

Strawberry Creek Nominating Process

1. Focus on the position (like clerk) or the committee to be considered. Nominating committee members remind each other of the functions of the position or committee, then on the personal qualities necessary to fulfill those functions. If no one present is clear on these functions, do not proceed until the next nominating committee meeting when the relevant information will have been found. When focusing on a committee to be appointed, questions of age and gender balance are relevant. (In the following steps, it is assumed that an individual is being sought, say, for clerk. When a whole committee is being sought, the process changes somewhat in the number of names presented and the number that rise to the top. This process can also be adopted for finding yearly meeting themes and speakers.)
2. When all committee members feel they understand what is being sought, the committee goes into silence out of which members identify whatever names occur to them, without commenting on the name. (Comments wait until step 3.) One person is responsible for writing down all those names, though other members may also write them down.
3. When it seems clear that no more names are forthcoming, questions may be asked about names that are unfamiliar to someone on the committee. When all are clear that they know enough about each name, the committee enters into silence again. (Note: comments like "I don't think she'll do it" are not relevant here; only descriptive comments should be shared.)
4. One person slowly reads all the names that have been suggested. Out of the silence that follows, each committee member identifies the one name that rises to the top for them. Sometimes the clerk will move to stop someone who begins to comment. If no name rises to the top for someone, s/he can simply state that.
5. When all committee members have shared who rose to the top for them, there may be only one name, and the clerk can call a sense of the meeting on that name. If one name seems to dominate, the clerk may ask if the committee is clear on that name or wishes to continue.
6. If the clerk feels there is no sense of the meeting, committee member then share why they think a given name rose to the top for them. After this sharing, committee members go back into the silence and once again identify the one name that rises to the top for them.
7. Usually the clerk will be able to call a sense of the meeting after this second period of worship. If not, the committee needs to discern the next step.

Strengths of This Procedure

1. The person to be asked to serve is chosen out of worship and from a sense of their gifts for a particular task, so that the gifts and sense of call can then be shared with the person when s/he is asked to serve. Since the nominating committee has reviewed the functions of the position under consideration, the person asking the chosen person can also articulate the responsibilities of the position in which s/he is being asked to serve.
2. The process doesn't focus on what gifts people don't have. There are perfectly fine names who are just not right for a given position. In worship, these names will drop away without any comment on what they can't do.
3. The person to be asked to serve is not chosen by elimination, i.e. when a name is given, a committee member can't say "They are too busy" or "They don't get along with so and so" or "They are disruptive on a committee." If these things are true and relevant, that person's name will not rise to the top and no negative comments need to be made.