

MINUTES OF EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING
ON
MEMBERSHIP ISSUES
HELD ON 3.3.1998 AT 2:30 P.M.

Attendance: From the total registered membership of 188, those who attended the meeting numbered 104.

Proceedings: The President, Mary Gore-Booth, opened the meeting with remarks on the issues concerning Membership. She thanked the members present for their positive suggestions at the membership teas hosted by the four-member Group on Membership appointed by her. She also announced that she had appointed Mako Lutyens, Chairperson on Membership and Maggie Knight, Chairperson on Membership in 1996-97 to be present at the counting of the ballot papers.

The Convenor of the Group, Prama Bhandari, explained the guidelines for discussion and voting drawn up by her and circulated to the members present. She reiterated that it was a secret ballot and then took up the issues in sequence, with Peggy Sood assisting on an overhead projector. Shireen Khemchand volunteered to keep the minutes and Connie Gupta acted as timekeeper.

Suggestions:

1. On the issue of 10 year membership, Babsi Nariman proposed that guidelines be drawn up for re-entry into the Club for those whose ten year period had expired. This could be done once the Executive Committee asked for suggestions on criteria from the membership.
2. On topic 3 relating to family members, some members suggested that if applicants for membership were to be considered on merit then criteria for this should be clearly written down and established.
3. On the issue of the Annual General Meeting, members felt that there should be flexibility regarding questions that **may** be invited by the Executive Committee and that members should have the option of either sending questions earlier or of asking them from the floor on the day itself.
4. On the issue of attendance, it was felt that when exercising its discretion on enforcing the rules, the Executive Committee must ensure complete impartiality to avoid any victimization from taking place with regard to any member.
5. On issue number 12 regarding increase in dues and using the club money lying in fixed deposits, Shanno Khurana felt that more money should be given to Circle Leaders. It was felt that the AGM was a more appropriate forum to discuss this suggestion as it was a totally new suggestion that had not come up earlier.
6. On issue number 17, sub-point 1, Babsi Nariman and Mary Gore-Booth felt that after some years a time may come when there may not be many experienced members left in the Club.
7. On issue number 17, sub-point 3, Prama Bhandari said that a member had written that house guests should be allowed at Circle Meetings. She added that the existing Club convention was that members could take a house guest to a meeting **after getting the hostess' permission.**

The ballot papers were taken up, filled and inserted into the two ballot boxes provided for the purpose. The meeting ended with thanks from the President and Prama.

Findings:

1. Ten - year membership:

Consensus: to be strictly enforced; all to retire at the end of 10 years.

Voted in: Members whose 10 years have expired can re-apply.

They go to the **bottom of the list.**

They must retire **in the month they joined.**

Criteria for re-entry to be established.

Voted out: The waiting period of three years.

2. Honoured members:

Consensus: None

Voted in: Honoured members must pay dues.

Voted out: Abolish Honoured Members for all

Tie between: Allow present Honoured Members to continue but add no more Honoured Members and

Continue Honoured Members but establish a strict criteria in the By-laws.

As these are mutually exclusive, the Working Group suggests that there be another secret vote on only this issue at the AGM.

3. Family members:

Consensus: No Senior category to be started; an elder member not to resign to make place for a younger one; application form to carry name of relatives in the club.

Voted in: Applicants to be taken in on merit.

No more than two blood relatives of member (e.g. 2 sisters, mother/daughter; in-laws would not be counted as blood relatives.)

2 members of the same family cannot serve together on an Executive Committee.

4. Voluntary Category:

Voted out: Voluntary Category plus the new proposal on members going on a one year sabbatical not acceptable.

5. Membership Committee:

As there was consensus on this issue from earlier meetings, this will require a Constitutional Amendment. This was included in the ballot paper only for information.

6. Members not residing in India:

Consensus: to resign as per the Constitution.

Voted in: to get priority if she returns and reapplies.

7. Termination of Membership:

Consensus: decision of Executive Committee to be final.
the application form must carry the line, "I will abide by all decisions of the Executive Committee."

Voted in: The Executive Committee that initiates or takes the action must see the case through to termination and not leave it to the next committee.

8. Membership Directory:

Consensus: None.

Voted in: Put an asterisk to show 10-year members for ease of record keeping, and 2 asterisks for three year members.

9. Club Membership:

Consensus: retain limit of 200 members and the current ratio; no need to put in the Constitution.

10. Constitutional Changes:

Consensus: To rarely amend the Constitution.
Amendments must be discussed at a separate meeting called for that specific purpose.

Voted in: Amend and re-work the By-laws rather than the Constitution.

11. Annual General Meeting:

Consensus: to be strictly business with no program and no guests
Voted in: Executive Committee may invite questions prior to AGM and categorize them.

12. Increase in Dues:

Consensus: to be announced ahead of AGM and justification to be given.

Voted in: The money in the fixed deposits may be used for expenses and for Gala Night.

13. Well wishers' Fund:

Consensus: abolish.

14. Attendance:

Consensus: None.

Voted in: strictly enforce rules; attendance should not be the only criteria for "good" member; the Executive Committee should exercise discretion.

15. Gala Night:

Consensus: Members may bring escorts and house-guests.

Voted in: Members may bring up to 2 additional family members.
It should be a simple affair with no sponsors, advertisements and donations.

A budget should be drawn up and adhered to.
It should not be held as a General Meeting.

Tie: The vote was extremely close on whether it should be held in March. (48 in favour and 45 against.) We suggest that the next Executive Committee seek input from the membership on when to hold this event.

16. Communication:

Voted in: To have a Welcome Committee or Big Sister to help new members settle in and to get to know the Club.

To have lunches for small groups.

17. Other points suggested by participants:

Voted in: All sub-points were favourably voted upon:

1 The Executive Committee should have experienced members, as well as some officers should carry on the next year for continuity.

2. Members continuously writing letters of excuse for absences from General Meetings should be asked to resign.

3. The rule permitting the same guest to attend only 2 General Meetings in a club year should be enforced.

4. Videos need not be taken of Club events.

5. Major Club events like Gala Night, Diwali, General Meetings etc. should be kept separate.

6. Note of local holidays/festivals should be made when making the Club's monthly calendar.

7. The Executive Committee should give warning notices in February and allow time for explanations in March. If no explanation is given or if it is unacceptable, membership should be terminated in April. **The Executive Committee should keep a cumulative record of terminations.**

8. Small group discussions are more satisfying for getting to know others. Indian and international members should make more effort to interact.

18. Endorsements, Sponsorships

Consensus: Generally not accepted.

This particular issue needed clarification and it was recommended by our Group that a sub-committee be appointed to review the question of endorsements and sponsorships and develop Guidelines for the approval of the Executive Committee and the General Membership.

Prama Bhandari, Connie Gupta, Shireen Khemchand and Peggy Sood.
(Members of the Working Group on Membership.)