

AC Conference Call with GPCO Counter-Complainants
Monday, July 10, 2017
8:30 p.m. EDT

AC

GPCO: Dave Bell, Sean Friend

AC

Q. Is there an internal dispute process?

A. Sean: a couple different avenues: members of state council and any co-chair and officer decision can be overturned by council. Proposal could have been run by the council. Complaint filed because they attempted to declare both co-chair positions opened, even though it wasn't the case, and that proposal failed badly.

Could also attempt to recall - any state officer can be recalled by 75% of council or at annual meeting. Coming up in August, they could do that, having co-chair elections in August, anyway.

Feel this is an undemocratic way trying to kick people out of office.

Q. What would you like to see happen? Would you be willing to work with DRC or arbitrator?

A. Dave: We never denied any dispute resolution. Is certain people he knows would participate. But at this point, complainants have effectively taken what he sees as personal vendetta to a point that may not be possible.

Concern about toxicity of council forum. We'd want an equal playing field.

Sean: Next step is the state meeting. We will talk about this stuff, language in bylaws, hold officer elections.

AC

Q. We were told, and saw evidence, that there was an instance where a chapter that was inactive was declared active without going through the process. What might have been circumstances that would warrant such a thing to happen?

A. Dave: is from that chapter, former co-chair. Chapter was never technically inactive, as Bill Bartlett, former co-chair, was a member and elected co-chair in 2015, even though the chapter wasn't active having meetings. Chapter was re-booted about the same time that election happened 2015. They were working with him specifically to get the chapter back up and running for upcoming 2016 elections. Were told by Bill to elect officers, they did.

Later on in 2016, they became one of the sponsors of the proposal to remove Bill Bartlett.

Q. "Re-boot" indicates Poudre Valley must have been inactive. Why was there not a vote taken, they were just put back on the list of active chapters?

A. Dave: Not aware of how it was listed as inactive or active, but with Bill acting as a council member, and his local being that chapter, he was acting as a council member.

Sean: was also involved with the council at that time. Chapter had stopped meeting, council figured they weren't meeting or have active member on council other than Bill. Council said they aren't defunct, but stopped being listed as active; technically were active per bylaws. Decision to re-

activate was done around the time the chapter re-booted itself. Bill Bartlett and Andrea Merida were co-chairs, Bill said they could re-activate just by posting on the forum, recognize them even though they weren't technically inactive. Informal, perhaps unfortunate.

Q. Who could see that post?

A. Sean: any member of the council, 2 to 4 members per chapter, about 30 people.

Q. Two chapters were declared inactive. How did that transpire?

A. Sean: bylaws say for a chapter to be active, must have members that vote on the forum. If they don't vote 3 times in a row, entire local is declared inactive. Platte Valley missed 7 votes; Jefferson County missed 3. Process then is to become re-activated by having another chapter sponsor a proposal, or attend state meeting and apply for re-activation.

Q. Did anyone reach out to them?

A. Sean: email went out from co-chairs. It's a low bar to be re-activated, 60% approval from council. More than a month and neither has attempted to re-activate.

Q. One piece of evidence said that Andrea Merida declared herself treasurer, did not go through a vote.

A. Sean: is party secretary and involved in bylaws. Treasurer resigned in October, 2016. Sean made a post on the forum calling for nominations, had 30 days to make nomination for a council vote. One nomination came in past deadline. Co-chairs had taken no responsibility for the position (bank account, filing with SoS). Now, Dave has been handling bank account, Andrea is doing the filings. No one was in the position, and co-chairs take over responsibilities that aren't otherwise designated. Same as forum administrator, they can choose to appoint facilitators, but co-chairs are responsible.

Personal note, a lot of stretching facts are in the complaint. Harry Hempy has been making complaints since August last year, not getting traction from other members of the council. Sean states most council disagrees and tells him to read the bylaws. He could, instead, run for treasurer in August, if he feels someone else should be in the position.

Q. We were given posts that seemed personal on both sides, uncivil dialogue, that is concerning. What do you feel about that, what could be done? For instance, the FB posts calling for people to come to a meeting to re-elect Andrea, which included hostile language ("Make them suck their white-ass thumbs"). Also, anyone questioning the language of a proposal that one of their group supported, being called racist.

Whether official or not, it makes Greens look bad there is so much contention going on within the party. When you have consensus process, you may come to an up or down vote, try to understand the other side, maybe change language, people feel they have been heard and concerns addressed. Sounds like a hardening of sides.

A. Sean: Certainly there is tension at some levels. To be expected when folks disagree about things. Not sure about FB posts, didn't see them as uncivil. There is a small faction that wants to remove current leadership and take the party in a different direction, there will be resistance to that. Will see what happens in August.

That comment didn't come from an official of the party, not speaking for the party. The person is the husband of Andrea Merida. It was a private post that someone broadcast in a screen shot. Feels it's ok for him to stand up for his wife, understand feelings, don't agree with the tone. There is a coordinated and sustained campaign against almost every decision she has made since she took co-chair position, from a small group of folks. Unhappy with "anti-oppression" language in our

bylaws. Feels like personal vendetta by Harry Hempy against Andrea Merida. He sent an email to her, Dave and Jason that they were going to kick them out of the party in August. Feels his side have made good-faith efforts to extend an olive branch.

Dave: Some of the complainants have also engaged in hostile language, clearly outside of language usage in their forum. [Referred to an email sent three times to him, didn't hear it all.] Most of this stuff is personal. Need to focus on interpersonal communications skills; major problems with disagreements over interpretations of bylaws.

He claimed that some proposals had fraudulent signatures, and when called, challenged with opposing democracy.

Q. Uncivil posts of forum on complainants' side, could we have documentation?

A. They included one in their statement. They reached out to Arn Menconi and he said three days ago he had not signed the complaint, although they included his signature.

Sean: asks for quick response from AC as to whether GPCO may be decertified.

GPCO Bylaws are on their website.

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AC:

Believe there are people working in good faith on both sides.

Notably, both groups on the calls have stated they would be willing to work with some kind dispute resolution, even though there is a great deal of distrust.

Concerns remain about:

Self-appointment

Control of communications forum

Hostility

AC:

Concern about consolidation of roles, especially Treasurer. Normally, there would be outreach to people who would be good for this, it's a huge task - train someone before that person retires.

Concerned about disputes ripping party apart, turning away people. Factions causing people to turn away. Proportionally, see an issue with internal process, when all chapters have same number of votes. The way it's set up, you're screwed, you have to get 60% approve to participate. Poudre Valley got breaks; may have stopped being active after Bartlett stopped being on the council. "Weren't really inactive" – gives a lot of wiggle room for their side but not the other; same thing for self-appointing treasurer. Just because you've taken on responsibilities doesn't mean you are forever treasurer, AND head of the forum, too much consolidation of power. Doesn't make sense for a leader to have that much on their shoulders. Why not delegate?

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Ideas to recommend:

Note issues of concern:

Consolidation or power and roles; Hostility

Delegate power (co-chairs are apparently allowed to do this)

Have independent observer(s) at GPCO August meeting

Add another forum administrator acceptable to complainants.

Observer at August meeting, advise as to whether we need to go further,

