Consensus Decision Making Model

Principles:

1. Our goal is to reach consensus on proposed code changes to the extent possible. When this is not possible we will rely on the process outlined below and on the attached flow chart.

2. We will engage in open and honest dialogue about all decisions and proposals. We aim to ensure everyone weighs in regarding their interests (desires, needs, fears, or concerns).

3. An easy way to check consensus is by having members indicate where they are relative to the decision or direction being proposed by indicating with their thumb:
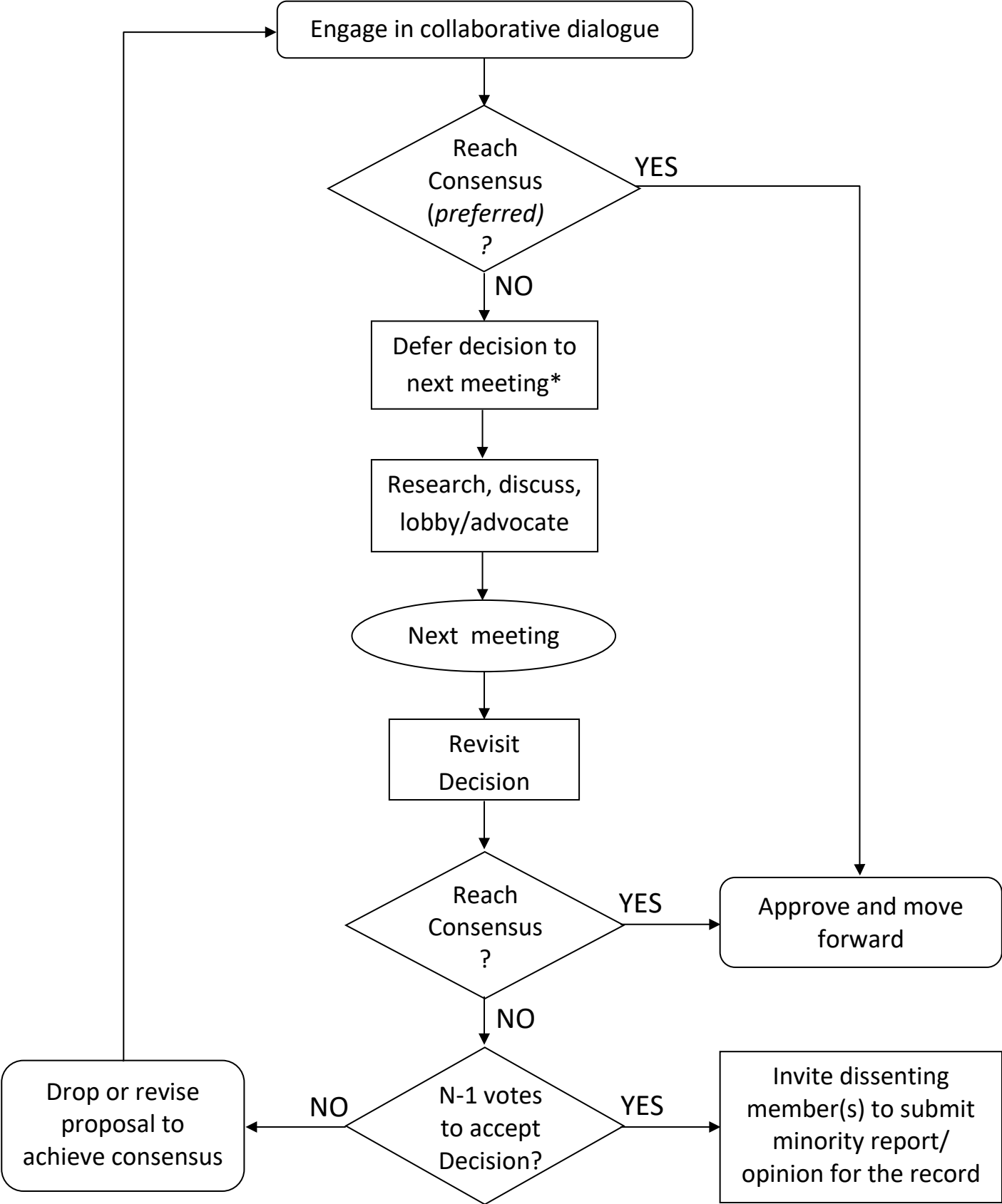
   👍 Fully support

   👉 Not excited – and can support

   👎 Cannot support

4. When participants (one voting member for each organization) show thumbs up or thumbs sideways, they are indicating that even if their preference is to go in a different direction, they can live with the decision of the group and "behaviorally support" the decision.

5. When participants show thumbs down they are indicating they do not support the proposal or decision and are thereby unwilling and/or unable to go along with the direction endorsed by the others.

6. If all participants give thumbs up or sideways to any proposal, this means the group has achieved the goal of consensus and can move on.

7. After initial dialogue, if one or more members cannot support a proposal (thumbs up or sideways), additional dialogue is required. This may involve deferring the decision to the next meeting.

8. At the next meeting, if all but one member support a proposal (a super majority), the group moves forward with the proposal, and the dissenting member is invited to write a minority opinion for the record.

9. If, after contemplating this proposal at the second meeting, the group cannot reach consensus or achieve super majority, the proposal will be dropped or significantly revised before further consideration by the group.

Adapted from Steve Sussman, Organization Training and Consulting.

Consensus Decision Making Flowchart

Engage in collaborative dialogue

Reach Consensus (*preferred)*?

YES

NO

Defer decision to next meeting*

Research, discuss, lobby/advocate

Next meeting

Revisit Decision

Reach Consensus?

YES

Approve and move forward

NO

N-1 votes to accept Decision?

NO

Drop or revise proposal to achieve consensus

YES

Invite dissenting member(s) to submit minority report/ opinion for the record

* If not time sensitive.