheryl-Ann said that we need to consider storage space.

(c) Letter from Nora Sanders – for information

Laurie O’Leary referred to a Nora Saunders letter regarding which General Council Executive representatives will be present at our inaugural annual meetings. Tim Reaburn will be our GCE representative to our May meeting.

7. Financial Considerations

Cheryl-Ann stated that the financial position is awkward in that it is still not completely clear exactly what funding we are receiving, making it difficult to allocate funds given that situation. She suggested that coverage be provided for the pastoral charge supervisor & pastoral relations liaisons mileage given that most pastoral charges are paying more for assessments already and don’t wish to add to their expenses. Some additional discussion about what funding we will receive and the timeliness of allocating. Discussion on two funding requests, as follows:

(a) Skylight Festival Funding Request

Cheryl-Ann echoed Tim Reaburn’s email comments regarding the funding request by the Skylight Festival, mainly around the financial statement. Marg Krauter noted the uncertainty and setting a precedent, Cheryl-Ann said that there should be emphasis that there is a one-time grant.

(b) Two Countries One World (TCOW) Funding Request

It was agreed that we remain in a wait-and-see position as we are not presently able to accommodate requests but will be sorting out a process for managing them.

8. Community of Faith Decisions

(a) Property Matters:

(i) Draft Property Policy

Given the length of the proposed property policy and background documents, tis was decided that we need to dedicate time to review and discuss at our next meeting.

(ii) Disposition of Sebringville United Church Cemetery

Brent Caslick reported that disposition of the Sebringville United Church Cemetery is on hold for the time being based on legal advice and other disposition options being considered.

(b) Process for Naming Pastoral Charge Supervisors

With respect to naming pastoral charge supervisors, John Neff said this is both a timeliness issue and the length of time someone is taking on the role, including short-term requests which cannot be met between the time of the next regional council meeting. Marg Krauter noted that sometimes there are conflicts – e.g., three annual meetings on one date. Heather Leffler said that if she had a conflict she would find another clergy or presbytery member. Cheryl- Ann said that her experience is that it is

important to have documented how someone was appointed as a pastoral charge supervisor.

It was agreed that we could speed up the appointment process by modifying our email voting to use Doodle polls, with the same process as followed in email motion voting with respect to notification.

(c) Supply Appointment policy

Cheryl- Ann summarized the supply appointment issue, with additional information contained in background information to the meeting, as follows:

Short-term appointments are not to exceed six months for supply purposes during the period a community of faith is preparing profiles for ChurchHub or searching.

All such appointments to:

- 1) contain a provision reducing the notice period for termination to 30 days; and
- 2) be renewed no more than two times and only after consultation with the Human Resources Commission of the Regional Council, and
- 3) Include a position description for the supply period.

Laurie O’Leary declared this policy to be approved by consensus.

(d) St. Paul’s, Walkerton

In doing further reading of the pastoral relations handbook, Gord Dunbar summarized the overall status and noted that the congregation of St. Paul’s Walkerton is now creating the position profile for the ChurchHub. The current supply person is interested in transitioning to the proposed permanent position, which means that the position changes from an appointment to a call. It was agreed that this would need regional council approval. Tim Reaburn noted that the current appointment was made in lieu of appointing an interim minister, which was not available at the time, and that needs to be taken into consideration. Gord Dunbar said that United Fresh Start facilitators will continue to work with the congregation doing some of the work of an interim ministry, and that this will change the nature of the relationship. With the change to the ministry position (proposed half-time) the congregation needs to agree to & approve the new role, after which the change in pastoral relations can follow established processes.

9. Commission Planning

(a) Building Commissions

Cheryl-Ann suggested that we hold two regional council meetings in March, one to work on building commissions, as well as working on the property policy.

[The meeting adjourned for 45 minutes - 12:30-1:15]

10. New Business

(a) Confidentiality Agreement

A proposed confidentially agreement for council members was provided with the meeting information. Following a suggestion by Tim Reaburn, this will be reformatted into a covenant rather than an agreement.

(b) Ministry Sharing Agreement

It was noted that the amended ministry sharing agreement was approved via email vote and is noted in the consent docket. There no were further comments on this matter.

(c) Affirm Statements

Cheryl-Ann noted that those ministries who had recently become affirming need not go through the entire process again, based on Affirming Ministries Network feedback. She questioned what the council would like to present to its annual meeting, and as Tim Reaburn will be attending the next Network meeting he agreed to be our liaison.

(d) Heather McCarrel - Chaplain to the ministers

Laurie O'Leary had received an email from Heather McCarrel, previously a chaplain to ministers in Norther Waters Presbytery, and asking how she might continue to serve in some capacity. Ann Harbridge suggested that we respond thanking Heather for her letter, noting that Kevin Steeper has this role in the region, and connecting her with Kevin.

(e) Melville United Church

Cheryl-Ann restated concerns raised by Heather Leffler & Ann Harbridge regarding the Congregationally Designated Minister (CDM) position being proposed for Melville United Church, with the scope of work broader than that a CDM would undertake. Heather provided additional background concerning the congregation's pastoral history and their recent JNAC. The congregation has been requested to narrow the scope of the CDM, after which it would return to our regional council for approval.

(f) Hensall United Church

Laurie O'Leary asked if we need to respond to some Facebook posts about Hensall United Church, and it was agreed that there is some confusion within the community and that Cheryl-Ann ought to be in contact with the pastoral charge supervisor, Rev. Tom Dunbar.

(g) Clusters/Networks

Referencing Facebook posts once more, regarding a "property" cluster, Laurier O'Leary said that there is misunderstanding about differences between networks and clusters. Following additional discussion about what is what is not a cluster (and a network) and the need for clarity, no additional action was taken at this time.

(h) Officer of the Court

Laurie O'Leary said that she had received an email indicating Kathy McDonald was suggesting that a region appoint an Officer of the Court to act on its behalf when a decision needs to be made about whether to put ministry personnel on an administrative leave. Often this arises from a complaint under the Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response policy. The name of John Benham, Trinity United, Guelph was

suggested. The region, by consensus affirmed John's appointment as officer of the court. It was also agreed that we find a second individual to fulfill this role.

(i) Next Meeting

It was agreed that March 20th be a face-to-face meeting at Drayton United Church, and that a second March meeting – by teleconference - will be arranged. Rod Coates is to set meeting date by Doodle poll.

11. Closing

Laurie O'Leary declared the meeting agenda completed and the meeting closed at 1:55 PM.

12. Next Meeting

- March 20 at Drayton United Church at 10 AM.

Signature of Chair

Signature of Secretary

Attachment #1
Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council Meeting 20 February 2019
CONSENT DOCKET

1. Approval of Agenda

That the Agenda as circulated be the agenda of the meeting.

2. Approval of Minutes

That the minutes of the meeting of 16 January 2019 and of the teleconference meeting of 22 January 2019 as circulated be approved.

3. Affirm E-Mail Motions:

That the following email motions be affirmed and entered into the records of Western Ontario Waterways regional council:

January 31, 2019 per Sect 3.4.2 of The Manual 2019, the secretary informed all the members of the voting body of the voting results:

THE MOTION

Moved by: Cheryl-Ann Stadelbauer Sampa

Seconded by: Mark Laird

That Western Ontario Waterways regional council name Cathy Stewart Savage as the pastoral charge supervisor of Christ the King for their annual meeting. Carried.

AND

February 11, 2019 per Sect 3.4.2 of The Manual 2019, the secretary informed all the members of the voting body of the voting results:

THE MOTION

Moved by: Rod Coates

Seconded by: Ann Harbridge

That Western Ontario Waterways regional council approve the Ministry Sharing Agreement as amended. Carried.

4. Pastoral Relations: Any of the following Pastoral Relations matters that require discussion can be lifted from the consent docket and voted upon separately:

A. Property Matters

B. Requests for Change in Pastoral Relations

Western Ontario Waterways regional council accepts the request for a change in pastoral relations from Rev. Marion Loree, ordained minister at Alma United Church, effective August 30, 2019, and give thanks for her ministry.

C. Pastoral Charge Supervisors

Western Ontario Waterways regional council affirm the appointment of Mary Elizabeth Piercy (retired Diaconal Minister) as pastoral charge supervisor to the Angus United Church effective immediately.

Western Ontario Waterways regional council affirm the appointment of Rev. Dennis Posno to attend the Annual General Meeting of the Angus United Church on Feb. 24, 2019.

Western Ontario Waterways regional council appoints Arthur Hills as the pastoral charge supervisor to Emmanuel United Church Waterloo effective immediately to cover a medical leave.

Western Ontario Waterways regional council affirm the appointment of Thom McDonough who attended the Annual General Meeting of the Chatsworth-Massie Pastoral Charge on February 10, 2019.

D. Living Faith Stories / Vacancies:

Fordwich

Western Ontario Waterways regional council receive for information the Community of Faith profile and financial information for Fordwich United Church.

Bellwood -Metz

Western Ontario Waterways regional council approves the request of the Belwood – Metz pastoral charge to revise the JNAC report, approved by Waterloo Presbytery in November 2018, to make the minister's position 80% (rather than 50%), using the current formula for shared charge expenses, and that a vacancy of 80% be declared for a category A-D Minister.

Trinity United Church, Kitchener

Western Ontario Waterways regional council receives the Community of Faith Profile, position description and budget for Trinity United Church, Kitchener and declares a vacancy for a ¾ time Minister and appoints Rev. Gary Clark as pastoral relations liaison to work with the Search committee.

E. Approving & Appointing Liaisons:

Western Ontario Waterways regional council affirms the request of St. Paul's United Church in Walkerton and appoints Rev. Gord Dunbar as the region's pastoral relations liaison effective immediately.

Western Ontario Waterways regional council appoint the following pastoral relations liaisons:

Marion Boyd to Arthur United Church (1/2 time position)

Marion Boyd to Clifford Pastoral Charge (full time position)

Herb Klaehn to Port Elgin United Church
Marion Boyd to Ripley-Bervie United Church re provisional call of Marsha Roberts

F. Calls:

G. Appointments:

Western Ontario Waterways regional council concurs with the request of Kilsyth/Keady/North Derby Pastoral Charge and approves the appointment of Kara McCluskie (DLM) part-time at 24 hours per week from January 14, 2019 to June 30, 2019 with the terms as noted on PR450 appointment form dated November 5, 2018 and amended on January 24, 2019.

Western Ontario Waterways regional council concurs with the request of Zion United Church, New Hamburg Pastoral Charge and approves the appointment of Marilyn Burnard, (retired ordained) part-time at 12 hours per week from February 5, 2019 to April 30, 2019 with the terms as noted on PR450 appointment form dated January 15, 2019.

Western Ontario Waterways regional council concurs with the request of Zion United Church, New Hamburg Pastoral Charge and approves the appointment of Margaret Smith, (retired Diaconal) part-time at 12 hours per week from May 1, 2019 to June 30, 2019 with the terms as noted on PR450 appointment form dated January 15, 2019.

That Western Ontario Waterways regional council name Brent Caslick as the pastoral charge supervisor of Sebringville United Church for their annual meeting & any remaining work.

H. Covenanting Services

Western Ontario Waterways regional council appoints Cathy Steward Savage to represent the regional council at the covenanting service for Andrea Allan and Westminster United Church, Waterloo at a date to be agreed to in consultation with those involved.

Western Ontario Waterways regional council appoints Laurie O'Leary to represent the regional council at the covenanting service for Rev. Cathy Larmond and Clinton United Church at a date to be agreed to in consultation with those involved.

Western Ontario Waterways regional council appoints Tim Reaburn to represent the regional council at the covenanting service for Kara McCluskie and Kilsyth/Keady/North Derby Pastoral Charge at a date to be agreed to in consultation with those involved.

I. Sabbatical Plans

Western Ontario Waterways regional council receives for information the sabbatical plan for Rev. Vicki Johnson, Pine River Pastoral Charge. (June 24 - September 30, 2019)

Attachment #2

The Basics of Consensus Decision Making

By Tim Hartnett, PhD

<http://www.groupfacilitation.net>

The Definition of Consensus

Consensus is defined by Merriam-Webster's Dictionary as "general agreement" or "the judgment arrived at by most of those concerned."

The Principles of Consensus Decision Making

Consensus decision making is a process used by groups seeking to generate widespread levels of participation and agreement. There are variations among different groups regarding the degree of agreement necessary to finalize a group decision. The process of group deliberation, however, has many common elements that are definitive of consensus decision making. These include:

- **Inclusive:** As many stakeholders as possible are involved in group discussions.
- **Participatory:** All participants are allowed a chance to contribute to the discussion.
- **Collaborative:** The group constructs proposals with input from all interested group members. Any individual authorship of a proposal is subsumed as the group modifies it to include the concerns of all group members.
- **Agreement Seeking:** The goal is to generate as much agreement as possible. Regardless of how much agreement is required to finalize a decision, a group using a consensus process makes a concerted attempt to reach full agreement.
- **Cooperative:** Participants are encouraged to keep the good of the whole group in mind. Each individual's preferences should be voiced so that the group can incorporate all concerns into an emerging proposal. Individual preferences should not, however, obstructively impede the progress of the group.

An Alternative to Common Decision Making Practices

Consensus decision making is an alternative to commonly practiced non- collaborative decision making processes. Robert's Rule of Order, for instance, is a process used by many organizations. The goal of Robert's Rules is to structure the debate and passage of proposals that win approval through majority vote. This process does not emphasize the goal of full agreement. Nor does it foster whole group collaboration and the inclusion of minority concerns in resulting proposals. Critics of Robert's Rules believe that the process can involve adversarial debate and the formation of competing factions. These dynamics may harm group member relationships and undermine the ability of a group to cooperatively implement a contentious decision.

Consensus decision making is also an alternative to “top-down” decision making, commonly practiced in hierarchical groups. Top-down decision making occurs when leaders of a group make decisions in a way that does not include the participation of all interested stakeholders. The leaders may (or may not) gather input, but they do not open the deliberation process to the whole group. Proposals are not collaboratively developed, and full agreement is not a primary objective. Critics of top-down decision making believe the process fosters incidence of either complacency or rebellion among disempowered group members. Additionally, the resulting decisions may overlook important concerns of those directly affected. Poor group relationship dynamics and decision implementation problems may result.

Consensus decision making addresses the problems of both Robert’s Rules of Order and top-down models. The goals of the consensus process include:

- **Better Decisions:** Through including the input of all stakeholders the resulting proposals can best address all potential concerns.
- **Better Implementation:** A process that includes and respects all parties, and generates as much agreement as possible sets the stage for greater cooperation in implementing the resulting decisions.
- **Better Group Relationships:** A cooperative, collaborative group atmosphere fosters greater group cohesion and interpersonal connection.

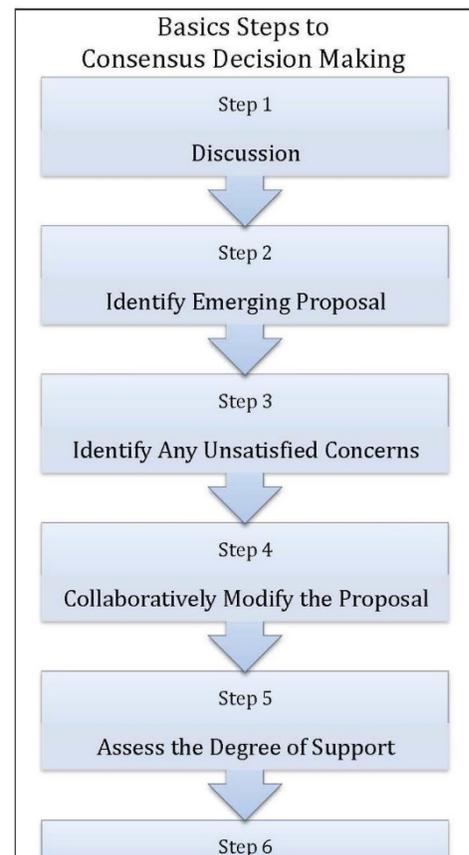
The Process of Consensus Decision Making

There are multiple stepwise models of how to make decisions by consensus. They vary in the amount of detail the steps describe. They also vary depending on how decisions are finalized. The basic model involves collaboratively generating a proposal, identifying unsatisfied concerns, and then modifying the proposal to generate as much agreement as possible.

Finalizing a Decision

The level of agreement necessary to finalize a decision is known as a *decision rule*. The range of possible decision rules varies within the following range:

- Unanimous agreement
- Unanimity minus one vote
- Unanimity minus two votes
- Super majority thresholds (90%, 80%, 75%, two-thirds, and 60% are common).
- Simple majority



- Executive committee decides
- Person-in-charge decides

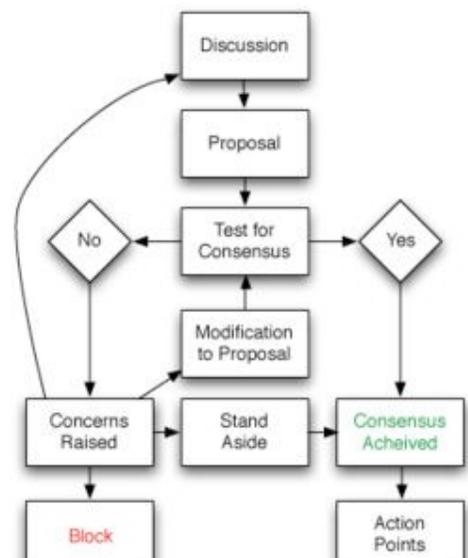
Some groups require unanimous consent (*unanimity*) to approve group decisions. If any participant objects, he can *block consensus* according to the guidelines described below. These groups use the term *consensus* to denote both the discussion process and the decision rule. Other groups use a consensus process to generate as much agreement as possible, but allow decisions to be finalized with a decision rule that does not require unanimity.

Consensus Blocking

Groups that require unanimity allow individual participants the option of blocking a group decision. This provision motivates a group to make sure that all group members consent to any new proposal before it is adopted. Proper guidelines for the use of this option, however, are important. The ethics of consensus decision making encourage participants to place the good of the whole group above their own individual preferences. When there is potential for a group decision to be blocked, both the group and any dissenters in the group are encouraged to collaborate until agreement can be reached. Simply vetoing a decision is not considered a responsible use of consensus blocking. Some common guidelines for the use of consensus blocking include:

- Limiting the option to block consensus to issues that are fundamental to the group’s mission or potentially disastrous to the group.
- Providing an option for those who do not support a proposal to “stand aside” rather than block.
- Requiring two or more people to block for a proposal to be put aside.
- Require the blocking party to supply an alternative proposal or a process for generating one.
- Limiting each person’s option to block consensus to a handful of times in one’s life.

A basic outline of consensus decision making that allows consensus blocking is outlined in this flow chart.



Agreement vs. Consent

Unanimity is achieved when the full group *consents* to a decision. Giving consent does not necessarily mean that the proposal being considered is one’s first choice. Group members can vote their consent to a proposal because they choose to cooperate with the direction of the group, rather than insist on their personal preference.

Sometimes the vote on a proposal is framed, “Is this proposal something you can live with?” This relaxed threshold for a *yes* vote can help make unanimity more easily achievable. Alternatively, a group member can choose to *stand aside*. Standing aside communicates that while a participant does not necessarily support a group decision, he does not wish to block it.

Debate Over Decision Rules

Critics of consensus blocking object to empowering individuals to block otherwise popular proposals. They believe this can result in a group experience of widespread disagreement, the opposite of a consensus process’s primary goal. Further, they believe group decision making may become stagnated by the high threshold of unanimity. Important decisions may take too long to make, or the status quo may become virtually impossible to change. The resulting tension may undermine group functionality and harm relationships between group members.

Defenders of consensus blocking believe that decision rules short of unanimity do not ensure a rigorous search for full agreement before finalizing decisions. They value the commitment to reaching unanimity and the full collaborative effort this goal requires. They believe that under the right conditions unanimous consent is achievable and the process of getting there strengthens group relationships.

Conditions that Favor Unanimity

The goals of requiring unanimity are only fully realized when a group is successful in reaching it. Thus, it is important to consider what conditions make full agreement more likely. Here are some of the most important factors that improve the chances of successfully reaching unanimity:

- Small group size
- Clear common purpose
- High levels of trust
- Participants well trained in consensus process
- Participants willing to put the best interest of the group before their own
- Participants willing to spend sufficient time in meetings
- Skillful facilitation and agenda preparation

Using Other Decisions Rules with a Consensus Process

Many groups use a consensus decision making process with non-unanimous decision rules. The consensus process can help prevent problems associated with Robert’s Rules of Order or top-down decision making. This allows majority rule or hierarchical organizations to benefit from the collaborative efforts of the whole group and the resulting joint ownership of final proposals. For instance, a small business owner may convene a consensus decision making discussion among her staff to generate a proposal for changes to the business. After the proposal is developed, however, the business owner may retain the authority to accept or reject it.

The benefits of consensus decision making are lost, however, if the final decision is made without regard to the efforts of the whole group. When group leaders or majority factions reject proposals that have been developed with widespread agreement of a group, the goals of consensus decision making will not be realized.

More Elaborate Models of Consensus Decision Making

As the field of group facilitation has evolved, more detailed models of consensus decision making have been developed. One example is the CODM model (consensus-oriented decision making). Newer models focus on the process of group collaboration, increasing understanding within the field of how collaboration can be best fostered and what facilitation techniques can promote it.

Origins of Consensus Decision Making

Historical examples of consensus decision making include the Iroquois Confederacy Grand Council, or Haudenosaunee, who finalized decisions with a 75% majority. Modern usage is often traced to the Quakers, or Religious Society of Friends, who practice unanimity. Activists groups, intentional communities, collective businesses have all developed and refined the process. Professional group facilitators now use the process in a large variety of settings, further developing the model and its effective application.



<http://www.groupfacilitation.net>