PLANNING COMMISSION
CITY OF THE VILLAGE OF DOUGLAS
CITY HALL - 86 W. CENTER STREET, DOUGLAS, MI

REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, JULY 8, 2020 – 7:00 PM

AGENDA

A. Call to Order - Remote Special Meeting Procedures

B. Roll Call

1. Approval of Agenda (additions/changes/deletions)
   - Motion to approve; July 8, 2020.
2. Approval of Minutes (additions/changes/deletions)
   - Motion to approve; June 24, 2020.

C. Public Comment (limit 5 minutes please)

D. Communications

E. New Business

1. Amendment of Bylaws (Planning Commission Bylaws, Article 10)
2. Conduct, Meeting Decorum, and Parliamentary Procedure Discussion (N. Wikar)

F. Old Business

G. Reports of Officers, Members, Committees

H. Public Comment (limit 5 minutes please)

I. Adjournment

This meeting is being held electronically.

ACCESS INSTRUCTIONS
To attend and participate in this remote meeting of the City of the Village of Douglas Planning Commission, please consider joining online or by phone.

Join online by visiting:
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83673349810

Join by phone by dialing:
+1 (312) 626-6799

Then enter “Meeting ID”:
836 7334 9810

Those who are hearing impaired and require additional accommodations are encouraged to contact (269) 857-1438 or douglas@ci.douglas.mi.us as soon as possible.
CITY OF THE VILLAGE OF DOUGLAS
REMOTE MEETING SPECIAL PROCEDURES

The following guidelines shall be in-place to assist and manage public attendance and participation in remote (online and telephone), electronic meetings of the City of the Village of Douglas, Michigan.

1. City Staff shall be available to assist the public to make reasonable accommodations for those with disabilities and/or the hearing impairment to attend and participate without impediment.

2. For the purpose of carrying-out remote meetings, a staff member will act as "administrator" to manage all content, access, video, audio, chat, "gesturing," recording, visual, and screensharing controls.

3. For the purposes of preserving the agenda and integrity of the meeting, the meeting "administrator" shall assist the chairperson in moderating audio/microphone controls of participants, building a speaker list of those wishing to comment while limiting public microphone access to "public comment"/"public participation" periods of the meeting, as published.

4. Online attendees/participants shall indicate their desire to speak on an agenda item or topic by using "gesturing" controls (i.e. Raise Hand, Thumbs Up, etc.), using the chat window, or by voice. All microphones will be temporarily unmuted for a brief period of time at the beginning of all "public comment"/"public participation" periods of the meeting so those joining by telephone or those participants who are audio-restricted may indicate they would like to be added to the speaker list. The chairperson and meeting "administrator" will share the responsibility of building and managing the speaker list, recognizing each speaker individually and toggling microphone controls so all speakers on the list may be heard.

5. Lewd, profane, hostile, aggressive, racist/discriminatory, disruptive, or otherwise obstructive behavior by attendees/participants will not be tolerated. The City and meeting "administrator" reserves the right to warn, limit, restrict, and remove any content or participants in violation of the of this directive.

6. All "public comment"/"public participation" periods of the meeting will be concluded after the chairperson/meeting "administrator" has:
   a. exhausted the speaker list
   b. responded to any outstanding "gesturing"
   c. answered any outstanding requests to speak as indicated in the chat window, and
   d. after a final call for any additional or remaining public comments as indicated by voice. All microphones will again be temporarily unmuted at that time.

7. The City shall record and make available to the public in a reasonable time frame all content of all remote meetings of Council and public boards/commissions for the public record, online and at individual request in electronic format.
PLANNING COMMISSION  
CITY OF THE VILLAGE OF DOUGLAS  
CITY HALL - 86 W. CENTER STREET, DOUGLAS, MI  

SPECIAL MEETING  
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24, 2020 – 7:00 P.M.  

MINUTES  

A. Call to Order   
Chair Pattison called the meeting at 7:00 PM. Motion by Kenny, supported by Stewart, to adopt the remote meeting special procedures as read by Pattison. Motion approved by unanimous voice vote.  

B. Roll Call:   
– Present: Buszka, Pattison, Heneghan, Seabert, McWebb, Kenny, Stewart  
  Absent – None  
  Also Present – City Planner, Nick Wikar  
  1. Kenny, supported by Heneghan, made a motion to approve the Special Planning Commission Agenda for June 24, 2020 as amended by including the site plan review to the PUD plan for Center Park Place. Motion approved by unanimous voice vote.  
  2. Kenny, supported by Stewart, made a motion to approve the minutes for March 11, 2020 as presented. Motion approved by unanimous voice vote.  

C. Public Comment:   
Dave Burdick, 385 Fremont – Dave thanked the developers for affordable housing and voiced concerns regarding the Tannery Creek development.  
Ronna Alexander, 265 Water St – Opposed to the Tannery Creek PUD.  

D. Communications:   
Written communications were read with the correlating new business.  

E. New Business:  

1. Nomination of Officers:   
   (Planning Commission Bylaws, Article 4, Section 1)  
   a. Chairman – Kenny volunteered to be Chairman.  
   b. Vice Chairman – Stewart volunteered to be Vice Chairman.  
   c. Secretary – Commissioners would like to leave it vacant at this time.  

2. Election of Officers:   
   (Planning Commission Bylaws, Article 5)  
   a. Chairman – Buszka, supported by Stewart, made a motion to appoint Kenny as Chairman of the Planning Commission. Motion approved by unanimous roll call vote.  
   b. Vice Chairman – Kenny, supported by Pattison, made a motion to appoint Stewart as Vice-Chairman of the Planning Commission. Motion approved by unanimous roll call vote.
c. Secretary – Kenny, supported by Heneghan, made a motion to leave the Secretary position open for the Planning Commission. Motion approved by unanimous roll call vote.

3. Special Land Use / Site Plan Review, 26 Hamilton – Seabert, supported by Buzska, made a motion to open the public hearing. Motion approved by unanimous voice vote. Applicant, Jeff Klem, is requesting approval for special land use and site plan for an addition of a 3,600 sq ft unit located to the east side of the existing unit. The new addition will be for professional services for a construction consulting business with no living space. Commissioners had several concerns/questions that the applicant was unable to answer at this time. Commissioners will gather their questions and email them to Wikar to be forwarded to Klem to be addressed at the next meeting. Seabert, supported by Pattison, made a motion to continue the special hearing on July 8th. Motion approved by unanimous voice vote.

4. Final PUD Plan (Amendment) – Center Park Place (Fremont Street Condominiums) PUD, 423 Center Street / 424 Fremont Street – Pattison, supported by McWebb, made a motion to open the public hearing. Motion approved by unanimous voice vote. Applicant, Rob Joon, is requesting final approval for an amended PUD established in 2000. The proposed is an expansion to building B (units 6-9) on Fremont St. Units are currently 2 bedrooms and 1 bath and will be expanded by an additional bedroom and bath. Commissioners concerns included the 2 parking spaces in the right-of-way on Fremont St. and the required 24ft of driveway space from building C (garage units G-1 through G-9) to building B (units 6-9). Seabert, supported by Buzska, made a motion to close the public hearing. Motion approved by unanimous voice vote. Pattison, supported by Stewart, made a motion to approve the final PUD plan with the addition of greenspace approximately the size of 10’x18’ in the NW and SW corners removing parking spaces in the right-of-way on Fremont St. and to grant a waiver of the 24ft required space between building C and B. Motion approved by unanimous roll call vote.

5. Advisory Public Hearing – Proposed “Tannery Creek” PUD, 64 Wiley Road – Seabert, supported by Buzska, made a motion to open the public hearing. Motion approved by unanimous voice vote. Applicant, Dave Schermer, is requesting public feedback on the proposed “Tannery Creek” PUD at 64 Wiley Rd. The proposed is a high-density development with affordable housing on 19.77 acres. Tannery Creek will offer 120 units, 1,300-1,400 sq ft in size. Schermer presented a financial study and estimated the mortgage payment of each unit to be $1,500 per month.

Commissioners like the financial report with the proposal and asked about amenities, how they will control short term rentals, and safety in regard to the Wiley Rd. entrance. Schermer stated for amenities they will provide sidewalks for walkability, gathering areas with pond views, a grilling area, water elements, and a courtyard to name a few. Schermer stated they could put in the bylaws that a one-year lease is required for rentals. Commissioners would like to see a traffic study done and will give a list of questions/concerns to Nick for the applicant to review.

Public Comments:
John Rice – 294 Water St. Submitted a written statement stating he is strongly opposed to the zoning change.

Chris Johnson – 416 Water St. Chris understands that this is just a start and is supportive of affordable housing. He stated he would like to see the trees preserved and that the applicant take into consideration the character of the Douglas neighborhoods. Enjoyed the presentation.

Tracy Shafroth – 271 Water St. Tracy has concerns about safety and how the new density will impact Water St. and Wiley Rd. Supportive of affordable housing.

Missy Rininger – 294 Water St. Missy is concerned with the safety on Wiley Rd. on the hill where the entrance will be located. She stated she likes her peace and quite and doesn’t think it is a good fit for this location. She is opposed to this development.

Dave Burdick – 385 Fremont St. Dave was concerned for safety on Water St. and Wiley Rd. stating that they are both very busy roads. He suggested the developers stick with the process and work through the concerns regarding safety.

Greg Plowe – 325 Water St. Greg is concerned with safety and speeding.

Fred Royce – 144 Lakeshore Dr. Fred suggested doing a study on how to make Water St. safe.

Pattison, supported by Buszka, made a motion to close the public hearing. Motion approved by unanimous voice vote.

6. Advisory Public Hearing – Proposed “West Center” PUD, 324 W. Center Street - Seabert, supported by Kenny, made a motion to open the public hearing. Motion approved by unanimous voice vote.

Applicant, Kerr Real Estate, is requesting public feedback on the proposed “West Center” PUD at 324 W Center St. The proposed development will include commercial uses fronting along Center St. such as retail, office, restaurant, and/or personal services. The proposed will also include residential uses including multi-family residential units above the commercial space, attached single family residential, and detached single family residential.

Commissioners did not like the angled parking on Center St. and were concerned with the character of the commercial units and would like to see them look similar to downtown. They are concerned about short term rentals and suggested no less than a one-year lease for rentals. The bike path was also a concern. Kenny stated that is seems like a lot of commercial space when we still have vacancies for commercial units around Douglas. He would like to see more outdoor seating and was concerned about the traffic that the pool would draw and whether it would be open to public or just private. McWebb suggested checking out 2 locations in Grand Rapids that he thinks the development should follow.

Public Comments:

Dean & Kathy Johnson – 314 Fremont. Submitted a written statement stating they are against the plans as they stand.

Kimberly Vivian – 337 Center St. Submitted a written statement stating that she is not against the development of the property but is concerned about the overall size and scope of the project.

Suzanne Dixon – 797 Center St. Suzanne suggested green space between the street and path as well as parking in back of commercial units instead of in front.

Tracy Shafroth – 271 Water St. Tracy suggested the use of permeable surfaces.

Fred Royce – 144 Lakeshore Dr. Fred asked if there are any other tenants besides Century 21 for the commercial units.
Heneghan, supported by Stewart, made a motion to close the public hearing. Motion approved by unanimous voice vote.

F. Old Business: None

G. Reports of Officers, Members, Committees: McWebb wanted to be transparent and stated that his brother works with Klem. Nick will run this by the Clerk to see if this is a conflict of interest. Commissioners will submit all related questions and concerns to Nick by Monday. Nick thanked commissioners for their patience and support. Commissioners congratulated Wikar on a great job.

H. Public Comments:
Fred Royce – 144 Lakeshore Dr. Fred stated that Nick did a great job.

I. Adjournment – Motion by Pattison, supported by Seabert, to adjourn the Planning Commission meeting at 11:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted by Jenny Pearson, Deputy Clerk
VILLAGE OF DOUGLAS
PLANNING COMMISSION
BYLAWS

As Amended, August 20, 1986

As Amended, October 16, 1995
ARTICLE 1  NAME OF COMMISSION

The name of this organization shall be the Douglas Village Planning Commission.

ARTICLE 2  AUTHORIZATION

The Authorization for the establishment of this Planning Commission is set forth under Section 2 of Public Act 285 of 1931, the Municipal Planning Commission Act, as amended, and includes all duties and responsibilities incurred therein, and as authorized by the Douglas Village Council according to Section 12 of P.A. 285, the Planning Commission shall also assume all duties of the Zoning Commission as prescribed according to Public Act 207, of 1921, the city and Village Zoning Act, as amended.

Power and duties for planning and zoning of Douglas Village are delegated to the Douglas Village Planning Commission by the Douglas Village Council by Ordinance No. 79 of May 3, 1982 in accordance with the above mentioned enabling laws.

ARTICLE 3  MEMBERSHIP

Membership shall consist of nine members, of whom the first three members shall be the Douglas Village President, one member of the Village council, and a Village Administrative Official. All members shall be appointed by the Village President, subject to approval by a majority vote of the members of the Village Council. Member’s compensation shall be determined from time to time by the Village Board. Members shall be reimbursed for reasonable and necessary expenses incurred in the exercise of their duties.

The terms of the Village President and Village Council member shall correspond to their official tenure, and the term of the Administrative Official shall correspond with the tenure of the President. The terms of the remaining six members shall be three (3) years, except that two (2) members of the first Commission shall serve for a term of one (1) year; two (2) for a term of two (2) years; and two (2) for a term of three (3) years. Annually following the appointment of the first Commission, there shall be appointed two (2) members to said Commission, who shall serve for a term of three (3) years. Members shall hold their appointed office until their successors are appointed, except that the terms of the Village President, Village Council member, and Village Administrative Official shall in no case extend beyond their tenure as outlined above.
ARTICLE 4 OFFICERS

Section 1 The officers of the Planning Commission shall consist of a chairman, vice chairman and secretary.

Section 2 The chairman shall preside at all meetings and hearing of the Planning Commission and shall have duties normally conferred by parliamentary usage on such officers.

Section 3 The vice-chairman shall act for the chairman in his/her absence. In the absence of both the chairman and vice-chairman, if a quorum is present, the members shall caucus and appoint a temporary chairman, who shall then preside for that meeting only.

Section 4 The secretary shall keep the minutes and records of the Commission. Meeting minutes from the last regular meeting shall be presented to the commission at the following meeting. In the event that a recording secretary is utilized in the absence of the secretary, the chairman shall appoint a temporary secretary to serve for that meeting only.

ARTICLE 5 ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Section 1 An annual organization meeting shall be held each year at the regularly scheduled May meeting of the Commission.

Section 2 Nominations shall be made from the floor at the annual organization meeting and election of the officers specified in Section 1 of Article 4 shall follow immediately thereafter, as set forth in Section 12.34 of Act 285.

Section 3 A candidate receiving a majority vote of the entire membership of the Planning Commission shall be declared elected, and shall serve for one (1) year or until his/her successor shall take office.

Section 4 Vacancies in office shall be filled immediately by regular election procedure.

ARTICLE 6 MEETINGS

Section 1 Regular meetings shall be held monthly as scheduled by the Commission at the annual organization meeting, said schedule to be posted at the Village Office. In the event of conflict with holidays or other events, a majority at any meeting may change the date of said meeting.
Section 2 A quorum shall consist of five (5) members. The number of votes necessary to transact business shall be five (5), except as provided in Act 285, Section 8, all votes shall be decided by a majority. Voting shall be by voice vote except when a member of the Commission requests a roll call vote.

All members present shall vote on every question unless they disqualify themselves or are excused from voting by a majority of the members present. No member of the Commission shall participate in the hearing or decision of such Commission upon any zoning matter other than the preparation and enactment of an overall or Comprehensive Plan, in which he/she is directly or indirectly interested in a financial sense. In the event of such disqualification such fact shall be entered on the records of the Commission.

Section 3 Special meetings may be called by the Chairman or a majority of the Commission members, as deemed necessary.

Section 4 All meetings, or portions of meetings, shall be open to the public. All meetings will be conducted in accordance with Public Act 267 of 1976, known as the "Open Meeting Act".

Section 5 Unless otherwise specified, Robert's Rule of Order shall govern the proceedings at the meetings of this Commission.

ARTICLE 7 ORDER OF BUSINESS

The recommended order of business at regular meetings shall include;

a. Call of order
b. Roll Call
c. Public Comment (limit 5 minutes please)
d. Communications
e. New Business
f. Old Business
g. Reports of Officers, Members, Committees
h. Public Comment (limit 5 minutes please)
i. Adjournment

Section 1 Specific requests or applications received by the Commission prior to the meeting shall be listed under the appropriate heading.
Section 2  A motion from the floor must be made and passed in order to dispense with any item on the agenda, or change the order of the agenda.

ARTICLE 8  PUBLIC HEARINGS

Section 1  In addition to those required by law, the Commission may hold public hearings when it is decided that such hearings will be in the public interest.

Section 2  Subject to the provisions of any applicable State Act and/or County Ordinance, public hearings shall be held on; the adoption or amendment of a Master Plan, the adoption, amendment or consideration of a Special Use permit as authorized by a Zoning Ordinance, or the preliminary approval of a plat subdivision, or Planned Unit Development.

Section 3  A petitioner who seeks to amend the Zoning Ordinance or other plan element shall file a petition with the Planning Commission through the office of the Zoning Administrator.

Section 4  At a public hearing before the Commission, the petitioner shall first present the facts and arguments in support of the case and those who oppose the petitioner shall follow. The petitioner shall be given time for a rebuttal. There shall be no rebuttal of the rebuttal. To maintain orderly procedure, each side shall precede without interruption by the other. No record or statement shall be recorded or sworn to as evidence for any court of law without notice to the parties.

Section 5  In the presentation of a case the burden shall be upon the petitioner to supply all information, including charts diagrams, and other exhibits, necessary for a clear understanding of the problem. The Commission may discontinue the hearing when in its judgment the petitioner has not provided sufficient evidence on which to make a determination.

Section 6  Every person appearing before the Commission shall abide by the order and directions of the chairman. Discourtesy, disorderly, or contemptuous conduct shall be regarded as a breach of the privileges of the Commission, and shall be dealt with as the Commission directs. Every person shall state his/her name, address, and interest in the case at the start of the presentation.
Section 7  The Commission may continue or postpone the hearing of any case on an affirmative vote of a majority of the members present.

ARTICLE 9  FINAL DISPOSITION OF CASES

Section 1  The final disposition of any case shall be in the form of an order setting forth the findings and determinations of the Commission together with any modifications, specifications, or limitations which it makes, with reasons therefore.

The Commission may dismiss a case for lack of prosecution or lack of jurisdiction. When a petitioner has failed to appear at two consecutive meetings, the case shall be dismissed.

A petitioner may not withdraw a case after a roll call vote has been ordered by the chairman.

Section 4  A case which has been withdrawn by the petitioner shall not again be placed on the docket for consideration within a period of twelve (12) months after the date of withdrawal.

Section 5  A case which has been decided adversely to the petitioner shall not again be placed on the docket for consideration until twelve (12) months after the date of decision.

Section 6  A record shall be kept of those speaking before the Commission at such hearings.

ARTICLE 10  AMENDMENTS

Section 1  Amendments to these rules of procedure may be made by the Commission at any regular or special meeting upon the affirmative vote of a majority of the entire membership of the Commission.

Section 2  The suspension of any rule may be ordered at any meeting by a unanimous vote of Commission members present.
At a regular meeting of the Douglas Village Council held August 6, 1984, a motion was made by Joel Matteson and seconded by Dean Johnson that the Village of Douglas Planning Commission adopt the Procedures Manual Revised June 10, 1984, attached hereto.

Vote for adoption: William McVea, Bruce Stevenson, George Baker, Dean Johnson, Joel Matteson, and Lester Pearson
Vote against adoption: None

Procedure manual revised June 10, 1984 hereby declared adopted.
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I. **PURPOSE**

The following policies and procedures have been prepared to assist the Village Council, Planning Commission, Village Clerk, and other affected Village officers in the administration of the Village Zoning Ordinance. These policies and procedures are intended as a quick reference and guide for the Village in implementing various procedures to follow regarding planned unit developments, special uses, variances, and rezoning requests. The procedure and requirements in processing applications in these areas are set forth in detail in the Zoning Ordinance, and in many cases it will be necessary for the Council, the Planning Commission or others to review the Zoning Ordinance to make sure its various provisions are complied with.
II. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Village Planning Commission

The Planning Commission shall meet at least once a month on a date and time set by the Commission, and shall conduct all business related to the Zoning Ordinance involving the Planning Commission at such meeting. Officers of the Planning Commission shall be elected by its members annually. Officers will be the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and the Secretary/Treasurer. The Secretary/Treasurer is responsible for taking minutes of the meetings and providing the Village Clerk with the original record of the minutes.

2. Zoning Administrator

The Zoning Administrator shall be appointed by the Village Council and shall be charged with the carry out the responsibilities of the Zoning Administrator as set forth in the Zoning Ordinance.

3. Village Clerk

The Village Clerk shall be the primary record keeper for the administration of the Zoning Ordinance and shall receive applications and collect fees submitted pursuant to the Zoning Ordinance. The Village Clerk shall further coordinate with the Village President and/or the Planning Commission Chairperson, the scheduling of Public Hearings, arrange for newspaper publications, and generally coordinate the flow of information between the public, the Council, and Commission members, the Building Inspector, the Zoning Administrator, the Village Attorney, and the Village Engineer.

4. Village Attorney

The Village Attorney shall assist the Village Council and Planning Commission on such legal matters as may be required concerning the implementation, interpretation, and administration of the Zoning Ordinance. The Village Attorney shall attend meetings and/or public hearings of the Village Council and/or Planning Commission, when requested to do so by the Council, its President, the Planning Commission, or its Chairperson.

5. Engineering Consultant

The Village Engineer, (Note: The term Village Engineer shall be construed to mean such competent engineering personnel as the Village Council or Planning Commission shall designate to assist the council and/or Commission in any particular instance) shall assist the Village Council and/or the Planning Commission in the
review of site plans, planned unit development proposals, rezoning requests, and such other matters which may arise from time to time during the Village Zoning Ordinance. The Engineer shall attend meetings and/or public hearings of the Village Council and Planning Commission when so requested by the Village Council, its President, the Commission or its Chairperson.

6. **Village Building Inspector**

The Building Inspector shall be responsible for all on site inspections during the various phases of construction once commenced following the issuance of a Building Permit. The Building Inspector shall insure that all construction is in compliance with the approved site plans, and shall report any violations to the Building Administrator. The Building Inspector shall, when necessary, consult with the Village Engineer and/or Village Attorney to assure full compliance with the state and local construction code, as well as the Village Zoning Ordinance.
III. REVIEW PROCESS FOR PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENTS

1. The approval of applications for a planned unit development shall comply with Chapter XIII and Chapter XV of the Zoning Ordinance, as amended.

2. An application for preliminary development plan approval shall be obtained at the Village Clerk's office, and shall be submitted by the applicant to the Village Clerk along with twelve copies of the application, plus the initial filing fee as set in the Village Schedule of Fees.

3. The information requested on the application shall constitute the preliminary development plan and site application shall be returned to the applicant and shall not be accepted until complete.

4. Upon receipt of the completed application and copies, the Village Clerk shall transmit one (1) copy to the village Engineer, and one (1) copy to the Village Attorney, and shall further make available to each of the Planning commission members a copy of the application.

5. Upon receipt of the applications, the Village Attorney and Village Engineer shall review each application within thirty (30) days from date of receipt. If, after consultation with each other, they agree that the application is in compliance with the Village Ordinance, they shall notify the Village Clerk to schedule a public hearing on the application in accordance with Section 13.6 of the village Ordinance.

6. The public hearing shall be held before the Planning Commission. At the public hearing, the applicant shall present his proposed preliminary development plan to the public, and shall answer such questions as may be presented to the applicant by the public. The Planning Commission shall further hear the comments of the public concerning the proposed plan. The Planning Commission shall not be obligated to vote on the proposed plan the night of the hearing. The Planning Commission shall receive and consider written recommendations from the Village Engineer and Village Attorney concerning the proposed preliminary development plan. The Planning Commission may then approve, approve with conditions, or deny the proposed preliminary development plan. Approval must be by majority vote or a quorum of Planning Commission members. At the time the vote is taken, the Planning Commission members should state their reasons or basis for their vote. If a preliminary development plan is approved with conditions, those conditions shall be clearly stated and reduced to writing by the Commission Secretary. If the proposed preliminary development plan is denied, another plan will be considered only after a re-application is filed with the Village Clerk.

7. The Village Council does not have to approve the development plans in a planned unit development project. If the Planning Commission
approves the preliminary plan, the applicant shall then submit a final development plan together with twelve (12) copies thereof to the Village Clerk. The Clerk shall transmit a copy of the final development plan to the village Engineer for his recommendations, and shall also make the said plan available to the Village Attorney, as well as to the members of the Planning Commission.

8. Within thirty (30) days, the Village Engineer shall submit his written recommendations and comments as to the proposed final development plan to the Village Clerk's office for transmission to the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission shall then review the final development plan at its next available meeting, and shall consider the recommendations of the village Engineer, approve with conditions, or deny the final development plan. Any approval with conditions shall be reduced to writing and shall become a part of the final development plan. No alterations or changes shall be allowed thereafter without re-applying in accordance with the procedure for the original approval. No approval shall become effective until all fees and charges due the Village have been paid.

9. In order to approve the final development plan, the Planning commission must find that the purpose, objectives, and requirements of Chapter XIII, as amended, of the Zoning Ordinance have been met. The purpose and objectives of the Ordinance are found in Section 13.1 and Section 13.3, as amended. If the plan generally does not meet these objectives, the final development plan should not be approved.

10. After approval of the final development plan by the Planning Commission, a Building Permit will be issued; however, prior to issuance the Planning commission may, at its discretion, require a performance bond, irrevocable letter of credit or certified check be filed with the Village Clerk by the applicant to insure that the development will be executed in accordance with the approval of the final development plan.

11. Preliminary or final approval by the Planning commission of a planned unit development does not constitute site plan approval. Final site plans for the project or any portion thereof must be presented to the Planning Commission and acted upon as required by Chapter XV of the Zoning Ordinance.

IV. REVIEW PROCESS FOR SPECIAL USE PERMITS

1. Special uses are those uses that are allowed in various zone districts only with special approval of the Planning Commission. Only special uses, which are provided in Chapter XIV of the Zoning Ordinance, as amended, or elsewhere in the Ordinance, may be considered for approval by the Village Planning Commission.
2. A person requesting a special use may obtain an application for the same at the Village Clerk's office, and shall submit the application to the Village Clerk, together with the application fee.

3. After receiving the application, the village clerk shall transmit copies of the application to the Planning Commission members. The Village Clerk shall then have published in the local newspaper a notice that the special use request has been received. The notice shall contain the information specified in Section 14.6 of the Ordinance, as amended, and shall also be sent by Certified Mail or personally served on all owners of real property within three hundred (300) feet of the subject property, and to all occupants of all structures within three hundred (300) feet of the subject property as described in Section 14.6 of the Ordinance, as amended. The notice shall be sent or served and published not less than fifteen (15) days prior to the date at which time the application will be considered by the Village Planning Commission.

4. It should be noted that a public hearing is not required under the Ordinance unless it is specifically requested by either the Planning commission, the applicant, or a property owner or occupant within three hundred (300) feet of the subject property. Usually a request for a public hearing will not be made; however, if such a request is made, notice of the public hearing shall be published in the local newspaper and mailed or personally served on all property owners or occupants within three hundred (300) feet of the boundary of the property in question. If the applicant or the Planning Commission requests a public hearing, only notification of the public hearing is required. A decision by the Planning Commission on a special land use request shall not be made, however, unless notification of the request for special land use approval, or notification of a public hearing on a special land use request has been given [MSA 5.2934(1) (3)]

5. After the notices have been sent and published as required, and after a public hearing has been held, if one has been requested, then the Planning commission may approve, or approve with conditions, or deny the special land use request. Approval of the request shall be reduced to writing by the commission Secretary, and shall clearly state any conditions of approval, which have been made buy the Planning commission. A copy of the approval, or approval with conditions, shall be sent to the applicant.

6. When a vote is taken on a special land use request, the Planning Commission members shall state their conclusions and vie the basis for their decision. In order to grant approval, the Planning Commission must find the following:

   a. That the proposed use is intended to serve the area or neighborhood where located; and,

   b. That it can be conducted at the proposed location without interfering with the enjoyment of substantial property rights of the other owners in the surrounding vicinity.
c. It should be noted that all home occupations which are approved as special used are subject to the limitations and conditions set forth in Section 14.5 (c) of the Village Zoning Ordinance, as amended.

V. REVIEW PROCESS FOR VARIANCES

1. The Douglas Village Zoning Board of Appeals has jurisdiction over requests for a variance under the Village Zoning Ordinance.

2. An application for a request for a Village Zoning Variance may be obtained at the Village Clerk’s office, and shall be submitted to the Village Clerk, together with the required filing fee.

3. Upon receipt of the application for a variance, the Village Clerk shall send a copy of the application to the Village Attorney, and shall transmit one (1) copy to the Chairman of the Board of Appeals.

4. Upon receipt of the application, the Chairman of the Board of Appeals, in consultation with the Village Clerk, shall schedule a date and time for the Board of Appeals to meet and consider the variance request. Notice of the meeting shall be sent to the applicant and to all property owners and occupants within three hundred (300) feet of the subject property. The notice likewise shall be published in the local newspaper. All notices shall be served and published not less than fifteen (15) days prior to the meeting date of the board of Appeals to consider the request.

5. The Board of Appeals may grant a variance only in accordance with the standards and requirements as set forth in Section 18.6 and 18.7 of the zoning Ordinance. Unless all of the requirements and standards can be met, the application for a variance must be denied. Also, if the Board of Appeals finds that the zoning requirements as written in the Ordinance can be met by the applicant, the application must be denied.

6. A majority vote of all of the members of the Board of Appeals is required to approve a variance request except that a concurring 2/3rds vote of all of the members of the Board of Appeals shall be required to grant a variance from uses of land permitted in the Zoning Ordinance.

7. The Board of Appeals may grant a variance subject to conditions, which shall be reduced to writing by the Village Clerk, and set forth on the variance approval. A copy of the approval with conditions shall be transmitted to the applicant by the Village Clerk.

8. At the time of taking the vote on the application for a variance, the Board of Appeals members should state their conclusions and basis for their decision. If it appears that a practical hardship is not unique, but is a common hardship on other individuals, it shall transmit such findings to the village Planning Commission, who may consider the appropriateness of amending the Zoning Ordinance if they so desire.
VI. REVIEW PROCESS OF RE-ZONING REQUESTS

1. A re-zoning request is actually a request to amend the village Zoning Ordinance by changing the present zoning of a given area of land within the Village, to a new zone.

2. An application for re-zoning shall be obtained from the Village Clerk's office and shall be submitted to the Village Clerk, together with the required fee. Twelve (12) copies of the application shall be submitted, in addition to the original application.

3. Upon receipt of the application, a copy of the re-zoning application shall be transmitted to each member of the Planning Commission, and to the Zoning Administrator.

4. The Village Clerk, when notified by the Planning Commission shall then schedule a public hearing to be held before the Planning Commission. Notice of the public hearing shall be published not less than fifteen (15) days prior to the hearing. A copy of the notice shall also be sent to the applicant, as well as to the owners of any other property, which lies within the area proposed to be rezoned. The notice shall contain the following information:
   
   a. The name of the applicant.
   b. The legal description of the property proposed to be rezoned.
   c. A description of the requested zoning change and a description of the present zoning.
   d. The date, time and place of the public hearing.

   (NOTE: That the notice does not have to be sent to property owners or occupants within three hundred (300) feet of the subject property, unless the property lies within the area requested for rezoning.)

5. Notice shall also be sent to any public utility, or railroad within the district or zones affected by the request not less than fifteen (15) days prior to the public hearing. Such notification is required, however, only if such utility or railroad has registered with the Village Clerk its name and address for the purpose of receiving such notice.

6. After the public hearing has been held before the Planning Commission, it shall transmit it's recommendations and findings to the Village Council, which must subsequently vote on the rezoning request.

7. At the meeting of the Village Council, the rezoning request may be approved by a majority of the Council members unless a protest petition has been filed with the Village Clerk and/or the village Council. If a proper protest petition has been filed, the request then can only be approved by a 2/3rds vote of the Village Council.

8. A protest petition is valid if it is signed by either the owners of at least twenty (20) per cent of the area of land included in the proposed zoning change; or, the owners of at least twenty (20) per cent of the land included within an area extending outward one hundred (100) feet from any point on the boundary of
the land included within the proposed zoning change. (Public land is excluded in calculating the twenty (20) per cent land area requirement.) [MSA 5.2934 (5)].

When voting on the proposed rezoning, the Council members should state their conclusions and the basis for their decision. This especially important in these cases, if their decision is challenged in court, and will avoid a claim that the decision was made arbitrarily or capriciously, and will avoid the court sending the request back to the Council for another vote so the basis for the decision can be established in the record. The Village Clerk will record the vote and reasons given.

9. Generally speaking, rezoning requests should be granted sparingly and only when the rezoning will not violate the general purposes and intent of the Village land use plan on which the existing Zoning Ordinance is based. If the rezoning request will not violate the general intent and purposes of the land use plan, and will be of some benefit to the public as well as the applicant, and where there are compelling reasons for changing the zoning plan, the Village may grant the rezoning request.

10. If the Council approves the rezoning request, the Zoning Ordinance shall then be amended by an amended ordinance prepared by the Village Attorney and signed by the Village President and the Village Clerk. This amending ordinance shall then be published at least one (1) time in the local newspaper within fifteen (15) days from the date of its adoption. It shall contain the effective date of the ordinance, and shall state the time and place where a copy of the amending ordinance may be purchased or inspected.

VII. REVIEW PROCESS FOR SITE PLAN APPROVAL

1. Applications for site plan approval must comply with Chapter XV of the Village Zoning Ordinance as amended, and shall be made on an application available at the Village Clerk's office.

2. A site plan application and subsequent approval by the Planning Commission is required for all land uses, except permitted detached single-family dwellings and two family dwellings.

3. The applicant shall file the application together with twelve (12) copies with the Village Clerk's office, and also be advised at that time that the applicant will be billed for the Village's actual costs in reviewing the application. Upon receipt of the application, the Clerk shall make available copies to the individual commission members, and, if necessary the Village Engineer and/or Village Attorney. The application shall also be sent to the Zoning Administrator for written opinion. Within forty-five (45) days of the filing of the application, the Planning Commission shall review the application and either denies the application or grant approval of the application. If the Planning Commission denies the application, it shall state its reasons for denial. If the Planning Commission requires that the site plan be revised, it shall notify the
applicant of revisions which are requested and the applicant shall then resubmit the site plan with the revisions required.

4. After the site plan has been approved, one (1) copy of the application shall be returned to the applicant by the Village Clerk indicating that approval has been granted, and that a Building Permit may be issued. A copy of the zoning application for the building permit, signed by the Zoning Administrator will also need to be presented before a permit can be issued.

5. The Planning Commission, in considering a site plan, shall follow the standards provided in Section 15.6 of the Zoning Ordinance.

6. In approving a site plan, the Planning Commission may require that a bond or other financial guaranty be furnished by the applicant to ensure compliance with the approved plan.

7. The Village Clerk shall determine the cost to the Village in approving the site plan, and shall bill the applicant in accordance with such costs as soon as possible after the review procedure has been completed. No approval shall be effective until all such charges have been paid in full to the Village.

8. It should be noted that Public Hearings or notices to surrounding property owners are not required under chapter XV for site plan review, when not associated with a Planned Unit Development.

9. A site plan shall be approved if it contains the information required by the Zoning Ordinance and is in compliance with the Zoning Ordinance and the conditions imposed there under, other applicable ordinances, and State and Federal statutes. [MSA 5.2934 (4) (2)]
Public Servant Code of Conduct

This general code of conduct is for members of the City of the Village of Douglas City Council and of the City’s boards, committees and commissions ("Members") to ensure public confidence in the integrity of local government and its effective, open, and fair operation. In addition, it is to apply the idea that what any one member does has an impact on the effectiveness and actions of the whole in both positive and negative ways. To this end the following standards are recognized:

1. Act in the Public Interest
Recognizing that stewardship of the public interest must be their primary concern, Members will work for the common good of the people of Douglas and not for any private or personal interest and they will ensure fair and equal treatment to all persons, claims and transactions coming before the Douglas City Council, boards, committees and commissioners.

2. Comply with the Law
Members shall comply with the laws of the nation, the State of Michigan and the City of the Village of Douglas in the performance of their public duties. These laws include, but are not limited to: The United States and Michigan Constitutions; the Douglas City Charter and Municipal Code; laws pertaining to conflicts of interest, election campaigns, financial disclosures, employer responsibilities, and open processes of government; and City policies and procedures.

3. Conduct of Members
The professional and personal conduct of Members must be above reproach and avoid even the appearance of impropriety. Members shall refrain from rudeness, disrespectful comments (including intended or perceived nonconstructive nonverbal gestures or body language), insults, name-calling, abusive conduct, personal charges or verbal attacks upon the character or motives of other Members of Council, boards, committees and commissions, the staff or public.

4. Respect for Process
Members shall perform their duties in accordance with the processes and rules of order as established by the City Council, board, committees and commissions governing the deliberation of public policy issues, meaningful involvement of the public, and implementation of policy decisions of the City Council by City Staff. In addition, it shall also be recognized that all inquiries or requests from Members to City Staff shall go through the City Manager’s office in order to keep the proper flow of information, until otherwise assigned.

5. Conduct of Public Meetings
Members shall prepare themselves for public issues, listen courteously and attentively to all public discussions before the body, and focus on the business at hand. They shall refrain from interrupting other speakers, making personal comments not germane to the business of the body, or otherwise interfering with the orderly conduct of meetings. Everyone should feel safe in expressing their opinions, views, and concerns. Negative, judgmental, or nonconstructive body language (i.e. eyerolling, crossed arms, etc.) or other nonverbal communication should be avoided. Clapping, shouting, booing, and excessive sighing during meetings are discouraged.
6. Conflict of Interest
In order to ensure their independence and impartiality on bee common good, Members shall not use their official positions to influence governmental decisions in which they have a material financial interest, or where they have an organizational responsibility or personal relationship, which may give the appearance of a conflict of interest. Members shall disclose conflicts with investments, interest in real property, sources of income, and gifts without being required to disclose the value of said conflicts; and they shall abstain from participating in deliberations and decision-making where conflicts may exist.

7. Policy Role of Members
Members shall respect and adhere to the Council-manager structure as adopted by the Charter of the Douglas City government. In this structure, the City Council determines the policies of the City with the advice, information and analysis provided by the public, boards, committees, commissions, and City Staff.

8. Independence of Boards, Committees and Commissions
Because of the value of the independent advice of boards, committees, and commissions to the public decision-making process, Members of Council shall refrain from using their position to obstruct or otherwise unduly influence the deliberations or outcomes of board, committee, commission, and staff deliberation proceedings in a manner that does not facilitate solution-based advancement.

9. Positive Environment
Members shall support the maintenance of a positive and constructive work place environment for City employees and for citizens and businesses dealing with the City. Members shall recognize their special role in dealing with City employees and in no way create the perception of inappropriate direction to staff.

Compliance and Enforcement
A code of conduct is integrity-based, and intended to be self-enforcing. It therefore becomes most effective when Members are thoroughly familiar with it and embrace its provisions. This document expresses standards for ethical conduct expected of Members of the Douglas City Council, boards, committees, and commissions. Members themselves have the primary responsibility to ensure that ethical standards are understood and met, and that the public can continue to have full confidence in the integrity of government. The chairs of boards, committees, and commissions and the Mayor, have the responsibility to intervene when actions of Members appear to be in violation of the perceived code of conduct are witnessed or brought to their attention. The City Council by majority vote may also impose sanctions on Members whose conduct does not comply with the City’s ethical standards. Sanctions may include:

- Official verbal reprimand in an open meeting;
- Formal public letter of censure by Mayor, Chair, or majority of the council or body
- Loss of committee assignment(s);
- Other courses of action as they are made available by state statute and legal means and agreed upon by a majority of the Douglas City Council.

Coordination with Charter and Code of Ordinances
This general code of conduct is intended to be consistent with Chapter VI of the Douglas City Charter and Chapter 31, § 31.35-31.44 of the City Code. In the event of a conflict, the City will strive to adhere to the rule or standard that is more ethically stringent.

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ETHICAL PRINCIPLES FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CITY OF THE VILLAGE OF DOUGLAS

1. **PRINCIPLE THAT THE PUBLIC OFFICE IS A PUBLIC TRUST.**
   Public servants shall treat public office as a public trust, using the powers and resources of public office only to advance public interests, and not to attain personal benefits or pursue any private interest incompatible with the public good.

2. **PRINCIPLE OF INDEPENDENT, OBJECTIVE JUDGMENT.**
   Public servants shall employ independent, objective judgment in performing their duties, deciding all matters on the merits, free from conflicts of interest and apparent improper influences.

3. **PRINCIPLE OF ACCOUNTABILITY.**
   Public servants shall assure that government is conducted openly, efficiently, equitably and honorably in a manner that permits the citizenry to make informed judgments and to hold government officials accountable.

4. **PRINCIPLE OF DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP.**
   Public servants shall honor and respect the principles and spirit of representative democracy and set a positive example of good citizenship by scrupulously observing the letter and spirit of laws and rules.

5. **PRINCIPLE OF RESPECTABILITY AND FITNESS FOR PUBLIC OFFICE.**
   Public servants shall safeguard public confidence in the integrity of government by being honest, fair, caring, and respectful, and by avoiding conduct which creates the appearance of impropriety.
Tips for Better Meetings

Preparation
• Define meeting purpose
• Develop an agenda
• Distribute the agenda
• Prepare the meeting site

Starting/Conducting
• Start on time
• Review/Agree on the agenda
• Stick to the agenda
• Involve all participants
• Summarize agreements
• Keep a written record

End of Meeting
• End on time
• Recap highlights
• Assign responsibilities
• Debrief the meeting
• Set next meeting date, time, place
• Thank participants

After the Meeting
• Tally debriefing exercise
• Prepare/Distribute minutes
• Compare agenda with meeting results
• Monitor for assigned duties and tasks
Why Meetings Fail:

Fifteen Leading Reasons

Meetings can fail for a variety of reasons. Sometimes the reason(s) for a less than satisfactory meeting is easy to identify. At other times, the reason(s) may be difficult to discern. The 15 points listed below serve as the leading reasons for meeting failure. Taking the time to control or monitor for each of the reasons noted will help any group or organization have productive meetings.

- Lack of focus and discipline
- No thought given to the process
- No purpose identified
- Participants lack clarity about roles
- Participants fell vulnerable
- Meeting environment
- No agenda or sequence
- No leadership
- No summary/evaluation
- No follow through
- Tommy Talkalots
- Silent Sarahs
- Attendance
- Ritual and tradition
- Reliance on professionals
Effective meetings

Local planning and zoning decisions are often contentious and can be highly emotional. The way a meeting is conducted and the way people are treated often affect not only the outcome but also public perception of the fairness of the process.

The first matter to consider in planning any meeting is its objective. Nearly all public meetings take place for at least one of three purposes:

- To provide information.
- To give advice.
- To solve problems.

Meetings may take the form of public hearings, regular meetings to consider development applications, workshops, forums or task force meetings. People need to know the purpose of a meeting so they can choose to participate—or not participate—appropriately. Sitting through a meeting only to learn they will not be allowed to participate makes people angry. Make the agenda available to all—not just board members or commissioners.

Regardless of the purpose, all meetings have four stages: preparing, conducting, concluding and following up. To achieve a desirable outcome, all four stages must be executed carefully. Planning officials are most often involved in informational meetings, problem-solving meetings and public hearings. Each type has a different purpose and method of conduct. Understanding the advantages, limitations and best use of each can help enhance public participation and deliberation of important issues.

CONDUCTING INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS

Sometimes called development review meetings, informational meetings are held to convey information or data to decision-makers or interested citizens. In the planning context, these meetings are conducted to review site plans for new development or discuss community changes that may require an update to the master plan. Communication at informational meetings is generally one way—from the presenters to the audience or board. The audience may be allowed the opportunity to ask questions of presenters, but an ongoing dialogue among the presenters and audience is generally not encouraged.

Although the environment and format at informational meetings are not conducive to creative participation, there are ways to engage participants. Though it's not possible at all meetings, people feel good when they are greeted at the door and made to feel welcome. When visitors arrive, give
them an agenda. Ask whether they plan to participate in the meeting or observe it. When the meeting is opened for public comment, invite them to speak. Remember that information, knowledge and statistics are power; if you're the only one who possesses those, you have the power. Audience members feel power when they're engaged. People who feel powerless are angry, devalued and grumpy.

Have presenters face the audience during a presentation. When the decision makers sit on a dais facing the audience and a presenter faces the members to addresses them, his or her back is to the audience. This is not a welcoming situation, especially when the audience is sitting on uncomfortable chairs. If the dais is not fixed, you can improve the situation by repositioning it to an angle at a front corner of the room. Position the lectern so presenters stand sideways to the audience, giving them the opportunity to address both groups, and giving decision makers and audience members a partial view of the action.

Preparing for a meeting you expect 200 angry people to attend is different from preparing for your normal meeting with a regular crowd or virtually no audience. The tips for conducting a better meeting (page 11) are provided to help you conduct meetings, particularly those with more people attending, when a greater degree of formality is necessary.

Start on time. People who come to a meeting expecting to participate or hear deliberations expect promptness. If you start and end on time, members learn quickly to arrive on time and you create a more favorable impression. Have the members review and agree on the agenda, then stick to it. Involve the audience when you can, and summarize agreements made during the deliberations.

To control a meeting and limit it to a reasonable length, set rules. Consider limiting the time allowed and number of comments from an organization, or from one person.
What’s important is that any rules are enforced consistently, fairly and equally.

Before adjourning, set the date, time and place for the next meeting, particularly if items under consideration are tabled or delayed until future meetings. Thank people for coming.

You’re not done when the gavel has been tapped at adjournment and everyone has left. After the meeting, prepare and distribute minutes. Boards and commissions are required to keep this written record of meetings. Make the minutes available as promised or in accordance with Michigan’s Open Meetings Act, if required.

Following these tips will result in effective meetings that people appreciate. They will come to the meeting on time. They’ll feel that you listen and value their opinions in a businesslike and professional manner.

CONDUCTING PROBLEM-SOLVING MEETINGS
The purpose of a problem-solving meeting, also called a workshop or decision-making meeting, is to identify issues, discuss a controversial or complex issue and agree on a solution. Generally, agreement is reached by consensus rather than by vote. These meetings provide the most flexibility for public participation. Public input could include a visioning exercise, design charrette, SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis, strategic planning exercise, town hall meeting, open house or other activity.

The problem-solving meeting is best suited to kick off the master planning process, develop recommendations for a sub-area of the community (such as downtown or a neighborhood), or seek initial input on a complex or large development proposal.

One of the mos: important considerations is to prepare the meeting site so it’s conducive to public participation. Room setup is important. For example, if a meeting is for the specific purpose of developing language for master plan goals and objectives, you will want interaction; keep the group small so that people feel comfortable speaking. If more than 12 attend, assign individuals to smaller groups for optimal discussion. It’s important that everyone sits at the same
Physical level and each group has a diverse mix of people. Round tables provide an ideal format for small-group discussions.

Although the problem-solving meeting appears more informal, it can be the most complicated meeting to conduct because of its multiple levels of communication. There may be overall communication from the meeting leader, a group facilitator for each table, individual discussion and intergroup discussion. In addition, a recorder can be designated for each group, for the entire meeting or both.

One of the first questions to ask yourself when designing a problem-solving meeting is, "what would a successful outcome look like?" Regardless of format, consider examining six major steps in a problem-solving meeting. The process of using the six steps collectively is referred to as strategic futuring. It may not be feasible or desirable to address all steps in a single meeting. You may need to use different problem-solving tools at different stages in the process.

### Steps in strategic futuring

1. **Reviewing history.** What are our community’s milestones? What have we learned from the past that can help shape our future?

2. **Assessing reality.** What are our purposes, mission, values and guiding principles? What are our strengths, assets, resources and opportunities? What are our challenges, weaknesses and learning needs? What events, developments and trends shape the community’s future?

3. **Envisioning the future.** What is our community’s dream, our ideal future, our ultimate goal?

4. **Developing options for change.** What can we do to move the community closer to our ideal?

5. **Setting priorities and selecting from among options.** What should we do to move closer to our ideal community? What should our goals be?

6. **Planning action.** How can we achieve our goals for the community?
CONDUCTING PUBLIC HEARINGS

The purposes of a public hearing are to give citizens ample opportunity to be heard and to bring to the planning commission relevant facts and opinions that may help in making decisions.

Public hearings fail when the public misunderstands the limitations and has unreasonable expectations of how citizens can influence decisions. Recognizing this constraint, it is important to maintain formality for the hearing. Taking time at the beginning of the meeting to inform the public about the process to be followed can save valuable time during the hearing.

Although the zoning act does not specify a procedure for public hearings, each planning commission should have an established procedure for holding them. The commission should adopt rules or bylaws governing the conduct of meetings. The rules should be spelled out in the bylaws of the planning commission or zoning board of appeals. The rules may specify reasonable limits, such as limiting the time allotted per speaker. Rules and procedures should be printed and distributed with the meeting agenda.

Generally, public hearings should allow everyone attending the opportunity to speak. Speakers should always address the chair, not individual members, the staff, an applicant or other members of the audience. Once the public hearing is closed, it should remain closed so the commission may adequately deliberate the merits of the case.

The single most important key to a successful public hearing is clear direction and enforcement of meeting procedures by the chair. Without formal procedures, a public hearing can quickly degenerate into debates among members of the audience, between the presenter and the audience or between board members. The chair may need to call a 10-minute recess if a meeting appears to be getting out of hand.
SAMPLE
Public hearing procedures

1. The chair will call the meeting to order and make any special announcements about how the hearing will be conducted.

2. Minutes will be reviewed and approved.

3. The planning staff will review the facts and circumstances of the application.

4. The applicant(s) will make their presentation, which may be limited to 10 minutes. Commission members may ask questions.

5. Speaker(s) for or against approval of the application will be allowed up to three minutes each to address the commission at the point their specific item appears on the agenda. For meetings in which extensive participation is predicted, the commission may require participants to sign up to speak before the meeting begins. Citizens can also submit comments in writing as an alternative to speaking at a public hearing. All written comments should be submitted by a designated deadline before the meeting. All speakers or commenters should state their names and addresses when speaking or submitting written comments.

6. Each speaker will be given a 30-second signal to conclude the presentation. When notified that their time is up, speakers must stop speaking immediately.

7. Homeowners associations and other large groups are encouraged to designate a spokesperson. Each group may designate one speaker, who will have a maximum of 10 minutes.

8. After all presentations, the planning commission will take formal action to close the hearing.

9. Commission members will have an opportunity to comment, ask questions and deliberate the issue.

10. The commission will take action on the issue. The commission is not required to make a decision during the meeting if additional information is needed.
Making and documenting decisions

DELIBERATIONS

Deliberations of the planning commission or zoning board of appeals (ZBA) before a motion is made should focus on ensuring conformance with ordinance standards. The decision-making body must ensure that the standards required for review are used properly and made part of the record. To avoid challenges of decisions, it’s critical to follow an effective decision-making process. It’s essential to support decisions using the standards of the zoning ordinance.

It is not enough to state that an application should be denied because it will be detrimental to the site or community as a whole. The record must show sufficient facts to back up the findings made according to the ordinance standards. For instance, if traffic is a concern, describe those concerns as precisely and factually as possible. A well-supported decision provides the background needed to build a solid legal foundation for the decision.

CONDITIONS

The planning commission and ZBA may attach reasonable conditions for rezoning an approval. Conditions are allowed only for planned unit development approvals and rezonings under the state’s conditional rezoning provision. The conditions must be related to the standards of review. In addition, the decision-making body must consider the “reasonableness test”: If this condition were not attached to the decision, the standards for review would not be met and the request denied.

DECISION-MAKING PRINCIPLES

After deliberating the facts of a case, it is time for the planning commission or ZBA to make a decision. A motion to approve, deny or approve with conditions should contain the facts to support the decision reached and who is responsible for ensuring that conditions are met. For example, you may require that a landscape plan be submitted to the zoning administrator to certify that all conditions have been met. The motion must contain:
• a maker and supporter.
• a description of the request.
• the action (approval, approval with conditions, denial or tabling).
• conditions attached to affirmative decisions.
• reasons for the action taken (the standards that apply).

Remember, if the members of the board are not comfortable with making a decision, they should table the issue until the needed information can be obtained. It is important to avoid rushing to a decision. Even motions to table a decision must be clear to everyone on the board — plus the applicant.

It is important to avoid even the perception of “back room” decision-making before a formal vote. Private conversations among board members before or during the meeting should be avoided ever if they are not technically in violation of the Open Meetings Act. Express your opinions during the public hearing process to help the audience and fellow board members understand how you reached your decision. This will help demonstrate to the public that a fair and impartial decision was made.

SAMPLE
Motion
I move that the request for site plan #05-07 by Kedzie Development Company, for a special use permit to construct Burger Barn restaurant at 1956 Center Street, be approved in conformance with the requirements of sections 3.1 and 7.8 of the Sparltyville Zoning Ordinance, subject to the following conditions:
1. Include a service drive on the site plan connecting the Burger Barn parking lot to the Spartan Shopping Center parking lot adjacent to Center Street in conformance with section 2.5 of the zoning ordinance.
2. Revise the roadway sign dimensions and height in conformance with section 2.2 of the zoning ordinance.

Avoid
Rushing to make a decision.

Private conversations between board members.
3. Revise the landscape plan to show additional buffering to the neighboring residential area south of the site in accordance with section 9.2 of the zoning ordinance.
4. Revise the storm water runoff plan as outlined in the engineer's report submitted and approved by the Spartyville engineering consultant.
5. Revise and date the site plan and documents addressing the above conditions and submit for staff approval within 60 days.

FINDING OF FACT
One of the most effective means of documenting decisions is through a finding of fact — a concise statement of action taken by the members. It normally includes the same information contained in a motion, such as the one above, but in more detail, including:
- Description of the requested action.
- Motion made by the planning commission or ZBA.
- Reasons the standards were deemed to be met or not met.
- Any conditions attached to an approved request.

The findings may be drafted during a meeting and completed as part of approval of minutes at the following meeting. Neither the findings nor the minutes are official until reviewed and adopted by the decision-making body.

The Michigan Zoning Act now says, "the decision on a special land use shall be incorporated in a statement of findings and conclusions relative to the special land use which specifies the basis for the decision and any conditions imposed."

Fifteen reasons meetings fail
Meetings fail for a variety of reasons. Monitoring the reasons for your meeting successes and failures will help you conduct better meetings in the future. The top reasons that meetings fail are:
1. The purpose has not been identified.
2. Those in charge have not thought about the process.
3. No agenda is planned.
4. The meeting has no focus or discipline.
5. Traditional rituals that are no longer appropriate are followed.
6. Those in charge don't exercise leadership.
7. Professionals are relied on rather than volunteers doing their share.
8. Participants are unclear of their roles.
9. Participants feel vulnerable.
10. "Tommy Talkalots" are allowed to dominate the meeting.
11. "Silent Sarahs" are not encouraged or allowed to participate.
12. The meeting environment is inappropriate.
13. Attendance is low.
14. Meeting minutes are not adequate or available when required.
15. Those in charge don't monitor follow-through.
DOCUMENTING DECISIONS MADE
Several important steps must be taken to follow up a zoning decision. Because the planning commission may have reviewed several versions of the development proposal, it's a good practice for the secretary of the decision-making body and the applicant to sign at least two copies of the approved plan — one for the applicant and one for the planning commission. This will avoid future confusion if changes to the plan are proposed or if there is a question about compliance with the approval. In addition, a copy of the approved minutes should be sent to the applicant to clarify any conditions or other important information reached as part of the decision.

Good record keeping on the part of the planning commission will help ensure a smooth post-decision process. At the very least, the planning commission should keep records of:
• meeting minutes.
• staff notes (including reports of consultants).
• application materials (including public notices in newspapers).
• site plan (at least one signed copy).
• correspondence (including follow-up letter to applicant noting action taken by approving body, conditions placed on approval and special instructions).

On the record
Good record keeping means keeping meeting minutes, staff notes, application materials, a signed copy of the site plan, all correspondence, plus any conditions placed on approval and special instructions.
Most conflict stems from miscommunication. It behooves us to improve our communication skills.

Speaking skills

Many people have found that a high percentage of conflict stems from miscommunication. It behooves us to improve our communication skills.

Speaking is one of the many ways we communicate. Think before you speak. Know your audience and tailor your message to it. Be specific and speak in easy-to-understand terms. Organize your thoughts and present them logically. Make notes and use visuals. Be patient with the audience. Summarize your presentation. Give and receive feedback from the audience.

Listening skills

Most people like talking better than listening. Effective listening is a skill that needs practice. Following are tips to improve your listening skills.

Call people by their name. Do it formally, using Mr., Ms. or Commissioner, as appropriate. Using first names implies a degree of familiarity that may not be appropriate for a public body. It may help to write down the names of presenters and speakers on paper positionally. During the meeting, you may be better able to call everyone by his or her name, and they will know you listened to them. Using people’s names helps you remember them, too.

Speak positively. Meanings are in people, not in words. Sometimes two people say the same things repeatedly, neither understanding the other. If they don’t change their explanation, each wonders why the other doesn’t understand. When you are in a situation with someone in which you do not understand each other, change the way you express yourself, using different words.

Give people your complete attention. Make eye contact with the listener. Do not carry on casual side conversations with other board or commission members. Eliminate your barriers to listening. We put up all kinds of barriers, such as faking attention, which does not fool people. When someone asks a question and you respond to the wrong question, she or he knows you were faking it. If you want people to feel heard or listened to, you have to listen to them. Look them in the eye, pay attention and listen honestly. You can’t be thinking about getting home and relaxing in front of the
television. We all use filters, and often don't really listen because we don't like what we're hearing. Often, we only half listen and hear what we want to hear.

**Speak at a moderate rate** — not too fast or too slow.

**Give feedback.** Clarify, paraphrase and respond to what someone has said.

**USING “I” MESSAGES**

Effective communication is a skill that can be learned with practice. When someone's behavior is unacceptable, you have a concern — and a choice. You can change yourself, change your environment, or communicate your concern to the other person. You may use an “I” message, which communicates your concern effectively, or a “you” message, which puts people on the defensive. When we put people on the defensive we create inhibitions and distrust, then they're ready for conflict.

To communicate an “I” message, identify a behavior, explain its effect on you, and communicate your feeling that results. Here's an example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communicating an “I” message</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State the behavior or event, in concrete, specific terms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe the effect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Express your feelings honestly and clearly.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“I” messages are effective because
- they place responsibility with the sender of the message.
- they reduce the receiver's defensiveness and resistance to further communication.
- they provide information about the other person's behavior without evaluating it.
- they promote open communication.
- they build trust, create empathy and facilitate understanding between the sender and the receiver.

When you are not describing your own feelings as you send a message, you are probably evaluating, ordering or blaming
Tips for improving written communication

- Keep it short.
- Use familiar words, avoiding jargon.
- Be clear and precise.
- Edit ruthlessly.
- Proofread to find your errors.
- Use graphics to aid understanding.

the other person. When you do that, you are sending a "you" message. "You" messages are ineffective because:
- they label the receiver instead of explaining your own feelings.
- they put the receiver on the defensive against a negative message.
- they tend to create inhibitions and closed behavior because of distrust.

Written communication

There's no getting around it. You have to do some writing as you carry out your responsibility as a community planning official. When we speak to people, we have the advantage of seeing whether the listener understands. With written messages, we usually don't have that advantage. It's important to write so you cannot be misunderstood, so people cannot interpret your message any way they choose.

Nonverbal communication

Body language. Your body language can be positive or negative. Posture, facial expressions and gestures are part of body language. Public officials in front of an audience give signals without realizing people interpret their body language. When people watch someone scoot his chair back from a table, look at his watch or roll his eyes, they form a negative impression. Negative body language can be destructive. Strive to maintain an impartial but engaged expression.

Room setup. The room setup can be conducive to interaction or inhibit it. Setups that allow everyone to see one another, such as a circle, encourage participation. Auditorium-style seating, with rows of chairs facing the front, gives the impression that the person at the front is an expert and everyone else is a student. A classroom style setup, with rows of chairs, each row behind a row of tables, encourages people to take notes. Use a room setup that is appropriate for the type of interaction desired.

Sharing information. Information is part of what gives us power; in fact, some people say information is power. The more
information you keep to yourself, the more power you have over people who don’t have the information. Communication is more effective when you share information with meeting attendees. Just as important as sharing agendas and handouts, ensure that all can see visual aids used.

READING YOUR AUDIENCE
Understanding the kind of audience you’re dealing with gives you clues to facilitating meetings effectively.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience stance</th>
<th>Communication goal</th>
<th>Strategies for facilitating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Open Accommodating</td>
<td>Share information, teach, plan for action</td>
<td>• Involve the audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Use active planning and problem-solving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Build leadership and relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complacent Not invested</td>
<td>Motivate them to action</td>
<td>• Introduce energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Use humor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Draw from their experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Use experiential learning; avoid lecturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judgmental Faultfinding</td>
<td>Help broaden their perspectives</td>
<td>• Use concrete, factual information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Let group members represent their views</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Use <em>and</em> or <em>or</em>, but not <em>but</em> statements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resistant Angry</td>
<td>Help them feel that they are heard</td>
<td>• Use informality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Share control with group process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Acknowledge verbal and nonverbal messages</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With an open and accommodating audience, you have an opportunity to share and teach. A strategy that works well is to involve the audience in the teaching process. Audience members can share information with one another. With an open, accommodating audience, you have an opportunity to build relationships and leadership.
Robert’s Rules of Order

Role of meeting chair

1. Calling the meeting to order on time
2. Announcing the business before the group in the order noted on the agenda
3. Determining the presence of a quorum
4. Recognizing members who want to speak
5. Processing all motions
6. Expediting business
7. Ruling on points of order
8. Conducting the meeting in a fair and equitable manner

Notes:
• The goal of following Robert’s Rules is to protect the rights of the minority, ensure legality and expedite business.
• Chair should remain neutral, not making motions and not debating. If chair participates in the debate, he or she should relinquish the chair’s position until after the vote.
• When the meeting strays from the business item being addressed, the chair needs to bring the focus back to the specific motion, even if it means interrupting a speaker.

Making a motion is a six-step process:

1. Member makes a motion.
2. Another member seconds the motion.
3. The chair states the motion, formally putting it before the group.
4. The members discuss the motion.
5. The chair puts the question to a vote.
6. The chair announces the results of the vote.

Debates and decorum
• After a motion is made, the floor is open for debate.
• The person making the motion has the right to speak first.
• Each speaker needs to be recognized by the meeting chair.
• Ideally, speakers should alternate between those in favor of a motion and those opposed.
• Each speaker is given a specific time limit to present his or her argument, usually 10 minutes. (Our meetings typically don’t have the luxury of time, so this may be too long.)
• A longer time can be given, if approved by a two-thirds vote.
• A person who hasn’t spoken out yet gets precedence over people who have already spoken to the motion.
• No speaker can speak more than two times.
• Maker of the motion (or the chair) calls for closure of the debate after everyone who wishes to speak has been heard. If someone calls the question before that, the group must vote on whether to end debate (no discussion). A two-thirds vote is required to end a debate.
• To keep the discussion focused on the motion, avoid discussing personalities of the people involved, questioning the motives of other members, making derogatory remarks, including name calling.

Adapted from The Complete Idiot’s Guide to Robert’s Rules and Quick Study Parliamentary Procedure
## ROBERTS RULES CHEAT SHEET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To:</th>
<th>You say:</th>
<th>Interrupt Speaker</th>
<th>Second Needed</th>
<th>Debatable</th>
<th>Amendable</th>
<th>Vote Needed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adjourn</td>
<td>&quot;I move that we adjourn&quot;</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recess</td>
<td>&quot;I move that we recess until...&quot;</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complain about noise, room temp., etc.</td>
<td>&quot;Point of privilege&quot;</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Chair Decides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspend further consideration of something</td>
<td>&quot;I move that we table it&quot;</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End debate</td>
<td>&quot;I move the previous question&quot;</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postpone consideration of something</td>
<td>&quot;I move we postpone this matter until...&quot;</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amend a motion</td>
<td>&quot;I move that this motion be amended by...&quot;</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduce business (a primary motion)</td>
<td>&quot;I move that...&quot;</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Majority</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

The above listed motions and points are listed in established order of precedence. When any one of them is pending, you may not introduce another that is listed below, but you may introduce another that is listed above it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To:</th>
<th>You say:</th>
<th>Interrupt Speaker</th>
<th>Second Needed</th>
<th>Debatable</th>
<th>Amendable</th>
<th>Vote Needed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Object to procedure or personal affront</td>
<td>&quot;Point of order&quot;</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Chair decides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request information</td>
<td>&quot;Point of information&quot;</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask for vote by actual count to verify voice vote</td>
<td>&quot;call for a division of the house&quot;</td>
<td>Must be done before new motion</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>None unless someone objects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Object to considering some undiplomatic or improper matter</td>
<td>&quot;object to consideration of this question&quot;</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take up matter previously tabled</td>
<td>&quot;I move we take from the table...&quot;</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconsider something already disposed of</td>
<td>&quot;I move we now (or later) reconsider our action relative to...&quot;</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Only if original motion was debatable</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consider something out of its scheduled order</td>
<td>&quot;I move we suspend the rules and consider...&quot;</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vote on a ruling by the Chair</td>
<td>&quot;I appeal the Chair's decision&quot;</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Majority</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The motions, points and proposals listed above have no established order of preference; any of them may be introduced at any time except when meeting is considering one of the top three matters listed from the first chart (Motion to Adjourn, Recess or Point of Privilege).
PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING A MAIN MOTION

NOTE: Nothing goes to discussion without a motion being on the floor.

Obtaining and assigning the floor

A member raises hard when no one else has the floor
  • The chair recognizes the member by name

How the Motion is Brought Before the Assembly

  • The member makes the motion: *I move that (or "to") ...* and resumes his seat.
  • Another member seconds the motion: *I second the motion or I second it or second.*
  • The chair states the motion: *It is moved and seconded that ... Are you ready for the question?*

Consideration of the Motion

1. Members can debate the motion.
2. Before speaking in debate, members obtain the floor.
3. The maker of the motion has first right to the floor if he claims it properly
4. Debate must be confined to the merits of the motion.
5. Debate can be closed only by order of the assembly (2/3 vote) or by the chair if no one seeks the floor for further debate.

The chair puts the motion to a vote:

1. The chair asks: *Are you ready for the question?* If no one rises to claim the floor, the chair proceeds to take the vote.
2. The chair says: *The question is on the adoption of the motion that ... As many as are in favor, say 'Aye'.* (Pause for response.) *Those opposed, say 'Nay'.* (Pause for response.) *Those abstained please say 'Aye'.*

The chair announces the result of the vote.

1. *The ayes have it, the motion carries, and ...* (indicating the effect of the vote) or
2. *The nays have it and the motion fails*

**WHEN DEBATING YOUR MOTIONS**

1. Listen to the other side
2. Focus on issues, not personalities
3. Avoid questioning motives
4. Be polite
HOW TO ACCOMPLISH WHAT YOU WANT TO DO IN MEETINGS

MAIN MOTION

You want to propose a new idea or action for the group.
- After recognition, make a main motion.
- Member: "Madame Chairman, I move that __________.

AMENDING A MOTION

You want to change some of the wording that is being discussed.
- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move that the motion be amended by adding the following words __________.
- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move that the motion be amended by striking out the following words __________.
- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move that the motion be amended by striking out the following words, __________, and adding in their place the following words __________.

REFER TO A COMMITTEE

You feel that an idea or proposal being discussed needs more study and investigation.
- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move that the question be referred to a committee made up of members Smith, Jones and Brown.

POSTPONE DEFINITELY

You want the membership to have more time to consider the question under discussion and you want to postpone it to a definite time or day, and have it come up for further consideration.
- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move to postpone the question until __________.

PREVIOUS QUESTION

You think discussion has gone on for too long and you want to stop discussion and vote.
- After recognition, “Madam President, I move the previous question.”

LIMIT DEBATE

You think discussion is getting long, but you want to give a reasonable length of time for consideration of the question.
- After recognition, "Madam President, I move to limit discussion to two minutes per speaker."
POSTPONE INDEFINITELY

You want to kill a motion that is being discussed.
  • After recognition, "Madam Moderator, I move to postpone the question indefinitely."

POSTPONE INDEFINITELY

You are against a motion just proposed and want to learn who is for and who is against the motion.
  • After recognition, "Madame President, I move to postpone the motion indefinitely."

RECESS

You want to take a break for a while.
  • After recognition, "Madame Moderator, I move to recess for ten minutes."

ADJOURNMENT

You want the meeting to end.
  • After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move to adjourn."

PERMISSION TO WITHDRAW A MOTION

You have made a motion and after discussion, are sorry you made it.
  • After recognition, "Madam President, I ask permission to withdraw my motion."

CALL FOR ORDERS OF THE DAY

At the beginning of the meeting, the agenda was adopted. The chairman is not following the order of the approved agenda.
  • Without recognition, "Call for orders of the day."

SUSPENDING THE RULES

The agenda has been approved and as the meeting progressed, it became obvious that an item you are interested in will not come up before adjournment.
  • After recognition, "Madam Chairman, I move to suspend the rules and move item 5 to position 2."

POINT OF PERSONAL PRIVILEGE

The noise outside the meeting has become so great that you are having trouble hearing.
  • Without recognition, "Point of personal privilege."
  • Chairman: "State your point."
  • Member: "There is too much noise, I can't hear."
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

You are going to propose a question that is likely to be controversial and you feel that some of the members will try to kill it by various maneuvers. Also you want to keep out visitors and the press.

- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move that we go into a committee of the whole."

POINT OF ORDER

It is obvious that the meeting is not following proper rules.

- Without recognition, "I rise to a point of order," or "Point of order."

POINT OF INFORMATION

You are wondering about some of the facts under discussion, such as the balance in the treasury when expenditures are being discussed.

- Without recognition, "Point of information."

POINT OF PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

You are confused about some of the parliamentary rules.

- Without recognition, "Point of parliamentary inquiry."

APPEAL FROM THE DECISION OF THE CHAIR

Without recognition, 'I appeal from the decision of the chair.'

Rule Classification and Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class of Rule</th>
<th>Requirements to Adopt</th>
<th>Requirements to Suspend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charter</td>
<td>Adopted by majority vote or as proved by law or governing authority</td>
<td>Cannot be suspended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bylaws</td>
<td>Adopted by membership</td>
<td>Cannot be suspended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Rules of Order</td>
<td>Previous notice &amp; 2/3 vote, or a majority of entire membership</td>
<td>2/3 Vote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standing Rules</td>
<td>Majority vote</td>
<td>Can be suspended for session by majority vote during a meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modified Roberts Rules of</td>
<td>Adopted in bylaws</td>
<td>2/3 vote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Order</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Parliamentary Motions Guide  
Based on Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (10th Edition)

The motions below are listed in order of precedence. Any motion can be introduced if it is higher on the chart than the pending motion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>§21 Close meeting</td>
<td>I move to adjourn</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§20 Take break</td>
<td>I move to recess for</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§19 Register complaint</td>
<td>I rise to a question of</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>privilege</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§18 Make follow</td>
<td>I call for the orders of the</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agenda</td>
<td>day</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§17 Lay aside</td>
<td>I move to lay the question on</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>temporarily</td>
<td>the table</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§16 Close debate</td>
<td>I move the previous question</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§15 Limit or extend</td>
<td>I move that debate be limited to</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>debate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§14 Postpone to a</td>
<td>I move to postpone the mot on to</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>certain time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§13 Refer to committee</td>
<td>I move to refer the motion to</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§12 Modify wording of</td>
<td>I move to amend the motion by</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>motion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§11 Kill main motion</td>
<td>I move that the motion be</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>postponed indefinitely</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§10 Bring business</td>
<td>I move that [or &quot;to&quot;]</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>before assembly (a main</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>motion)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Parliamentary Motions Guide
Based on Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (10th Edition)

Incidental Motions - no order of precedence. Arise incidentally and decided immediately.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YOU WANT TO:</th>
<th>YOU SAY:</th>
<th>INTERRUPT</th>
<th>2ND?</th>
<th>DEBATE?</th>
<th>AMEND?</th>
<th>VOTE?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>§23 Enforce rules</td>
<td>Point of order</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§24 Submit matter to assembly</td>
<td>I appeal from the decision of the chair</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Varies</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§25 Suspend rules</td>
<td>I move to suspend the rules which ...</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§26 Avoid main motion altogether</td>
<td>I object to the consideration of the question</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§27 Divide motion</td>
<td>I move to divide the question</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§29 Demand rising vote</td>
<td>I call for a division</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§33 Parliamentary law question</td>
<td>Parliamentary inquiry</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§33 Request for information</td>
<td>Point of information</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Motions That Bring a Question Again Before the Assembly - no order of precedence. Introduce only when nothing else pending.

| §34 Take matter from table          | I move to take from the table ...      | No        | Yes  | No      | No    | Majority |
| §35 Cancel previous action          | I move to rescind ...                  | No        | Yes  | Yes     | Yes   | 2/3 maj. w/ notice |
| §37 Reconsider motion               | I move to reconsider the vote ...      | No        | Yes  | Varies  | No    | Majority |

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Use of “I” Messages

Effective communication is a skill which can be learned and practiced. “I” messages are most helpful to use when you have a problem with another person or when you have a concern or feeling based on their behavior.

“**I**” Messages are effective because:
- They place responsibility with the sender of the message.
- They reduce the other person's defensiveness and resistance to further communications.
- They provide information about the other person’s behavior but do not evaluate it.
- They help promote open communication in work and personal relationships.
- They built trust, create empathy and facilitate understanding between sender and receiver.

“**I**” Messages defined:
- Speaker identifies the effect (impact) and his/her own specific feeling as a result of a specific behavior or event.

“**I**” Messages have three parts:
- Behavior or event: “When I arrived at the meeting on time this morning...”
- Effect (Impact): “…and no one else was there...”
- Feeling: “I felt angry and disappointed.”

When you are not describing your own feelings as you send a message, then you are probably evaluating, ordering, or blaming the other person. When you are blaming someone else, you are send “you” messages. “You” messages are ineffective because:

- They label the receiver instead of describing your feelings.
- They put the receiver on the defensive against a negative message.
- They tend to create inhibitions and closed behavior because of distrust building.
Using "I" Messages

- If a person's behavior is acceptable to you, no problem.
- If a person's behavior is unacceptable to you, then you have a concern, and a choice.

Your choices include:
- Change yourself
- Change your environment
- Communicate your concern to the other person using "I" or "you" messages.

Three components to an effective "I" message:
- Stating the behavior that is of concern, in concrete specific terms
  
  I.E., "When work on the project is late..." (Notice there is no blame.)

- Describing an effect
  
  I.E., "...it makes it impossible for me to complete my assignment..." (This can assist another person to understand your dilemma.)

- Expressing your honest feelings clearly
  
  I.E., "I am concerned and worried about completing the job."
Managing Meeting Madness

Editor's Note: What follows is a three-part interview with communications expert Andy Flapp conducted by Marla K. Jenkina, Livingston County Planning Director.

Understanding The Negative Response

Q. Public meetings on controversial zoning matters typically draw a large number of hostile people. What are their psychological and social needs during these hearings?

A. I think it's fair to say that many people who show up to complain at hearings understand that the decision cannot be reversed. So... why are they there? For a long time we used to feel that people wanted to blow off steam. Later on in the 70's, we thought that they wanted to be listened to in an impersonal, mechanized world. But it didn't seem like the bureaucracy was listening. What we know now is that people do not want to blow off steam. They want to be understood. Their concern is between understanding somebody and just listening to them.

Q. How does the person conducting the meeting, who cannot reverse his or her decision, indicate to citizens who are very angry and very upset that their concerns are understood?

A. After allowing the citizen to stand up and ventilate, the planning commissioner responds using an A. B. plus C. format. The A part is a qualifier, and you need the qualifier so that you don't come off too strongly. Say to the person, "If I understand what you're saying," Part B is the fact. "You do not want the road going through your property." Then say that, "Here's where the understanding comes in and this is a key element. Part C rephrases the citizen's feelings, "makes you very upset." So put it together. "If I understand you correctly, the road going through your property has made you very upset." Do it sincerely. Do it honestly. Use eye contact. Allow that citizen to know that you understand his or her anguish. In an imperfect world this is not a perfect solution, but at least a person walks away feeling they've been listened to and understood.

Q. What are some of those hidden agendas?

A. A citizen might have political aspirations and want to have the constituency assembled hear them and establish their leadership abilities. Maybe they are lonely. Maybe they need some excitement, and this is exciting to them. It's a game. It's a contest. It's an exhibition. Don't assume that everyone is at the meeting for the same reason. Just because persons have a hidden agenda, however, doesn't mean that they don't have a right to be heard and that they don't have the same kind of need to be understood.

Q. In a meeting situation where people view what is normally unacceptable behavior to be acceptable in the context of a public hearing. They do things that would shock their mothers.

A. There is a whole mob psychology at play. Rudeness and disruptive behavior become the norm when it's not something a person would do in normal situations. In addition to being angry and frustrated a lot of people don't know how to express themselves.

Many people in positions of power are articulate people. They can write a good letter, compose a good memo and can be very strong without swearing or using obscenities in speech. Not everybody is that way. So, some forms of hostility are just the best that a person can do.

So, right away, something psychological happens to the people at these meetings. First of all, they are surrounded by other negative people. This reinforces their negativity. And the other side — the planning commissioners — they see are people that are angry and against their decision making. Both the planning commissioners and the citizens start to think of themselves as being very vulnerable.

Managing The Meeting

Q. Let's talk about organizing and implementing public meetings. Let's investigate some ways to conduct the required hearings or meetings so the format itself discourages conflict and encourages a productive dialogue with two sides listening and working together. How can a planning commission avoid the impression of talking at someone rather than talking to them?

A. The techniques I would use with planning commissioners dealing with a hostile audience are the same techniques I would use with anybody in a verbal communication situation involving giving a speech, interviewing for a job or motivating a sale. They are all the same magnified times 100.
For example, suppose you’ve been looking forward to hearing a speaker you really agree with and you really enjoy. You think about going to see this person every day for three weeks. If you show up at this person’s speech and there is a draft over your head, it is a minor annoyance because you are happy to hear this person talk. Suppose you show up at a hearing; you’re hostile and you’re angry about something that you’ve thought about for three weeks, and there’s a draft of the audience is above your head. That’s like someone running fingernails down a blackboard. It becomes a major problem.

Gestalt talked about the figure-ground. He said that the figure, in this case, the words - what we say — are not really the most important thing. It’s the ground. It’s everything else connected to the communication situation that is important: the way you look, the way you walk, the body language, the humor, the room that you’re in. These are the things, the total package. As one author has said, “You are the message, The words are not the message. You are the message.”

All right, people are only going to remember 25 percent of what was said. Three weeks later they are only going to remember 13 percent of the 25 percent. People do remember if they were treated fairly, if they were treated honestly. Were the people giving them the bad news telling them the things that they didn’t want to hear, doing the best job they could to make them understand and be rationale? To solve as many problems as they possibly could? Did they truly appreciate the feelings these people had that made them so upset?

This is the ground that we must deal with. It’s the tie you wear and the way that you sit at the conference table when you’re not speaking. It’s putting your hand up to your face to whisper something to somebody next to you even though it might be innocent. Is that perceived as doing something negative to the audience that is there? Are you saying something about them? I tell all of my clients, and it’s a hard thing to swallow: perception is reality.

Q. Sometimes a planning commissioner’s skills in communicating are no greater than the skills of average citizens. What are some of the things that the lay planning commissioner can do to establish that positive ground? Is it advisable for the chairperson to set ground rules at the start of a public meeting and tell people what they can expect in terms of procedure?

A. Well, if you are going to have rules, you have to start at the beginning. You can’t establish them as you go along, because the perception is that you just need a decision to cut off debate, or because you are losing, or because you are not getting your own way.

I have to say this as strongly as I can. Almost everyone I have as a client is not a particularly skilled “natural” communicator. There is far less natural talent than there is work. Good hard work. Anticipation, anticipation, anticipation. I honestly believe in any kind of communicative situation you can anticipate about 90 percent of what may happen.

M. Anderson Rapp is President of The Rapp Group of Midland.

I’m amazed how many people don’t give hard thought to determine all of the different scenarios and different situations that might occur and prepare for them ahead of time. They just kind of go in blind, like a lamb being led to the slaughter, and then they just let the situation control them.

If you can anticipate the kind of audience you’re going to have and the kind of response, what’s the best way to plan that meeting? How should we structure the design of the room? Different situations could mean different configurations. Will there be a hearing problem? Should we have a microphone? Should the people come to the microphone? All of these rules should be decided ahead of that meeting. Then nobody feels that you’re changing the game.

Q. Is adjourning a public hearing or meeting prematurely a good alternative when dealing with intense hostility?

A. I would say no. It smacks of cutting off the debate. Unless the meeting is becoming violent, physically violent, or if you feel for the safety, not just of yourself but of the participants on the other side of the table, their families, or the disruption of the property, don’t cut off a discussion prematurely. By the same token, it doesn’t mean you have to go on until every single question has been answered.

Q. You mentioned the organization of the meeting room as a factor in communication. How can the meeting room influence communication?

A. For instance, if a planning commission sits across from the citizens with a desk between them, it establishes an authoritarian situation. The commission on the one side is the authority and the person on the other side is not. If the planning commission is elevated higher than the person, it gives the commission more authority. These points are illustrations of that ground that we discussed before.

If the planning commission wants to have a maximum amount of informality, it could sit at a circular table with every other person being a citizen. That works in very small groups. It works in negotiating situations. All of this should be anticipated and thought about ahead of time. It should not be decided when you show up at the hall.

Q. How do you deal with the citizen who has to have the last word? There are some personality types that always have the last word.

A. Well, I’d say give them the last word. What harm does that do? If it doesn’t detract from what other people want to say, I think the bottom line, the objective, is to allow the citizens to have their voice and to allow planning commissions to make sure that they have a certain kind of decision. Once that is done, I think you’ve accomplished your end. I think a lot of commissions go to these sessions with false expectations, with false objectives and then they come out discouraged. Planning commissioners can certainly make citizens appreciate that they understand citizen difficulties, and that they’ve done the best job they can, explaining clearly why they arrived at a certain decision. To win people over to make them see your side and carry you out on their shoulders is not going to happen.

Q. Is humor a possible means of reducing hostility? How should it be used?
Robert Ales, who advises large corporation heads and presidents, says it is good to use humor to calm a tense situation. I would strongly caution, good humor is good. Bad humor is worse than no humor. In a highly charged situation, verbal techniques are, as I said, magnified times 100. People are looking for things, and a failed joke can become a major irritant, and can even become a thorn in the side of the people that are angry to begin with. This is what they needed to really become angry. So, I would say that I would be very hesitant to use humor in a situation like this.

Q. If a public meeting appears to be truly out of control, for example the audience is controlling the floor, or who’s speaking and in what order, what might the planning commission members do to restore order? Should they ever try to restore order to the meeting?

A. In most cases, if the meeting is out of order, it is because of poor pre-planning and lack of anticipation. I just find in most cases that forethought and pre-planning would have alleviated a lot of the situation.

If a crowd is shouting out angry things you can certainly indicate that other people cannot hear. One good technique is to apply an "I" message rather than a "You" message. Suppose somebody is disruptive and the planning commission chair says, "You’re disturbing the situation. I am going to bounce you out of here." Basically the chair has backed him or her into a corner and given the person more power, more influence and importance than they really deserve.

A better response is to say, "I am having difficulty hearing the person speaking right now because this speaker is being disrupted by someone speaking to his or her neighbors. It is irritating me a great deal and probably the rest of the audience."

Q. It stands to reason that a planning commission chair who has been dealing with these issues for a while should have experience in the types of things that can come up and can pre-plan a lot of those "I" messages and have them available.

A. Ask yourself the question. "If I said this, what would the people say?" Could you anticipate what they would say?

If they ask that, what would my response be? Say it out loud, play both parts and listen to how it sounds. Was I sarcastic? Was I sincere? Do it out loud. You have the time, you are not too busy.

Everybody has intellectual deadtime. If you take a shower for 15 minutes, you’re not doing anything intellectually. With the water running where nobody can hear, the shower is a great time and place to rehearse out loud. If you exercise and you run throw the walkman away. Use the time to speak to yourself. When nervous somebody sees your lips moving. If you are in an automobile traveling, shut off the tape decks and telephones. Put them away and just rehearse out loud as far in advance of the meeting as you can.

When you get into the situation, the responses almost kick in automatically. Now, I am not saying that you can anticipate everything. I am not saying that every answer is going to be the same. Sure, there are going to be questions that you did not anticipate. Think how much better this is than a hundred or more questions that you hadn’t anticipated. Out loud preparation is the real key to preparation.

Effective Presentation

Q. Let’s switch gears again and talk a little bit about presenting information. An audience can be influenced by the amount of information and the detail being presented as well as by the person making the presentation. How can one present the facts without giving the impression of being either for or against the project?

A. You’ve used an excellent word. The word impression. Let’s call it groundwork, let’s call it message. Maybe you do not have a bias or a prejudice, but if you are perceived to have it, then you might as well have it. So, you have to be careful. The only way you can come close to assuring this is to rehearse the presentation many times and to listen to it, or have somebody else listen to it, to see if bias or prejudice is creeping in.

Now, let’s talk about the case where you do have a bias. I think it’s safer to declare your bias, rather than trying to hide it and have it come out. Say, "I have studied this issue and my personal feelings on this are whatever. I will try to present the issue as objectively as I possibly can."

Also, don’t assume people know any more than what you are telling them. We sometimes think, well, everybody at this meeting will be fairly sophisticated. People, by the way, are very hesitant to say that they don’t know. It takes a certain kind of person to say, "I just don’t know what this is all about." You know what that does? It makes us angry inside, more hostile and frustrated especially if we do not know the terms the speaker is using. I don’t let any of my clients use any abbreviations, any terms, without first defining them. It’s an irritant. It is that ground part.

Don’t make things too long, I would even hate to tell you what experts say is our attention span now. One that I think quite highly of says the attention span of the average American today is 30 seconds. I don’t think that is true. I think that it’s nine seconds.

Q. What can you do when you are presenting facts and the audience will not accept the truth, whatever it is?

A. The bottom line is that you do the very best that you can, and that’s all that you can do. There are certain techniques
that you can use. For instance you might not want to present the material in a presentation. You might want to plant questions. The way to communicate facts is to make them interesting. Maybe you need some good visuals, handouts or some things that later, in the cool of their home when the mob psychology is not active, they can read.

But again, the audience in most cases is angry because the road is going through their back yard. You could give them all of the great reasons in the world that their back yard is the place this road should be. Your goal as a planning commissioner has less to do with convincing them that the idea is right. It has more to do with convincing them that you worked hard at arriving at this decision, that you understand their frustration, their anger, their bitterness or whatever it might be, and you are being honest with them. You are willing to listen to them and you have done the best job you can.

One other thing you can do, if it's them against us, is find one of their own and take him or her aside. Sit down with this person, and really spend some time going through all of the details. If this is possible, let this opposition person explain part of the issue.

You have to make sure your information is correct. If anything is in error, anything, it's again that fingernails on the blackboard. In a positive situation people would say, "Ah, everybody makes mistakes." But in this kind of situation, they will doubt everything that you say.

Q. Most planning commissions have very limited budgets for training, generally less than $500 a year. Do you have any suggestions on how to best utilize these limited resources for training?

A. First of all, I think if I were a government official of any sort, my number one priority would be to get a good communicator. I don't care if you are a city manager or a city councilman. It all comes down to being an able communicator. If you can't communicate with constituents, if they can't communicate with you, and communication is a two-way process, what good are you?

Q. Where can a planning commissioner go to get communications training?

A. If you have a little skill but not much training in school, Toastmasters gives you an opportunity to practice for relatively low dollars. Community colleges offer courses in public speaking, persuasion and argumentation. Dealing with hostile audiences requires you to use all those skills.

Some techniques you can practice on your family and colleagues without them knowing. You can observe body language: study your audience. When dealing with a hostile audience, I would suggest arriving an hour early. Sit where you are going to sit and watch the people come in. Study them, look at their body language, look at the power sources. Perhaps a biker kind of guy with chains and tattoos comes in and you anticipate him to be disruptive, but nobody sits near him. Maybe he has limited influence. Then there is this wity, squirely guy who sits down in the front row. He looks like you could knock him over with a weed. Everyone who comes in says, "Hello, Godfather, how are you?" Here is a guy who may not say a word, but he is the power source.

Maybe he is the brains behind a certain element or a certain part of the opposition.

Study the audience. Are they taking this seriously? Did they have clenched fists and furrowed brows when they walked into the room? You can decipher and anticipate a lot of things right then. All of these things can be done — you can train yourself.

Q. How can a planning commissioner buy time if the answer to a question doesn't form in his or her head?

A. In the heat of the public meeting with a hostile audience, there are techniques a planning commission can use to buy time. Establish a policy of replying to the question. Most often the audience will appreciate this even if it is not necessary because they feel you are repeating it to allow them to understand the question. While you are repeating the question, you are crafting your answer, getting the words right. If you want more time, you get the question wrong. Then you ask the person is "that what you wanted to know?" if he says no, go through the whole process again.

Take a drink of water. If you are a pipe smoker, you can pack it, put it, punch it, do whatever a pipe smoker does. While you are thinking, pause. There is nothing wrong with pausing occasionally. All of these things are ways of buying a little time, so you think of the answer you need. You don't want your words to get you into trouble. Pausing is a natural thing to do. The person in charge of the meeting has a great deal to do with the pacing of the meeting. If you are getting questions fired at you, almost like a machine gun effect, slow your answers down. Take a little bit more time, a little bit more space between the question and the answer. This has a psychological effect on the people asking the questions and they tend to slow their questions. Don't answer in kind. If a person uses inflammatory language, or speaks very loudly, speak softly, bringing the level of emotions down. A person usually responds in kind to soft speech.

Q. How can we prepare to deal with the comments that have a tendency to infuriate us and make us lose our cool?

A. Everyone has emotional triggers. Now, as much as I advocate preparation with others, or having an expert come in, this is the one area that should be private. This is so personal, so private, so sensitive, that it is something you only deal with yourself. Write down the things that psyche you off. These tend to be irrational, by the way. I might set off an emotional trigger in you. In many cases, hit it unintentionally, am just amazed when you fly up to the ceiling and have to be peeled off. I don't know — what did I say? If that happens in a situation like a hearing, you could go crazy, and I have seen this happen. You can lose your cool — and blow it! And, you are the loser.

What you need to do is list your 3, 5, 25 or whatever emotional triggers and think of both the kind of things that a person could say that will set you off and your responses to them. Now imagine yourself keeping control. You have to be very strong and come to grips with the situation. Going into one of these situations, you can't just sit back and hope the emotional triggers won't be touched on. You have to know yourself and how to handle it. This is a very disciplined activity. 