

Bylaws of the Portland Local of the Democratic Socialists of America

Adopted February 19, 2018, amended January 13, 2019

ARTICLE I. Name. The name of the Local shall be the Portland Local of the Democratic Socialists of America, a not-for-profit corporation, referred to herein as Portland DSA or the Local.

ARTICLE II. Purpose. Portland DSA seeks to facilitate a transition from capitalism to a truly democratic and socialist society, in which the means and resources of production are democratically and socially controlled.

Portland DSA rejects an economic order based on private profit, alienated labor, gross inequalities of wealth and power, discrimination by race and sex, and brutality and violence in defense of the status quo.

Portland DSA envisions a humane social order based on popular control of resources and production, economic planning, equitable distribution of goods and services, elimination of class-based oppression, realization of gender and racial equality, and non-oppressive relationships.

Our conception of socialism is a profoundly democratic one. Public policies should be determined by free and equal popular participation. Human beings should be free to develop to their fullest potential.

Individual liberties should be carefully safeguarded. We are committed to freedom of speech that does not recoil from dissent. We insist on freedom to organize independent trade unions, women's groups, political parties, cooperative economic organizations, religious congregations, and other groups to support human well-being and security against any form of excessive power. We uphold freedom of personal conscience and practice in matters of religion and spiritual belief or unbelief, inasmuch as such freedom does not entail any right of one group to oppress another.

Portland DSA works to develop practical strategies to achieve that vision. In the present, we are building a visible socialist presence within the broad democratic left. In time, our goal is to build a majority movement capable of making democratic socialism a reality in the United States as part of a global democratic socialist order.

Portland DSA works to develop practical strategies to achieve that vision in the short, middle, and long terms, by organizing a majority movement able to redress the harms injuries caused by capitalism to support of the wealth and power of a small owning and ruling class over the interests of all others, and to replace capitalist institutions and practices in a society organized to be free, peaceful, humane, and egalitarian for the benefit of all.

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ARTICLE III. Membership.

Section 1. Membership.

- a. Individuals in good standing with national DSA, who reside or work in the Portland, Oregon metro area, shall be members of the Portland Local.
- b. The General Meetings are the highest authority of the Local. The members set and amend Bylaws, approve policies and guidelines for the operation of Portland DSA, including adoption of campaigns, membership in coalitions, and endorsements, elect delegates to the biennial DSA national convention and other bodies that vote or make recommendations on DSA national governance and policy, and make recommendations on issues and other matters to the National Political Committee of DSA.

Section 2. Removal of Members.

- a. If a member is found to be in substantial disagreement with the principles of democratic socialism, or to be persistently engaging in undemocratic or disruptive behavior, or to be engaged in coordinated entryist activity, the Local may vote to expel them from DSA. Portland DSA regards expulsion as an extreme measure that ought to be rare. Except in cases involving personal abuse, personal safety concerns, or clear evidence of systematic bad faith, a vote to expel a member should be preceded by other efforts to resolve disputes and secure change in problematic behavior.
- b. For such a finding to be made, another DSA member must bring written charges under Section 2.a. to the Local Steering Committee. The Steering Committee shall refer the charges to the Grievance Committee for fact finding and report, and shall add items pertaining to deliberation on the charges to an appropriate General Meeting agenda, following the Grievance process. The Steering Committee may also call an Emergency Meeting for this purpose, pursuant to Article IV, Section 1.a.
- c. Alternatively, the Grievance Committee may independently recommend expulsion as part of its report to the Steering Committee on a complaint filed in the regular Grievance process. The respondent must receive a copy of the written charges, full opportunity to participate in the fact finding process, notice of the General or Emergency meeting a minimum of two weeks before that meeting takes place, and full opportunity to refute allegations or their relevance to Section 2.a. at the Meeting.
- d. Expulsion of a member requires a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the General or Emergency Meeting, subject to regular quorum requirements.
- e. In cases where the Grievance Committee unanimously recommends this course of action, an aggrieved requests it in writing, and it is clear to the Steering Committee that the immediate

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emotional, mental, or physical safety of a member is in jeopardy, the Steering Committee shall be allowed to expel a member from DSA by a 9/10 majority. The accused member shall be provided all of the notice mentioned in b) and c) of this section, except that General or Emergency Meetings shall be taken to refer to the Steering Committee meeting at which such an expulsion vote shall be taken. The Steering Committee shall notify the membership of the name of the expelled member and that they were expelled pursuant to the process provided in this subsection. Any other information should remain private in the interest of the well-being of the aggrieved, unless the aggrieved requests this information be made known either to the Local or the public.

f. An expelled full member may appeal to the National Political Committee of DSA.

Section 3. Dues.

Portland DSA may establish a Local pledge system of voluntary donations for its members. Payment of a Local Chapter donation may not be a requirement for voting or for holding Portland DSA office or elected position.

Section 4. Privacy concerns.

Care shall be taken to protect the privacy of each member's contact information, and other information gathered by the Local. The Local shall adopt an information privacy and security policy.

ARTICLE IV. Portland DSA Meetings.

Section 1. General Meetings.

a. Portland DSA shall hold General Meetings at least four times annually, the time and place of which shall be set in a schedule published and distributed by the Portland DSA Steering Committee. The General Meetings shall set Portland DSA policy and work priorities. Only members may vote at General Meetings. All members of Portland DSA shall receive two weeks written notice by postal or electronic mail and an agenda for any General Meeting, and three weeks written notice for General Meetings wherein officers are elected or a recall is considered.

b. One Portland DSA General Meeting per year shall be designated the Annual Meeting in accordance with Oregon law, wherein elections shall be held under Article XII, and an annual budget may be adopted.

c. The Portland DSA Steering Committee shall set the agenda for General Meetings.

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d. The membership convened in a General Meeting is the legislative body of Portland DSA. Powers of any other Portland DSA body or officer derive from acts of the membership convened in a General Meeting.

e. Motions made and passed pursuant to these bylaws at General Meetings shall be binding unless otherwise indicated by the person or persons making the motion. These motions may include setting policies for the chapter. A policy must be submitted to the Steering Committee before the agenda is distributed for the Meeting at which it is discussed, and must be available to the membership for inspection at the Meeting. No policy may be adopted by a vote of the Steering Committee alone.

Section 2. Emergency Meetings.

The Portland DSA Steering Committee may call an Emergency Meeting of the Portland DSA on five days' notice when an urgent and important matter requires deliberation. These meetings shall have the same quorum requirements and all the powers of a General Meeting, except that they may not elect officers nor deliberate on expulsions.

Section 3. Electoral Endorsements and Joining Coalitions.

a. The General Meetings are the only body authorized to make electoral endorsements, approve campaigns, or join coalitions on behalf of Portland DSA, actions requiring a two-thirds (2/3) majority affirmative vote.

b. In exceptional situations the Steering Committee may provisionally endorse candidates or join coalitions by three-quarters (3/4) majority vote, but such actions expire unless affirmed by the membership at the next General or Emergency Meeting.

c. Members of Portland DSA are prohibited from campaigning as representatives of DSA or Portland DSA for candidates or ballot measures that Portland DSA has not officially endorsed, and from acting within any coalitions as representatives of Portland DSA that Portland DSA has not officially joined.

Section 4. Quorum.

A quorum of ten percent (10%) of the members, but not fewer than six (6) members, is required for any General or Emergency Meetings to transact business.

ARTICLE V. Steering Committee.

Section 1. Composition.

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- a. The Portland DSA Steering Committee shall be composed of the two (2) Co-Chairs, a Secretary, a Treasurer, two (2) Internal Organizing Committee Co-Chairs, two (2) External Organizing Committee Co-Chairs, two (2) Communications Committee Chairs Co-Chairs, four (4) At-large Steering Committee Members, and a YDSA representative.
- b. The Young Democratic Socialists of America (YDSA) chapters within the geographic area defined by Portland DSA may elect one (1) representative to the Steering Committee to represent all YDSA chapters associated with the Local.
- c. No Grievance Officer of Portland DSA may sit on the Steering Committee of Portland DSA and vice versa.
- d. The Steering Committee shall be considered “The Board of Directors” where relevant local, state, or federal law requires such. The Co-Chairs shall jointly be considered the “President” where legally required.

Section 2. Duties.

- a. The Steering Committee administers the affairs of Portland DSA and oversees the implementation of the decisions of the General Meetings; it may also propose policy to the General Meetings. It shall have the power to receive reports of any committee, working group, branch, or caucus and advise Local members thereon, to call emergency meetings of Portland DSA, and to act on any matter that requires immediate and urgent action. The Steering Committee is the regular executive body of Portland DSA, deriving its powers to act from delegation by the membership in General Meetings.
- b. The Steering Committee shall be responsible for establishing and coordinating program activities for Portland DSA, for proposing guidelines and policies to be voted on by Local members in good standing, for ensuring that the Local has in place policies and practices meeting requirements established by law and by national DSA, and for acting on the organization’s behalf between Portland DSA General Meetings.

Section 3. Meetings.

- a. The Steering Committee shall meet at the call of one of the Co-Chairs at such intervals as may be determined by a prior Steering Committee Meeting or by consultation with any seven members of the Steering Committee. All members of the Steering Committee must be given four days oral or written notice of regular Steering Committee meetings including by telephonic, email, or other electronic means; a 24-hour notice may be given under emergency circumstances.
- b. Steering Committee meetings may be held by telephonic or electronic conference technology, and individual members may participate and vote if eligible by those means in primarily face to face meetings.

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c. In situations in which not all members of the Steering Committee are present at a meeting, a motion shall not be considered passed unless a simple majority of the full Steering Committee votes in the affirmative.

d. Any member of Portland DSA may attend or listen in on Steering Committee meetings, except that the Steering Committee may go into executive session by majority vote to discuss personnel matters and reports from the Grievance Committee of fact finding about complaints. Notice of Steering Committee meetings shall be circulated on the Local's internal communications media on the same schedule as notice to Steering Committee members for General and Emergency Meetings.

e. The Steering Committee minutes or meeting notes shall record the names of all Steering Committee members present at each meeting, and shall publish all meeting minutes to the general membership.

ARTICLE VI. Officers.

Section 1. Offices and Terms.

a. The officers of Portland DSA shall be two (2) Co-Chairs, a Secretary, a Treasurer, two (2) Internal Organizing Committee Co-Chairs, two (2) External Organizing Committee Co-Chairs, two (2) Communications Committee Co-Chairs, four (4) At-Large Steering Committee members, a YDSA representative to the Portland DSA Steering Committee, and any Grievance Officers.

b. An elected officer's term shall begin upon certification of the election results by the Elections Committee. The term of office shall run for 12 months or until their successors are elected. The Steering Committee shall take reasonable care to ensure that elections are held for all elected offices such that terms do not expire before successors are elected.

Section 2. Equitable representation.

The Steering Committee shall be representative of the variety of identities of members of the chapter. A diversity quota requirement policy for the Steering Committee elections will be adopted by Portland DSA to achieve this goal.

Additionally, the Chapter Co-Chairs may not both be men, and the higher vote-getter is seated first.

Section 3. Removal.

a. A Steering Committee member may be removed for malfeasance or nonfeasance by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the full Steering Committee, with nonfeasance defined as unexcused absences from two or more consecutive Steering Committee Meetings. The Steering

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Committee shall propose a policy regarding absences, notice by members of unavoidable absence, and notice of removal votes to parties concerned. The Steering Committee may use the Grievance process for fact finding about accusations of malfeasance.

b. A Grievance Officer may be removed for malfeasance or nonfeasance by a majority of the other Grievance Officers, with nonfeasance defined as unexcused absences from two or more consecutive Grievance Committee meetings, or failure to carry out assigned duties in a timely fashion as defined by the Grievance Policy.

Section 4. Vacancies.

In the event of a vacancy in any Portland DSA office—due to recall, removal, resignation, or other cause—the Portland DSA Steering Committee may appoint a replacement by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the full Steering Committee for the remainder of the term, or until the Local holds a special election.

Section 5. Co-Chairs.

a. The Co-Chairs shall be the chief executive officers of Portland DSA. They shall preside over Portland DSA General and Steering Committee Meetings or shall appoint a substitute to assume the powers and duties of the presiding officer as specified in Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised. The Co-Chairs shall be the official public spokespersons for Portland DSA. The Co-Chairs shall initiate such actions and policies as the Local's general welfare may demand.

b. The Co-Chairs shall be responsible for coordinating the day-to-day operations and political work of Portland DSA's branches, committees, and working groups, and coordinating the fulfillment of policies and practices required by national DSA and by law. They are the official spokespersons of the chapter, and they shall speak for Portland DSA subject to the direction of the Steering Committee and the General or Emergency Meetings.

c. The Co-Chairs shall report to Portland DSA General Meetings on the business of the Steering Committee Meetings, at which time a copy of the minutes of those meetings shall be available for inspection. The Co-Chairs shall have access to all official records.

Section 6. Secretary.

a. The Secretary shall ensure effective communication with national DSA, including reports from the Local to the national organization, and circulation of national communications to Local officers and to branches, committees, working groups, and caucuses when relevant to their work.

b. The Secretary shall be responsible also for the taking of minutes of all Portland DSA General and Steering Committee Meetings, and shall have custody of these minutes, and the resolutions,

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reports and other official records of Portland DSA. They shall transfer official records in good condition to their successor. Official records shall include meeting minutes and member lists.

c. The Secretary shall temporarily assume the responsibilities of the Co-Chair, if neither Co-Chair is able to do so.

Section 7. Treasurer.

a. The Treasurer shall be responsible for the funds and financial records of Portland DSA. All funds collected by Portland DSA shall be turned over to the Treasurer, who shall deposit them in a bank account under the name of Portland DSA. In cooperation with the Internal Organizing Committee Chair, the Treasurer shall be responsible for tracking and promoting membership renewals and keeping records of which members' dues are paid up to date. The Treasurer shall prepare the annual Portland DSA budget and deliver the financial report for the past year to the Annual General Meeting of Portland DSA, as well as periodic progress reports as requested by the Steering Committee.

b. The Treasurer shall temporarily assume the responsibilities of the Co-Chair, if neither of the Co-Chairs nor the Secretary is able to do so.

Section 8. Internal Organizing Committee Co-Chairs.

The Internal Organizing Committee Co-Chairs shall coordinate the Internal Organizing Committee (see Article VIII). This Committee is responsible for fostering a lively participatory and democratic culture within the Local through the recruitment, education, mobilization, and development of members. The Internal Organizing Committee is also charged with maintaining membership records, organizing General and Emergency Meetings and social, educational, and fundraising events. Under the direction of the Steering Committee, the Internal Organizing Committee shall develop and oversee a program of skills training and political education, and a system of Mobilizers (similar to union shop stewards) who shall encourage active engagement of individual members with the campaigns and other activities of the Local including leadership development.

The Internal Organizing Committee Co-Chairs shall provide the Secretary with all records for which the Secretary is responsible.

Section 9. External Organizing Committee Co-Chairs.

External Organizing Committee Co-Chairs shall coordinate the External Organizing Committee (see Article VIII). This Committee shall lead Portland DSA's fight for a socialist political agenda in the Portland metropolitan area and beyond. In order to realize the policies, priorities and campaigns set forth by the General Membership, in consultation with the Steering Committee the External Organizing Committee shall coordinate Portland DSA's issue and electoral

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campaigns, direct actions, rallies, workplace organizing, and other activities targeted at the general public for political purposes, in collaboration with the Internal Organizing and Communications Committees for engaging member activism and developing internal and external communication supporting the activities and their aims. The External Organizing Committee may also work in collaboration with caucuses, branches, and YDSA chapters in order to bring about these aims.

Section 10. Communications Committee Co-Chairs.

The Communications Committee Co-Chairs shall coordinate the Communications Committee (see Article VIII). This Committee shall be responsible for the following activities: answering all written correspondence and queries to Portland DSA, crafting publicity, messaging, and design, managing social media and websites, and other communication related work, in collaboration with campaign leads, the Internal and External Organizing Committees, and the Steering Committee.

Section 11. At-large and YDSA Delegate Steering Committee Members.

At-large and YDSA Delegate Steering Committee Members shall participate in Steering Committee decision-making, and are responsible for attending all relevant meetings and reading all relevant documents. At-Large Steering Committee members are also tasked with representing the views of the membership that elected them as well as helping to advance the goals of Portland DSA generally by serving in other main committees, working groups, and campaigns.

The Portland DSA Steering Committee may assign additional temporary duties to an officer of Portland DSA, so long as such assignments do not conflict with the designation of responsibilities outlined in these Bylaws.

ARTICLE VII. Branches.

A branch is a subgroup of Portland DSA consisting of at least six (6) members in good standing with national DSA. Branches may be defined by geography, workplace, or by spoken language. The chairs of branches shall report to the Portland DSA Steering Committee. Branches must be approved by a General or Emergency Meeting.

ARTICLE VIII. Committees, Working Groups, and Campaigns.

Section 1. Committees.

a. Portland DSA shall have three (3) primary functional committees that members may join to work on behalf of Portland DSA. These Committees are the permanent structures through which

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all activities of Portland DSA shall be coordinated. These Committees shall be self-organized unless otherwise directed by a General or Emergency Meeting, or the Steering Committee, but the Committees should strive for stability over time, accessibility to new participants, and open democratic accountability.

b. The Internal Organizing, External Organizing, and Communications Committees shall exist and shall perform the functions outlined in Article VI, Sections 7, 8, and 9.

c. The Local shall have a Grievance Committee, elected or ratified by a General Meeting, which shall take complaints from members, conduct fact finding, seek to resolve disputes when possible, and make recommendations to the Steering Committee and relevant General Meetings, under a policy that meets the requirements of national DSA policy and promotes healthy organizational functioning. The scope of the Grievance Committee's activities is restricted to internal DSA matters.

d. Committees shall report on their activities regularly to the Steering Committee and the membership.

Section 2. Working Groups.

a. Portland DSA shall have Working Groups, which shall exist on a range from having a limited and explicit duration to being permanent. Working Groups may be established by a General Meeting or by the Steering Committee.

b. Chairs of Working Groups shall keep the Steering Committee and the General Meetings of the Portland DSA informed of the activities of the Working Group.

c. Working Groups shall support the work of the main committees and campaigns, and may be the means by which coordination among committees and campaigns occur, as well as being the means by which Portland DSA participates in coalitions whose work the Local supports but does not direct. Inasmuch as is reasonable, each Working Group shall form part of one of the three primary functional Committees.

d. Working Groups may also form to support one aspect of the chapter's work, across all campaigns and other efforts. These Working Groups may choose not to be part of a primary functional Committee.

Section 3. Campaigns and Projects.

a. Portland DSA shall have Campaigns, which shall serve to focus the Local's work in the community. Campaigns should have at least one point person. Campaigns may only be established by a General Meeting of Portland DSA by a two-thirds (2/3rds) majority vote of approval.

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b. A policy shall be established regarding proposals for campaigns and requirements such proposals must meet, including rationale in terms of Local goals and development, identification of needed support from the main committees, resources needed, point person or people, and methods of work including member engagement, activities, resources, and development.

c. Portland DSA shall allow for work outside of Campaigns to be done. Any member or members may make a proposal that the Local undertake a Project of smaller scope than a Campaign. Projects are not considered focal points of the Local's efforts, but may serve the community or the chapter in a way that furthers the purpose of the Local. Projects may be approved by a simple majority of the General Meeting.

ARTICLE IX. Caucuses.

Section 1. Definition and Purpose.

Portland DSA encourages the formation of caucuses to promote a vibrant democratic culture within the organization. Members may self-organize into temporary or permanent caucuses according to shared interests, affinities, and/or political goals. Caucuses may promote policies and actions for the Local to take on, and may challenge Local leadership and/or official Local policies.

Section 2. Official Recognition.

a. Caucuses do not require formal recognition, but may seek such recognition.

b. A caucus shall be formally recognized by Portland DSA if no less than six (6) members in good standing sign a mission statement that includes the name and purpose of the caucus and the name of a facilitator or spokesperson, and submits the mission statement to the Steering Committee. Portland DSA shall remove formal recognition if a caucus' mission statement ceases to have signatures of at least six (6) members in good standing. A list of recognized caucuses and contact information shall be maintained on Local internal media. The Secretary shall be responsible for ensuring maintenance and accuracy of that list.

c. Caucuses shall not make statements on behalf of Portland DSA without express prior authorization.

ARTICLE X. Delegates to National, Regional, and State Bodies.

Portland DSA delegates and alternates to the National, Regional, or State Convention shall be elected by members in good standing of Portland DSA. Elections for the National, Regional, or State Convention delegation shall be held on the schedule announced by the national, regional, or state organization.

ARTICLE XI. Prohibited Activity.

Portland DSA shall not engage in activity prohibited by Oregon or federal law. Nor shall the Portland DSA engage in any activity prohibited by the Constitution and Bylaws of Democratic Socialists of America or by resolutions adopted by DSA's National Convention or DSA's National Political Committee.

ARTICLE XII. Elections, Nominations, and Recalls.

Section 1. Elections Committee.

A three-person Elections Committee shall be established at least one month prior to every election by vote of a General Meeting. It shall solicit and receive nominations for the positions to be elected.

Section 2. Nominations Process.

Nominations for Portland DSA officers and delegates to the National Convention shall be opened thirty (30) days before and closed seven (7) days before the election meeting. The call for nominations shall be announced to all members of Portland DSA as soon as nominations are open. The list of candidates and their candidate statements shall be provided to all members of Portland DSA as soon as nominations are closed.

Section 3. Uncontested Positions.

If a position is uncontested, the nominee may be declared elected by acclamation. If any member objects to such election by acclamation, members must vote "yes" or "no" for the nominee. Should the candidate be rejected for the position, a special election shall be provided, pursuant to Article VI, Section 4.

Section 4. Recalls and Special Elections.

a. Any member of Portland DSA may initiate a Recall of any member of the Steering Committee or the Grievance Committee at any time and for any reason. To do so, the member must present a formal written Petition for Recall signed by 3% of the chapter membership in good standing. Upon presentation, the Steering Committee must immediately provide notice to all Portland DSA members that a Recall Election shall occur. The Recall Election shall occur at the next General Meeting where at least two (2) weeks' notice has been provided to the members.

b. The Steering Committee shall develop and propose a policy to ensure full and fair debate during a Recall Election process.

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c. Any member of Portland DSA may initiate a Special Election for Steering Committee by presenting a formal written Petition for a Special Election signed by 3% of the chapter membership in good standing. This may be the same Petition calling for a Recall Election. Upon presentation, the Steering Committee must immediately provide notice to all Portland DSA members that a Special Election shall occur. A Special Election shall follow the same procedure as for the usual annual Steering Committee Election (i.e., nomination committee formed at least one month prior, 3 weeks' notice provided to members before the election, etc.).

ARTICLE XIII. Amendments.

Proposed amendments to these Bylaws must be made by written resolution, endorsed by six (6) members of Portland DSA, and submitted to the Steering Committee two weeks and one day in advance of a General Meeting. The Steering Committee is required to provide the Portland DSA membership with two (2) weeks' written or electronic notice of the proposed amendments. Amendments must be approved by a two-thirds vote. The bylaws may be amended at a General Meeting called the Bylaws Meeting to be held no more than once per quarter.

ARTICLE XIV. Rules of the Portland DSA.

Section 1. Rules.

- a. General and Emergency Meetings of the Local shall be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised.
- b. Smaller Portland DSA bodies that make decisions may use less formal processes including consensus based processes, but shall use Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised at the request of any member present. All such less formal meetings shall include a note-taker who keeps minutes recording proposals discussed, and their disposition.

Section 2. Action Out of Order.

No action taken by a member or committee of members of Portland DSA in contravention of these Bylaws shall be an act of Portland DSA. Any action taken by a General or Emergency Meeting of Portland DSA in contravention of these bylaws is null and void.