

Proposed Changes to the Consent Agenda Process 2019

Background

1. Concerns about the title “consent agenda”:
 - a. not clear without explanation
 - b. term “consent” implies passivity, current concerns about unwanted sexual advances emphasize that passive consent is insufficient; the term is misleading and not in keeping with Quaker concern for integrity
 - c. we do not generally consider approval of “agendas”, but of concerns, minutes, nominations, etc.
2. Concern about the specifics of timing for presentation of the final version of consent agenda, which was changed too frequently and too late in the view of some Friends at Summer Sessions 2018.
3. Concern about nominations perhaps needing to be a separate process so that other items can be presented earlier and considered without the timing pressure that exists for the Nominating Committee.

Proposal

1. Liaison plans to experiment with changing the term “Consent Agenda,” using the term “seasoned” instead of “consent” and dropping the word “agenda” in this context. The use of the term “seasoned” is proposed to indicate that, in the opinion of the Clerk, these items are ready for action by gathered Friends at sessions and need no further seasoning; if any Friend feels additional seasoning is merited, the item will be removed by contacting the clerk in advance of the list’s presentation. An explanation of the process will be provided in writing on the heading all uses of the process.
2. For spring and fall sessions, the final version of the list of **Seasoned Business Items** including any nominations will be published in advance no later than Monday of the week of the gathering, with copies also made available on paper for Friends when they arrive. Anything to be added after the deadline will be added to a regular business agenda. Approval by gathered Friends will be sought at the second or third business session.
3. For summer sessions, there will be two lists of seasoned items: for general business, the list of **Seasoned Business Items** and for nominations the **Seasoned Nominations List**. The name changes and the new processes will be presented at Spring Sessions 2019 and an explanation will be available in advance of both Spring and Summer Sessions 2019.
 - a. General business:
 - i. The list of **Seasoned Business Items** will be made available as early as is feasible, and no later than Tuesday of the summer sessions. It will be made available on paper, if possible in the Quaker Update, and electronically.
 - ii. Anything to be added after the deadlines will be added to the regular agenda.
 - b. Nominations:

- i. A **Preliminary Nominations List** will be made available for first review no later than the Tuesday of summer sessions at 1:00 pm. It will be made available on paper to be posted and, if feasible, also electronically. Announcements will be made in advance by the Clerk as to its availability.
 - ii. There can be changes to and deletions from the **Preliminary Nominations List** up until 1:00 pm of the Wednesday of summer sessions. This review period provides everyone the opportunity to consider the proposed nominations and to speak with the Nominating Committee if there are questions or suggestions about the nominations. As of 1:00 pm on Wednesday, the Preliminary Nominations List, with any amendments made thereto, will become the **Seasoned Nominations List**.
 - iii. Any nominations to be made after the Wednesday 1:00 pm deadline will be added to a regular business agenda.
- c. All seasoned business lists will include contact individuals and their contact data in case of any concerns that could lead to a request for the item to be removed from the Seasoned Business Items list. Items can be removed from the list up until the beginning of the meeting for business at which the list is considered for approval. Consideration for approval of both lists will be requested at a Friday business meeting.
4. All future written use of **Seasoned Business Items** lists will include the following explanation in writing:

Seasoned Business Items lists are similar to “consent agendas” of the business world. The list of items is published in advance with an expectation of approval without discussion at an upcoming business session. These are items that the Clerk's believes need a decision or need to be recorded in our minutes but do not require any consideration during the business session. Anyone may seek clarification from a contact person in advance, if one is designated by an item on the list. Anyone may request that the Clerk remove any item from the Seasoned Business Items list. This can happen up until the time when we are ready to approve the list. The Clerk will first ask if any items need to be removed from the list. The Clerk will then ask for approval of the entire list. No explanation is needed when asking for an item to be removed from the list just before approval. When asking for an item to be removed from the list in advance, it would help the Clerk to know why. Items removed from the Seasoned Business Items list are added to the regular agenda.