

THE ORGANIZATION OF TRADITIONAL HAMLET GOVERNMENTS

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A. Ringors, Ringmasters, Traditional & Experimental Hamlets, Homesites and Elders

Now there are no hamlets. This outlines a process for creating them. First is nomenclature. The example is named the “The Highlands”. Its full name is Highlands Hamlet Delta British Columbia. That’s because it is in Delta municipality, British Columbia. Hamlets have ringors (councilors) and ringmasters (mayors). There are six ringors and one ringmaster per hamlet.

There are two types of hamlets: traditional and experimental. This essay deals with traditional hamlets only. A traditional hamlet consists of one hundred more or less contiguous homesites. The latter are single family residential properties with adjacent food-growing garden lots.

Homes without garden lots may not belong to hamlets. Homesites must be in some stage of food production: planting, growing, harvesting or topsoil rest and recuperation. Each one is owned by a couple called the elders. They would normally be a married pair but this is not necessary.

A couple of unmarried men or unmarried women might own a homesite making them elders.

Traditional hamlets have only two elders per homesite. There could be three homesite owners but there would still only be two elders. Three elders in a homesite makes the traditional hamlet an experimental one which is beyond the scope of this essay. Summarizing, traditional hamlets have a maximum of two hundred elder-electors each. They elect the ringors and ringmasters.

The requirement is that the elders reside in/on the homesites. They cannot be absentee land-owners. Hamlets with absentee owners are again ‘experimental’ and again beyond this essay. Of course ringors and ringmasters must be elders living within the hamlets which elect them.

B. Returning Officers, Candidacy Certificates, Hamlet Directors & General Meetings

A mechanism for electing ringors and ringmasters is needed. First are hamlet returning officers responsible for elections. They prepare elector-elder voting lists and accept nominations for ringors and ringmasters. Hamlet government elections are annual affairs with election periods of thirty days. Nominations are accepted by returning officers at the start of these 30 day periods.

Nominations close seven days before elections. Any hamlet elder on a returning officer’s list may nominate a ringmaster and up to six ringors. A person must be nominated by a minimum of six elders to be a ringor-nominee or a ringmaster-nominee. Returning officers review these submissions to ensure nominators and nominees are all elders living within their own hamlets.

Then officers issue certificates of candidacy turning nominees into candidates. That’s when the latter can begin incurring campaign expenses. Signs are posted subject to city or municipal bylaws. Of course returning officers are responsible for printing ballots and supervising elections. They count the ballots (in the presence of scrutineers) and announce election results.

Afterwards they may or may not destroy ballots depending upon instructions from hamlet boards of directors. Each hamlet has a board of maximum six directors. These individuals may during election emergencies help returning officers. They are elected annually at hamlet annual general meetings (AGMs) sixty days or so before hamlet ringor and ringmaster elections.

C. Campaign Returns, Records Offices and the Local Election Campaign Financing Act

After all this candidates (or their financial agents) prepare hamlet campaign returns. These are like municipal campaign returns and are submitted to returning officers within 120 days of elections. The latter review returns and any with obvious errors must be amended. Once officers have in hand returns without obvious deficiencies they are forwarded to hamlet records offices.

These are maintained by hamlet boards. Here, directors review returns and may ask candidates/agents for amendments to correct errors not detected by returning officers. Professional audits might even be done in these facilities. Intractable disputes are resolved by higher governments.

An example is British Columbia. Years ago civic campaign returns were submitted to municipal clerks acting as municipal returning officers. The problem was that these clerks did not have the time or expertise to verify the correctness of them. This changed with new legislation named the Local Election Campaign Financing Act. Now, civic campaign returns go to Elections BC.

This office of the Legislature audits civic campaign returns and enforces local government election finance laws. It has made civic election finances way more professional. It is here, at least in B.C., that disputes will be resolved with Elections BC and the courts having the final say.

D. Annual General Meetings with Returning Officer and Board Elections

Returning officers like hamlet directors are elected annually at AGMs. Thus each AGM will see the election of seven people; six directors and a returning officer. Canadian control of hamlet governments is ensured with the requirement that all seven must be able to vote in Canadian elections. They may or may not be elders but must reside in hamlets in which they are elected.

Officers are elected at first board meetings following AGMs. An important role for presidents is coordinating directors and returning officers. An example is directors helping officers during election emergencies. Secretaries prepare minutes and correspondence in records offices.

Treasurers keep track of board expenses including rent for records offices and perhaps mailing addresses (P.O. boxes). There is also printing/postage for AGM mail-outs. Parliamentarians are encouraged to sit beside presidents at AGMs and make references to Robert's Rules of Order.

E. Dates for AGMs and Then General Elections and Hamlet Memberships

As seen, hamlets have two types of elections. The first ones occur at AGMs and then sixty days later are general elections. That means newly elected returning officers have sixty days to prepare for the latter. Once these are finished they review returns to correct glaring errors and forward them to records offices. After that their duties are finished except for one more item.

They must set dates for next year's general elections. This is done with boards. The latter need to know and approve proposed dates because AGM dates are dependent upon them. It is the boards who must organize and conduct AGMs sixty days before general voting days. They would have already partially prepared for this by having in hand hamlet membership lists.

These are constructed by directors over the course of their yearly terms. Once dates are set they notify hamlet members in writing or via email at least 14 days before AGMs. Phone calls and/or newspaper ads are not sufficient. The requirement for a hamlet membership is the same as for returning officers and directors. Again, this is to ensure Canadian control over hamlets.

Directors and returning officers must be able to vote in Canadian elections. Thus, people who vote for them must also be qualified to vote in Canadian elections. They might not actually be on the federal voters list – just as long as they are qualified to be on them. Of course, as with returning officers and directors, hamlet members must reside in the hamlets in which they vote.

F. Embryo-Hamlets, E-Hamlet Founding Boards, Founding AGMs & Members

Above is for operating hamlets. However since they do not exist now and there must be a way of creating them. During this creative process they are called embryo-hamlets, e-hamlets or simply embryos. Focusing on the first embryo a group of six individuals, each capable of voting in Canadian elections, sit down together. Anyone of the six may call the meeting to order.

That person next asks for nominations for chairman. Election is by a show of hands. The new chair then takes his/her seat at the head of the table and asks for nominations for secretary. Once elected the latter begins taking minutes. Next a treasurer is elected and then a parliamentarian.

Now there is a fully operational e-hamlet board of directors. Someone must make a motion to name the hamlet. This motion (and more later) need not be seconded. The board is so small that it can operate like a committee. Its only with larger boards that the process must be more formal.

Now the founding board must recruit members. They might use fliers, ads, conventional mail or email. As usual, new members must be able to vote in Canadian elections and live in the e-hamlet. Once a membership list is established a date is set by directors for the founding AGM.

Notifications to founding members can be either in writing or via email. This first AGM will see the election of six directors and a returning officer. Directors could be new ones or the membership could elect the founding board. The first general election is now sixty days out.

Hamlet elders will elect six ringors and a ringmaster. Note that these individuals are all homesite owners but not necessarily hamlet members. That's because people not able to vote in Canadian elections may own traditional homesites. The maximum number of homesites in a hamlet is one hundred with two hundred elders. However, this is not necessary especially with new hamlets.

There might only be five or ten homesites with ten or twenty elders. The idea is that these first hamlets will expand until the maximum 100/200 homesites/elders is reached. Key for hamlets are the garden lots. The main reason for joining a hamlet is to help co-ordinate food production.

G. Election Finance Canada EFC and Enlightened Vegetarian Agrarianism or EVA

Election Finance Canada EFC is registered with the B.C. Corporate Registry has a Delta municipal license. Its bank account is named Election Finance Canada and there is a web page at www.electionfinancecanada.com. Its email address is electionfinancecanada@gmail.com.

It can be thought of as a think tank for Enlightened Vegetarian Agrarianism or simply EVA. Now food production and distribution is mostly under corporate control. The result is a flaccid indoor civilization which revolves around the corporate grocery store. The idea is to return to more robust outdoor life-styles. Here, people become directly involved in local food growing.

This is via homesite vegetable/fruit growing garden lots. Hamlet ringors and ringmasters coordinate activities so that hamlets become (hopefully) food staples self-sufficient. That means if the corporate food trucks stop running for any reason hamlet residents can still basically survive.

EFC's web page is vital. Elders nation-wide may register homesites on-line. Since only elders can register them it means there will also be a database of elders. Ringors, ringmasters and returning officers can register as such. This will help greatly in coordinating hamlet activities.

The registration of homesites will involve listing the type and amount of food being produced on the properties. The objective is to network gardeners (ie., elders) across Canada. This will be a real bonus for the sciences of seeds, soil, food growing as well as its distribution and storage.

Another main role for EFC will be accepting donations (no tax receipts) for general elections. People will have option of specifying where the money will go. A donor might want his/her \$100 go to a returning officer in BC. Then, a Delta officer might submit a grant application.

That is a budget for election expenses; office, phone, etc. EFC would approve the application and deposit the \$100 into the officer's election account. Another example is a donor who gives \$100 with the requirement that the money go to a particular candidate. Then there is no grant application. The money would go into the candidate's campaign account without further adieu.

Eventually, EFC should become a public corporation and pay dividends to shareholders. Thus it must generate income. One way would be on-line searches of its databases. People might want to know how many homesites there are in BC and how much food they produce. They would pay fees for such searches. Another way is on-line seminars about Canadian election finance.

These would show how to fill out campaign returns. Eventually EFC might even complete these returns itself for money. There should be audits when campaigns have more than \$10,000 in expenses. Candidates might ask EFC for help with them. EFC would then contract audits out to chartered accountants. Then, candidates would pay for audits and also a finder's fee to EFC.

These EFC auditors will be experienced in election finance. Thus, they will be able to do the work faster and for less money. The result will be a savings in audit costs. This issue is whether EFC should be non-profit or for-profit. The latter is preferred. Good dividends will generate more public interest which in turn will stimulate more independent backyard food growing.