

APPENDIX II

HOW TO RUN AND CONTRIBUTE TO A MEETING

In This Section:

An outline of what it takes to have successful committee meetings, including suggestions on how to keep meetings efficient and productive.



SHAMROCK CO-OPERATIVE HOMES INC.
Member Handbook - Appendix II - How to Run and Contribute to a Meeting





HOW TO RUN AND CONTRIBUTE TO A MEETING

One of the most important skills a co-op member can learn is how to run and participate in a meeting. The main objective is to conduct business with a minimum of time and hassle. The trick is to make sure your meetings are not interminable or boring. The components of a good meeting are:

1. *A well planned agenda that incorporates the business on which action or information is required;*
2. *Simple, sensible rules of procedure for the democratic conduct of that business;*
3. *A chairperson who is fair, reasonably self-assured, and respectful of and respected by the other members;*
4. *A secretary who is capable of recording with accuracy the actions taken and producing readable minutes as a permanent record of the meeting; and*
5. *Participants who know the rules or are willing to learn; who have the best interests of the co-op at heart.*

THE AGENDA

An agenda is a meeting plan. It sets out not only the business to be discussed, but also the order in which it will be discussed. A proposed agenda is normally circulated in advance to all members who have a responsibility at the meeting (directors, staff, and any committee chairpersons who are reporting to the meeting). It is said to be proposed until such time as it is adopted by the meeting. Even after formal adoption, the agenda may be amended by means set out in the parliamentary procedures that are in use. Time limits may be set for debate on any agenda item, or a specific time may be designated for the introduction of any item.

RULES OF PROCEDURE

A clearly stated, easily understood, fairly applied set of rules can help the group move quickly and efficiently through the business of the meeting and assure everyone a reasonable opportunity to speak on each issue. Roberts Rules of Order have been used so far by many co-op Boards, but it is seldom necessary to go beyond the following basic procedures. A helpful guide for people who expect to be called upon to chair a formal meeting is Parliamentary Procedure at a Glance, by O. Garfield Jones.



SPEAKING THROUGH THE CHAIR

To maintain order, it is important that speakers be recognized by the Chair and then address remarks to the Chair. To facilitate this process, the Chairperson should keep a "speaker's list", in the order in which raised hands have caught his/her attention, and then recognize each in that order.

MOVING A RESOLUTION

If action is to be taken, the proposed action should be clearly stated by a recognized speaker before any debate is allowed. For example: "I move that we accept the Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on use of the Community Centre and dissolve the Committee". If the Motion is seconded the mover is offered first opportunity to support the Motion. If there is no second, the Motion "dies".

AMENDING A MOTION

If a speaker wishes to amend the Motion, the Amendment is stated, "I move the Motion be amended to add, 'with thanks for a job well done.'" If seconded, the Amendment is debated and brought to a vote before the main Motion is considered. (Or, the mover and seconder may agree to incorporate a "friendly" addition, without going through the formal procedures.) If an Amendment is passed, the meeting then considers the amended main Motion, which is restated by the Chair, "The Motion now reads, 'Moved that we accept the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the use of the Community Centre and dissolve the Committee with thanks for a job well done.'" Sometimes a speaker will attempt to make a point by amendment that should be a separate issue. For example, referring to the same example above, "I move the Motion be amended to add "and strike a committee on the use of the common areas." The Chair would rule that amendment out of order and ask the speaker to propose it later as a separate Motion.

TESTING THE FLOOR

Usually the Chairperson will have no difficulty recognizing when the group has had long enough time for discussion and is ready for the vote. If it is a long debate and interest is flagging while there are still people waiting to be recognized, the Chairperson may test the floor by asking, "Are you ready to vote on this Motion? All those in favour? (Hands raised and counted.) Opposed? (Same procedure.)" According to the outcome of the vote, the Chair then says something like, "It is the will of the meeting that the vote be taken on this Motion..." Then the Motion is restated so that everyone is clear on its meaning. Or, if the vote is against ending discussion, something like, "I will allow debate for five minutes (or recognize so many more speakers) and then test the floor again."



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CALLING THE QUESTION

A recognized speaker may call for the question, which means ask for the vote to be taken. Once seconded, this becomes a non-debatable motion, which may be stated by the Chair as, "All those in favour of voting on the Motion", etc. If a majority are in favour, the Motion must be brought to a vote immediately. If not, the debate may continue.