

## Why does your PCCW need Bylaws?

Guess what every Fortune 500 company and LDCCW have in common? They all operate under a customized set of bylaws. Bylaws are defined as the laws or rules that govern the internal affairs of an organization. Every organization whether larger or small, for profit or nonprofit needs a set of written bylaws that clarify its mission, leadership, funding and other issues that will help it be successful. Bylaws are written by the members, for the members and accepted by the members. Organizations that don't have written bylaws operate under a kind of controlled chaos. All important information is passed down through oral tradition so when a question arises the answer is usually "because that's how we've always done it." These organizations can perform tasks, but it is nearly impossible for them to grow and thrive.

Bylaws give structure to an organization by giving answers to basic questions and concerns. Think of your PCCW and answer the following questions. Does your PCCW have a mission statement? Who makes up your PCCW leadership and what are their duties? How is your PCCW leadership nominated and how are they elected? When are elections held, when does a term begin and end? Does your PCCW have special committees and/or commission chairs? Are they elected or appointed? How is your PCCW funded? Who decides how funds are spent? Does your PCCW have a set date, time and place for meetings? Does your PCCW meeting follow parliamentary rules?

If you were able to quickly answer all those questions, your PCCW may already have written bylaws. If you have problems with those questions, ask if your PCCW has bylaws and get a copy. If your PCCW does not have bylaws, maybe now is the time to write them. Many may think this process is long and may lead to more problems than it is worth. There is some truth to the first part, however it is very worthwhile. During the process of writing the bylaws your PCCW can focus on what is important to the membership. They can state their mission and how they want to achieve it. They can answer questions concerning leadership, funding, meeting schedules, etc.

Bylaws can set a foundation for now and future generations. Unlike the Ten Commandments, bylaws are not set in stone! They can change if concerns arise. However if they are simple and well formed from the start, they require little updating.

If your PCCW is interested in learning more about bylaws and how to write them, you can look at LDCCW's Bylaws in the back of the Resources Manual for ideas. If I can help your PCCW better understand bylaws, please feel free to contact me at [kay.c.portillo@gmail.com](mailto:kay.c.portillo@gmail.com).

God bless,