



## Conducting an Effective Neighborhood Association Meeting



Neighborhood Relations

Adapted from City of Arlington, Texas

# Making Your Meetings the Best

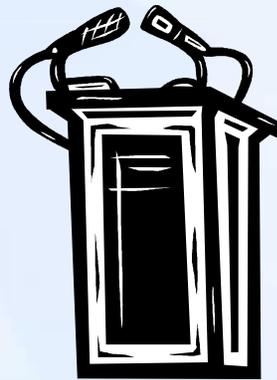


- Select a “neutral” place to meet.
- Plan your meeting.
- Always start and end on time.
- State the purpose of your meeting clearly on the agenda.
- State ideas positively and show their relation to the overall issue.
- Watch the general flow of the meeting – keep it moving as need warrants.
- Find background information ahead of time or invite resource people to come to the meeting.
- Encourage everyone to contribute.
- Encourage people to voice their opinions by questioning or restating as you go along.
- Make frequent summaries during the discussion.
- Attempt to stress cooperation, not conflict.
- Encourage people to take on tasks and responsibility as the meeting proceeds. Make sure that each assignment is recorded in the minutes.
- Direct the meeting and the attendees from problem to solution after each issue.
- Conclude the meeting.
- Summarize the decisions reached.
- Point out differences not yet resolved.
- Outline future actions, next steps to be taken.
- Set deadlines and review task assignments.
- Set the next meeting date, time, and place.
- Evaluate the meeting.

# Elements of Successful Meetings



## **Public Speaking**



- Know what you want to say.
- Keep it short.
- Speak clearly and project your voice outward.
- Practice your speech.
- Be concise.
- Avoid distractions.

# Listening to Others



- Listen for the unfamiliar.
- Learn to concentrate.
- Rephrase important points in your own words.
- Pay attention to details.
- Be open-minded about new ideas and opinions.
- Allow speakers to complete their ideas or opinions without interruption.
- If you are not clear on terms being used, ask the speaker to define them.
- Ask clarifying questions such as:
  - “Do you mean...?”
  - “Are you saying that...?”
  - ”Could you be more specific...?”

Are You Really Listening???



# Conducting Successful Meetings



**Successful meetings involve preparation before the meeting begins and follow-up once the meeting has been concluded. The following lists may provide you tips on conducting successful meetings.**

## **Before The Meeting**

- Set attainable goals. With the people on your planning committee, determine what you want to accomplish during the meeting. The agenda should serve as a “plan” for how your meeting will be run and what will be covered.

### **Examples:**

1. Select officers: President/Vice-President, Secretary/Note taker, Contact Person
2. How often will you meet: once a month, bi-weekly
3. What issues will be address: crime, youth, speed bumps, seniors citizens

**Once you have set goals this information can be used as a basis for the meeting agenda.**

# Details! Details!! Details!!!



- **Gather all pertinent information.** Collect all new information that has been received by the committee. Put this in outline form so all committee members have the information in front of them during the meeting.
- **Resources and information.** Be sure to make this information clear and concise. When advertising your meeting, be sure to include the date, time, place, and purpose on all materials.

# Preparing an Agenda



- Strive to get agenda ready 5-10 days in advance. This could also serve as a reminder to the group about the upcoming meeting.
- The agenda should be as short and concise as possible.
- Identify and list each item on the agenda. Include who is responsible for the presentation, what kind of action is needed (when appropriate) and the time allotted for the presentation.
- Try to keep your meetings to ninety (90) minutes or less.
- Generally, plan the agenda to mix items of importance. Alternating major items of less importance can benefit the flow of the meeting.
- At the opening of the meeting, ask for changes, clarifications, or additions to the agenda.
- Include an ending time for the meeting. In support of credibility, honor the closing time as scheduled.

# Sample Agenda



## Sample Meeting Agenda

Item	Person Responsible	Action Required	Time
Call to order	Chair		7:30 p.m.
Announcements	Chair		7:35 p.m.
Minutes	Secretary	Approval	7:40 p.m.
Treasurer's Report	Treasurer	Approval	7:45 p.m.
Standing Committee Reports			
- Finance	Chair	Approval	7:50 p.m.
- Land Use Planning	Chair	Informational	8:00 p.m.
Ad-hoc Committee Reports			
- Bylaws	Chair	Discussion	8:10 p.m.
Unfinished Business			8:25 p.m.
- (List each item)		Possible actions include: refer to committee;	
New Business			8:40 p.m.
- (List each item)		Postpone for further consideration; decision.	
Evaluation	Chair		8:55 p.m.
Adjournment	Chair		9:00 p.m.

# Preparing Minutes



**Review the minutes of your last meeting. When reviewing, ask the following questions:**

- Who was assigned which task?
- Are they prepared to make a report on their assignment?
- Where should they be on the agenda?
- How much time do they need for their presentation?
- What issues were left unresolved?
- On what issues are you now prepared to make decisions?

# Sample Meeting Minutes



## Sample Meeting Minutes

**[NAME OF ASSOCIATION]**

**MEETING – [DATE]**

Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. at the management office meeting room. Quorum was established.

**Attendees Present:**

Bob Leader, President, Jim Writer, Secretary, Connie Candue, Vice President, Betsy Spender, Treasurer, Association Attorney, Lazega & Johanson LLC, Riley Reliable, Association Manager

**Absent:**

Norton Noshow, member, excused

**Approval of Minutes:**

- Motion: To approve Minutes from June 1st Board meeting
- Vote: Unanimous approval
- Resolved: The minutes of the January 9, 2005 meeting are approved as corrected and entered into the Association records.

**Reports:**

- Treasurer's report given by Betsy Spender.
- Management report given by Riley Reliable. Written reports presented and maintained in Association's records.
- Collections report given by attorney Lazega & Johanson attorney.

# Sample Meeting Minutes



## **Business:**

- Motion: Hire Pool R Us to resurface pool for \$26,000.
- Vote: Motion Disapproved - One in Favor, two opposed, one abstaining.
- Motion: Have Riley Reliable contact Lazega & Johanson to amend the association to restrict leasing in the community.
- Vote: Motion Approved Unanimously
- Resolved: That the Association contact Lazega & Johanson to amend the association to restrict leasing in the community.
- Motion: Accept Lovely Landscaping Company's written proposal (maintained in the Association's records) to maintain the Association's common property, subject to the Association attorney's review of the contract.
- Vote: Motion approved - three in favor, one opposed. Discussion of recognition that Lovely Landscaping was the highest bidder, but the consensus is that a good history with Lovely Landscaping justifies renewing the contract.
- Resolved: That the Association accept Lovely Landscaping written proposal to maintain the Association's common property, subject to the Association attorney's review of contract.

**Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.**

# During The Meeting



- Keep information items brief and relevant.
- Discuss decision items at a time when most members are present. Generally, this is in the body or middle of the meeting.
- Know the limits of the group's decision-making authority.
- Committee reports should recommend action with clearly stated proposals.
- Present financial information with written copies for everyone present.
- Involve everyone who attends the meeting. Have newcomers introduce themselves before they speak, or introduce everyone at the beginning of the meeting.

# During The Meeting



- Use visual aids as much as possible. This includes charts, graphs, posters, etc. Visual aids give groups something to focus on during a discussion.
- Establish the next meeting time and place. People should walk away from the meeting knowing when and where they will meet next.
- Hand out new task assignments. Be clear about who is doing what and what is expected of that person.
- Allow time for new business so that all participants have an opportunity to bring up issues that have not already been covered by the agenda.
- Minutes should be taken at all meetings.
  - The persons attending and their capacity.
  - A summary of all items presented and discussed along with action to be taken.
  - A record of all decisions made, and votes taken.
  - The votes on plans made, task assigned, etc.
  - All items which are referred to committees or to future meetings.

# Committee Reports



A written record of your committee's actions will assist you in sharing that information with the larger association. In addition, documenting the activities of your committees makes good sense. It not only helps you track your group's progress and decisions, but also provides a permanent historical record that future association leaders can refer back to in their own decision-making processes.

When writing a committee report, document what transpired at the most essential level. In recording minutes, details are very important.

The following should help you accomplish this task:

# Sample Committee Report



## Sample Committee Report

Name of Committee

Date of Association Meeting: (When report is presented)

Committee Members Present: (List by name)

Agenda Item Number: (Should correspond to the Board Agenda number)

Situation or Issue: (Detail as much as appropriate)

Options or Potential Solutions: (List at least 2 or 3 options that were considered by the committee, with the advantages and disadvantages of each clearly identified)

Recommendations: (Specify which option is being recommended and why it should be adopted)

Action required: (Define what action the entire Board needs to take)

# Parliamentary Procedures



Robert's Rules of Order is the standard resource for facilitating discussion and Decision making among members of a group. Robert's Rules outlines and defines the rules of parliamentary procedure. Copies of the rules are available at most libraries and bookstores. Although they may seem long and involved, having an agreed upon set of rules makes meetings run smoother.

Following Robert's Rules of Order will help your group conduct better meetings. Your group is free to modify them to find another suitable process that encourages fairness and participation, unless your bylaws state otherwise. Most organization's adopt Robert's Rules of Order as their standard rules of meeting.

Presented as follows are the basic elements of Robert's Rules as utilized by most organizations:

**I. Make a Motion.** To introduce a new piece of business or propose a decision or action, a motion must be made by a group member ("I move that..."). A second motion must then also be made (raise your hand and say, "I second it."). After limited discussion the group then votes on the motion. A majority vote is required for the motion to pass (or quorum as specified in your bylaws).

# Parliamentary Procedures



**II. To Postpone an Item Indefinitely.** This tactic is used to kill a motion. When passed the motion cannot be reintroduced at that meeting. It may be brought up again at a later date. This is made as a motion (“I move to postpone indefinitely...”). A second is required. A majority vote is required to postpone the motion under consideration.

**III. To Amend a Motion.** This is the process used to change a motion under consideration. Perhaps you like the idea proposed but not exactly as offered. Raise your hand and make the following motion: “I move to amend the motion on the floor.” This also requires a second. After the motion to amend is seconded, a majority vote is needed to decide whether the amendment is accepted. Then a vote is taken on the amended motion. In some organizations, a “friendly amendment” is made. If the person who made the original motion agrees with the suggested changes, the amended motion may be voted on without a separate vote to approve the amendment.

**IV. To Commit a Motion.** This action is used to place a motion in committee. It requires a second. A majority vote must rule to carry it. At the next meeting the committee is required to prepare a report on the motion committed. If an appropriate committee exists, the motion goes to that committee. If not, a new committee as established.

# Parliamentary Procedures



**V. To Call for the Question.** To end a debate immediately, the question is called (say “I call for the question”) and the action needs a second. A vote is held immediately (no further questioning is allowed). A two-thirds vote is required for passage. If it is passed, the motion on the floor is voted on immediately.

**VI. To Table a Discussion.** To table a discussion is to lay aside the business at hand in such a manner that it will be considered later in the meeting or at another time (“I make a motion to table this discussion until the next meeting. In the meantime, we will get more information so we can better discuss the issue.”) A second is needed and a majority vote required to table the item under discussion.

**VII. To Adjourn a Meeting.** A motion is made to end the meeting. A second motion is required. A majority vote is then required for the meeting to be adjourned (ended).

NOTE: If more than one motion is proposed, the most recent motion takes precedence over the ones preceding it. For example, if #6, a motion to table the discussion, is proposed, it must be voted on before #3, a motion to amend, can be decided.

# Parliamentary Procedures



In smaller meetings, like a committee or board meeting, often only four motions are used:

- To Introduce (Motion)
- To Change a Motion (Amend)
- To Adopt (Accept a Report Without Discussion)
- To Adjourn (End the Meeting)

Remember, these procedures are designed to ensure that everyone has a chance to participate and to share ideas in an orderly manner. Parliamentary procedure should not be used to prevent discussion of important issues.

Board and committee chairpersons and other leaders may want to acquire training in meeting facilitation and in using parliamentary procedure. Additional information on meeting processes, working with many types of people, and using Robert's Rules is available from community resources such as the League of Women Voters, United Way, Lions Club, etc. [Parliamentary Procedure at a Glance](#), by O. Garfield Jones, is an excellent guide for neighborhood association chairs to familiarize themselves with this information.

# Parliamentary Procedure at a Glance



- A main motion must be moved, seconded, & stated by the chair before it can be discussed.
- If you want to move, second or speak to a motion, stand and address the chair.
- If you approve of the motion as it is, vote for it.
- If you disapprove of the motion, vote against it.
- If you approve of the idea of the motion but want to change it, amend it or submit a substitute for it.
- If you want advice or information to help you make your decision, move to refer the motion to an appropriate quorum or committee with instructions to report back.
- If you feel they can handle it better than the assembly, move to refer the motion to a quorum or committee with the power to act.
- If you feel that the pending question should be delayed so more urgent business can be considered, move to table the motion.
- If you want time to think the motion over, move that consideration be deferred to a certain time.
- If you think that further discussion is unnecessary, move the previous question.
- If you think that the assembly should give further consideration to a motion referred to a quorum or committee, move that motion be recalled.
- If you think that the assembly should give further consideration to a matter already voted upon, move that it be reconsidered.
- If you do not agree with a decision rendered by the chair, appeal the decision to the assembly.
- If you think that a matter introduced is not germane to the matter at hand, a point of order may be raised.
- If you think that too much time is being consumed by speakers, you can move to limit the time of such speeches.
- If a motion has several parts, and you wish to vote differently on these parts, move to divide or split the motion.

# Question and Answer Period



Q & A

# References-Free Websites



- [Neighborhoodlink.com](http://Neighborhoodlink.com)
- [i-Neighbors.org](http://i-Neighbors.org)

# Contacts



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