

Great Planning Commission Meetings

City of Mercer Island

Jan. 22, 2025

Presented by

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Great Planning Commission Meetings

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City of Mercer Island, Washington
Wednesday, January 22, 2025

1

Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Our Topics

1. Introduction
2. Authority and Roles (chair, members and staff)
3. Opening the meeting
4. Motions and Amendments
5. Meeting discussion, Point of Order, Appeal
6. Public comment and public hearings
7. Pitfalls
8. Conclusion

2

Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

1. Introduction

3

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Why are we here?

To invigorate you to run effective city advisory meetings in the service of your community

4

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After taking this training you will be able to:

1. Apply the principle that the authority of the group is more important than any single individual.
2. Follow best practices for discussion.
3. Respond to disorder or difficult people.
4. Make motions and amendments.
5. Avoid common advisory body pitfalls.
6. Run effective public comment.

5

Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Disclaimer

The material contained in this presentation is based upon the principles and practices of parliamentary procedure. I am not an attorney and nothing in this presentation constitutes legal advice.

6

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2. Authority & Roles

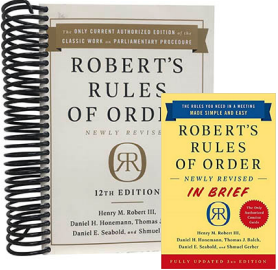
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Robert's Rules of Order

Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (RONR), 12th edition

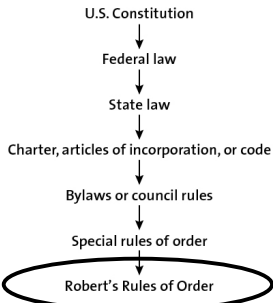


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Authority of Robert's



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graph TD
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    B --> C[State law]
    C --> D[Charter, articles of incorporation, or code]
    D --> E[Bylaws or council rules]
    E --> F[Special rules of order]
    F --> G[Robert's Rules of Order]
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9

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Authority of the Commission

What is your job?

The work of the Planning Commission is to carry out the instructions of the Council.

City of Bellevue Planning Commissioner

10

10

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Authority of the Commission

- Commissions must follow the parameters established by the City Council.
- Their role is to **advise** the City Council.
- The City Council will review the recommendation of the commission and make a final decision.

11

11

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Role of Chair

Fundamental Guideline

During meetings, the chair is the servant of the group, and the group is the final authority.

12

12

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Role of Chair

Accountability Hierarchy

13

13

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Role of Chair

Voluntary Association

14

14

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Role of Chair

The Chair needs:

1. Knowledge of how this system works.
2. A majority of your body in favor of civility and this system.
3. The personal moxie, energy and drive to put it all into practice.

15

15

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Role of Chair

16

16

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CHEAT SHEET

LANGUAGE TIPS FOR MEETING MANAGEMENT

SITUATION	CHAIR CAN SAY
Call to order	This meeting of the [name of organization] is called to order.
Unanimous consent	without objection... if there is no objection...
To begin discussion	It has been moved and seconded that... Is there any discussion?
If there is no second	Since there is no second, the motion will not be considered.
To end discussion	Is there any further discussion? or Are you ready to vote?
Process Point of Order	1. Member says, "Point of Order." 2. Chair says, "State your point." 3. Member explains issue. 4. Chair says, "The point is well taken," or "The point is not well taken."
When someone says "Point of Order" but can't explain what they mean	What rule has been broken?
Process Point of Information	1. Member says, "Point of Information." 2. Chair replies, "State your question."

17

17

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Role of Chair

The Chair should NOT:

- Participate too much in the debate.
- Try to control the content of the debate.
- Try to make people vote the chair's way.
- Get all emotional.
- Interrupt a speaker because they know more than speaker about the subject.

18

18

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Role of Chair

Jurassic Parliament Recommendation:

- Chair speak and vote last.
- Refrain from making motions.

19

19

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Role of Chair

The chair should never get excited.

Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, 12th edition, 47:19

20

20

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Role of Members

All members of a governing board share in a joint and collective authority which exists and can be exercised only when the group is in session.

The Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure

21

21

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Role of Members

What is each person's individual authority?



22

22

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Role of Members

- Show up! Communicate in advance if unable to attend a meeting.
- Come prepared (read agenda packet) and ready to participate in discussion.
- Have questions and any amendments ready; email them in advance to staff if able.

23

23

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Role of Members

It's Okay to Disagree

- Each member has an equal right to speak and to try to persuade others to accept their view.
- Discussion on your motions can and should be vigorous!
- Express your views freely and don't hold back.
- Once the vote has been taken, however, things change.

24

24

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Role of Members

At the end of the day, the body must unite behind its decision.

25

25

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Role of Staff

- Staff are employees of the city.
- The commission may not direct them independently of their assigned tasks.
- Staff have a duty to remind the commission of the laws, regulations, and fiscal constraints that apply.

26

26

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Role of Staff

- Commission as a whole has the responsibility of giving clarity to the staff.
- Don't float an idea and expect staff to make it concrete.
- If an individual commissioner wants the staff to do something, there should be a motion and vote.
 - "I move that we request that the staff research this..."

27

27

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Partner Discussion

What takeaways do you have from this section?

28

28

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3. Opening the Meeting

29

29

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Call Meeting to Order

- Rap the gavel lightly one time and announce, "This meeting of the Bonny Dino Planning Commission is called to order."
- Ask staff to take the roll.
- Announce that a quorum is present (or not).



30

30

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Quorum

- The “quorum” is the minimum number of voting members who must be present for business to be done.
- For local governments, usually it is a majority (more than half) of the fixed positions in the body.
- “Quorum” is different from “votes cast.”
- If you lose your quorum, you can’t do business.

31

31

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Quorum & Serial Meeting

- Local government bodies must not create a “walking quorum” or a “serial meeting” by communicating outside of a meeting.
- Generally speaking, when members of the board communicate with each other outside of meetings, such that a quorum is discussing the body’s business, the Open Public Meetings Act has been violated.

32

32

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Agenda

- Prepared by leadership, but within control of the body.
- If following standard “Order of Business,” you don’t need to vote to adopt.
- **Mercer Island Rules:** Takes a majority vote to amend agenda at the start of the meeting.

33

33

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4. Motions and Amendments

34

34

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Motions

- A motion is, “a formal proposal by a member, in a meeting, that the assembly take certain action.”

Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised, 12th edition, 5:1

I move that we recommend to the council that residents be authorized to build catios in their private yards.

35

35

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Main Motions

- Staff presents proposal and answers any questions.
- Each member may ask one or two questions, then the next member has a turn.
- Motion is moved and seconded.
- Members discuss motion and may amend it.
- Members vote on motion.

36

36

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Main Motions

- It should be in writing if at all possible.
- It should be **clear and unambiguous**. Don't say, "I move what he just said," or "so moved."
- It should be phrased in the grammatical **positive**.
- It must comply with the **bylaws** and the **procedural** law of the land.
- You can have only **one main motion** at a time.

37

37

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Main Motions

I've been noticing that the number of wild cats is increasing in our city, and they're getting stomped on by bigger dinosaurs, so I think allowing catios would be great, it would make a huge difference to the safety of our little feline friends.

38

38

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Motions

Eight steps to process a motion

1. **Member makes motion.**
2. Another member seconds motion.
3. **Chair states motion.**
4. Members debate and/or amend motion.
5. **Chair restates motion and calls for vote.**
6. Members vote on motion.
7. Chair states results of vote, whether motion passes or fails, and what happens next as a result of the vote.
8. Chair states next item of business.

39

39

Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Step # 1: Make Motion

I move that we recommend to the council that residents be authorized to build catios in their private yards.

40

40

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Step # 2: Second

Second the motion!

- You "second a motion" to show that you would like to talk about it.
- No need to be recognized. Just call out "second."
- It is OK to second a motion you disagree with, if you want to explain why it's a bad idea.

If there is no second, the chair says,
"There being no second, the motion will not be considered."

41

41

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Step # 3: Chair States Motion

It was moved and seconded that we recommend to council that residents be authorized to build catios in their private yards.

42

42

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Step # 4: Discuss/Amend

- The maker of the motion has the right to speak first.
- You can't speak against your own motion!
- The maker CAN vote against their own motion.

43

43

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Step # 4: Discuss/Amend

General contractor

Catios are a safe and effective way to protect cats from predators, and birds from cats. Here is an example of a nice little catio. I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this motion.

44

44

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Step # 4: Discuss/Amend

Photographer

I'm in favor! My cousin has built a catio, and her little pet Fuzzy is completely at home in it, as you can see from this photo.

45

45

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Step # 4: Discuss/Amend

Architect

I think this is a terrible idea! Catios are intrusive and will ruin the look of our city. Here's an example I saw when I visited Dinodome last week. We don't want this kind of ugly building in beautiful Bonny Dino.

46

46

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Step # 5: Chair Restates

When it seems that discussion is finished, chair asks, "Is there any further discussion" or "Are you ready to vote?" If no one speaks up, take the vote.

- Note that these are rhetorical questions, to see if there is any further discussion. Chair then repeats the motion.

47

47

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Step # 6: Vote

Voice Voting


- Chair says, "All those in favor say 'aye,' all those opposed say 'no.'"

Roll Call Voting

- Staff reads names of each member
- Member states their vote (aye, no).

48


48

 **Step # 6: Vote**
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No debate during voting

- Nothing can interrupt the voting process.
- Members are not allowed to explain their vote during the vote, or afterwards.
- Even a Point of Order must wait until the result of the vote is announced.

49

 **Step # 7: Announce Vote**
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- *The “ayes” have it, the motion passes, and we will recommend to council that residents be authorized to build patios in their private yards, OR*
- *The “noes” have it, the motion fails, and we will not recommend this proposal to council.*

Note that the chair must call for the negative vote, even if it seems unanimous.

50

49


50

 **Step # 8: Next Item**
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The Chair moves the meeting along.

The next item of business is...

51


 **Changing your Vote**
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- A member may change their vote up until the time the chair announces the result.
- After that time, it takes unanimous consent of the body (everyone agreeing) for the member to change their vote.
- Once the chair has moved on to the next item of business, it is too late to change a vote.

52


51

52

 **Abstaining from Voting**
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- Under Robert’s Rules, to abstain is to do nothing.
 - Abstentions are not counted.
 - The chair does not call for abstentions.
- Since you are a public body, you will call for and record abstentions.

53

 **Conflict of Interest**
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- There are criteria to determine whether you have a conflict of interest.
- If you think you may have a conflict of interest, check with staff or the attorney **before** the meeting!
- If it is determined that you do have a conflict of interest, you will need to “recuse” yourself from the vote and leave the room.
- Recusal is a special form of abstention.

54

53

54

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EXERCISE

Script Reading

Weeds at City Hall, Part 1

55

55


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Step # 4: Discuss/Amend

An amendment is a proposed change to the main motion or proposal intended to improve it.

Amendment

Dimetrodon



56

56

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Step # 4: Discuss/Amend

Photographer

I move that we amend the motion by adding the words, "Provided that the plan for each patio has been approved by the Design Review Board."

57

57

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Step # 4: Discuss/Amend

If adopted, it will read:

The Commission will recommend to Council that residents will be authorized to build patios in their private yards, **provided that the plan for each patio has been approved by the Design Review Board.**

58

58

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Step # 4: Discuss/Amend

- The Amendment is processed using the same eight steps that we just saw for a main motion.
- The vote on amendments is taken BEFORE the vote on the main motion, in order to make the main motion as good as possible—to PERFECT the motion.

59

59

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Step # 4: Discuss/Amend

- Once you've dealt with one amendment, you may have others...
- Provided that they apply to a *different aspect* of the main motion.
- It takes special actions (reconsideration) to go back and change something we've already amended.
- After all amendments have been processed, **the body still must vote on the AMENDED MAIN MOTION.**

60

60

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5. Meeting discussion, Point of Order, and Appeal

61

Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Discussion

Discussion in commission meetings
IS NOT A CONVERSATION.

It has its own rules.

62

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Discussion

Principle of Equality

All members have equal rights,
privileges and obligations.

63

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Discussion

Fundamental Guidelines

Must be recognized by chair to speak in
discussion.

No one may speak a second time
until everyone who wishes to do so
has spoken once.

64

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Discussion

Why is this important?

- In conversations, dominant people tend to dominate. Agreeable people tend to let them.
- Must have a structure to make sure that everyone has an equal voice.
- The system is formal but inclusive.
- It will make for robust discussion and advance your equity goals.

65

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Discussion

Round Robin



66

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Discussion

- No interrupting (in general).
- No sidebar conversations.
 - No whispering! Disable the chat.
 - No texting to each other or people outside during meetings.
 - No posting on social media during meetings.
- Set time limits.
- Virtual participants – keep camera on!

67

67

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Discussion

Fundamental Guideline

Courtesy and respect towards everyone are required.

68

68

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Discussion

These remarks are **inappropriate**:

1. Personal remarks about other members
2. Discourteous remarks – insulting language, attacks
3. Inflammatory language
4. Criticizing past actions of the group (unless under discussion, or proposed action)
5. Remarks that are not germane (relevant) to the discussion

69

69

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Discussion

The measure, not the member, is the subject of debate...The moment the chair hears such words as "fraud," "liar," or "lie" used about a member in debate, he must act immediately and decisively to correct the matter and prevent its repetition.

Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, 12th edition, Section 43:21

70

70

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Discussion

What to do if inappropriate remarks are made?

1. The chair should interrupt the speaker and state firmly that disrespectful remarks are not allowed.
2. A commissioner may interrupt the speaker, say "Point of Order," and explain the violation.
3. In case of offensive comments made generally, the chair may also make a statement that "in our city, we value the participation of all, and repudiate all comments that make offensive judgments about some of our residents."

71

71

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Discussion

An occasional exception - **informal discussion**:

- Sometimes there is benefit in the conversational style or "informal discussion."
- Chair must ensure that no one dominates.
- Do not make the conversational style your ordinary or "default" style of discussion.

72

72

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CHEAT SHEET

WAIT! WAIT! WHAT SHOULD I SAY?

	If you are the chair, say...	If you are a member speaking about another member, say...	If you are a member speaking about the chair, say...
BIG MISTAKES			
speaking twice in a row	Members are reminded that no one may speak a second time until everyone who wishes to do so has spoken once.	Point of order. The member has spoken twice while others are waiting to speak.	Point of order. The chair does not have the right to dominate the discussion, but must speak in turn.
not seeking recognition	Members will kindly seek recognition before speaking.	Point of order. Members must seek recognition before speaking.	[not applicable]
speaking directly to another member	Members will kindly address all remarks to the chair.	Point of order. Members are supposed to speak to the chair.	[not applicable]
interrupting another person	Members will kindly refrain from interrupting one another.	Point of order. Interrupting is not allowed.	Point of order. The chair does not have the right to interrupt a member.
INAPPROPRIATE REMARKS			
personal remarks	Members will refrain from making personal remarks.	Point of order. Personal remarks are not allowed.	Point of order. Personal remarks are not allowed.
insulting language, vulgarity, attacks	Insulting or vulgar language is not allowed at our meetings.	Point of order. The language used by the member is insulting/vulgar.	Point of order. The chair is using insulting/vulgar language.
inflammatory language	Inflammatory language is not allowed.	Point of order. That remark is inflammatory.	Point of order. That remark is inflammatory.
criticizing past actions	Members may not criticize a past action of the group during a meeting, with two exceptions.	Point of order. Members may not criticize a past action of the group during a meeting, with two exceptions.	Point of order. The chair may not criticize a past action of the group during a meeting, with two exceptions.

Note that this is proprietary information. Do not duplicate.


73

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Point of Order

flying dinosaur

A Point of Order is a motion claiming that a procedural mistake has been made.



74

74

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Point of Order

- You can make this at any time, except during voting.
- Do not have to be recognized.
- May interrupt a speaker if necessary.
- Must be timely – made at the time of the offense.
- A member may raise a Point of Order against the Chair.

75

75

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Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Point of Order

1. Member: *Point of Order!*
2. Chair: *State your point.*
3. Member: *That remark was inflammatory.*
4. Chair: *The point is well taken. Members will kindly refrain from inflammatory remarks.*

76

76

Jurassic Parliament
Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Point of Order

The chair must issue a ruling:

- It is the chair's responsibility to say, "The point is well taken," or "the point is not well taken."
- Be alert as to whether the member who says "Point of Order" is actually using the motion correctly.
- The ruling goes into the minutes, as a precedent for the future.

77

77

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Role of Chair

When in doubt, ask the group!



78

78

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Appeal

The most important motion in all of Robert's Rules – and the least known!

The CHAIR enforces order and decorum.
The GROUP is the final authority.

79

79

Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Appeal

- Point of Order is made by one member, but an Appeal needs a second.
- Point of Order and Appeal are processed immediately. No other business can take place until they are dealt with.
- Points of Order and Appeals do not count against a member's turn to speak in debate.

80

80

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Appeal

Don't get into arguments!

- If you are a member, you may not argue with the chair.
- If you are the chair, don't argue with a difficult member.
- Simply state your ruling. You can say, *Does the member wish to appeal this ruling?*

81

81

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EXERCISE

Script Reading

Weeds at City Hall, Part 2

82

82

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6. Public Comment and Public Hearings

83

83

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Public Comment

Another disclaimer

Robert's Rules of Order contains very little guidance on public comment. In general, this information comes from Jurassic Parliament's experience.

84

84

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Public Comment

- A council or commission meeting is NOT A MEETING OF THE PUBLIC.
- It is a MEETING OF THE BODY that is held in public.
- The purpose of the PUBLIC COMMENT period is to allow the members of the body to become informed about the views of the public.
- It should be carefully structured.

85

85

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Public Hearings

- A PUBLIC HEARING is an administrative procedure governed by law and regulation.
- It is a formal opportunity for public comment on a specific topic.
- It is often required and has additional notice requirements.
- It must be carefully managed.
- Include testimony or a summary in the minutes.

86

86

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Public Comment

- The courts have found that local governments may limit the time, place and manner of public comment.
- All such restrictions must be viewpoint-neutral.
- Rules must respect First Amendment protections.
- Attendees do not have the right to DISRUPT the meeting.
 - However, the courts have found that mere words do not usually constitute disruption.

87

87

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Public Comment

Announce rules at beginning of each meeting.	Public must address remarks to chair.
Do not dialogue.	Discourage demonstrations—clapping, booing, whistling, stamping of feet, etc.
Adhere to time limits.	Enforce rules consistently!

88

88

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Public Comment

What can you do to make people's comments feel welcome?

- Give your full attention.
- Convey interest and concern.
- Keep a warm, pleasant or neutral expression.
- At the end of the comment period, the chair should thank the public for attending.
- Explain that while this is not a time for dialogue, all comments and questions are taken seriously.

89

89

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Public Comment

How to respond?

- Thank each speaker.
- Chair may provide brief factual information.
- Don't put staff on the spot.
- Can ask for contact information for future follow-up.

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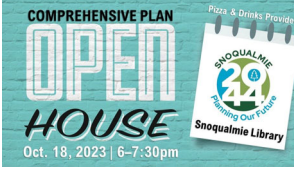
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Public Comment

Other forums for public comment:

- Community forums
- Personal discussions
- “Coffee with the Commission” (always less than a quorum)
- Form on your website
- Community surveys



91

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7. City Advisory Committee Pitfalls

With thanks to Ric Stephens, Portland, Oregon

92

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Another disclaimer

This material pertains to how city advisory boards do their work. It is not parliamentary advice, but is based on Jurassic Parliament's experience in 20 years of working with local governments.

93

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Pitfalls

1. Confusion about scope
2. Asking for the moon
3. Confusion about your job
4. Deafened by decibels
5. Lost in the weeds/analysis paralysis

94

Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Situation

The planning commission is considering a request to lower the setback from 50 feet to 20 feet.

95

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Commissioner asks:

Isn't there a better place in the city to site this hotel?

96

Pitfall: Confusion about scope

You must answer the questions assigned to you by the Council, not propose unrelated alternatives.

97

97

Situation

The environmental commission is considering recommending setting aside some wetlands.

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Commissioner says:

I think we can't address this until the University report comes out in five years.

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Pitfall: Asking for the moon

- It is an unfortunate fact of governance that sometimes bodies must make decisions with less than adequate information.

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Situation

The staff has carried out a survey of a property.

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Commissioner says:

Since I'm a professional surveyor, I can re-do the survey to verify it.

102

102

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Pitfall: Confusion about your job

- A commissioner may have valuable particular expertise, but they are recruited to the commission as a resident, not as a technical expert.
- Let staff be staff and residents be residents!

103

103

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Situation

There has been a public outcry about changes to the irrigation district boundaries.

104

104

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Commissioner says:

Six of my neighbors are very upset about this. They've taken the trouble to come to our meetings, so we should do what they want.

105

105

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Pitfall: Deafened by decibels

Being swayed by the emotional power of a presentation is a common problem. Decisions should be rational, not determined by decibels.

Ric Stephens
106

106

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Your responsibility?

- Listen to your constituents, while accepting your own responsibility.
- You must vote based on your own best judgment, not solely in response to crowd opinion.

107

107

Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Situation

The commission is discussing plans for a new hiking trail along the river.

108

108

Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Commissioner says:

I think we have to analyze what kind of paving stones are best, so teeny-tiny rocks don't get stuck in the paws of our dinosaur residents.

109

109

Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Pitfall: Lost in the weeds/analysis paralysis

- We all have a human tendency to delve into the details.
- Sometimes this leads resident commissions astray, as they spend too much time discussing details that are not relevant to their assignment.

110

110

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8. Conclusion

111

111

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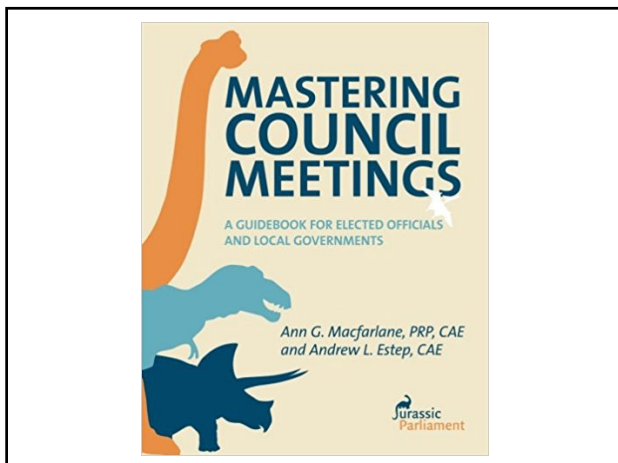
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112

112



113

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Reference Materials

- 50 Guidelines for Public Comment
- Cheat Sheet: Language tips for meeting management
- City of Olympia WA – Quick Guide Poster
- City of Seattle WA – Basics for Boards
- Follow four fundamental guidelines for successful meetings
- Point of Order and Appeal are the heart of democracy
- Quick Guide for Citizen Advisory Committees
- Quick Guide for Planning Commissions
- Rights and Responsibilities of the Member
- Roundtable Community Workshops
- Successful staff interaction in local government meetings
- Time limits create productive meetings
- When public pressure is intense
- MRSC's Local Government Citizen Advisory Boards publication

114

114

*Serving on a local government board
is like being in a marriage
arranged by the voters.*

Tami Tanoue, Colorado Intergovernmental
Risk Sharing Agency

115

115

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116

116

Eight Steps To Process A Motion

Member A: *I move that we hold a cruise on Dino Bay.*

Member B: *I second the motion!*

Chair: It has been moved and seconded that we hold a cruise on Dino Bay. We will now debate the motion. [debate]

Chair: Are you ready to vote?

The motion is that we hold a cruise on Dino Bay. All those in favor say “aye.” All those opposed say “no.” The “ayes” have it, the motion passes, and we will hold a cruise on Dino Bay. The Social Committee will make the plans for this event. Our next item of business is...

Eight steps to process a motion

1. Member makes a _____.
2. Another _____ seconds motion.
3. Chair states _____.
4. Members _____ and/or amend motion.
5. Chair restates _____ and calls for the vote.
6. Members _____ on motion.
7. Chair states results of vote, whether motion _____, and what happens as result of vote.
8. Chair states next item of _____.

In taking the vote, the presider must call for the _____ or the vote is not legitimate.

The presider has a duty to make things clear so that members understand what they are doing.

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WEEDS AT CITY HALL

6 attendees: chair, banker, botanist, dancer, facilities committee chair, football coach

[Note that the numbers are a substitute for being recognized.]

Part 1		
1.	chair	As commissioners know, when we built our new city hall 10 years ago, it was landscaped according to GREEN principles. We use only the latest energy-efficient tools and methods. However, despite our best efforts, the blackberries and the English ivy have gotten out of hand. The City Council has asked us to make a recommendation on how to address the overgrowth. City staff have proposed that we hire a herd of goats from “Rent-a-Goat” in order to trim the grounds. Does any member care to make that motion?
2.	botanist	I move that we recommend that a herd of goats from “Rent-a-Goat” be hired to trim the grounds.
3.	facilities committee chair	Second!
	chair	It has been moved and seconded that we recommend that a herd of goats from “Rent-a-Goat” be hired to trim the grounds. Do you care to speak to your motion?
4.	botanist	This is a very sensible, environmentally friendly way to take care of the overgrowth. I know that in Washington State, they use goats all the time to trim their county parks.
5.	football coach	I think that this is a silly way to tackle this problem. I’m in favor of “slash and burn” myself. I move that we recommend applying industrial-strength plant killer to destroy the blackberries and the ivy, root and branch!
6.	chair	Members are reminded that under Robert’s Rules of Order, only one main motion can be considered at a time. We are discussing the recommendation to hire a herd of goats, so no other main motion can be made.

7.	botanist	I can't believe that you said that! How can anybody be "in favor of slash and burn"? Have you NO consideration for the well-being of our planet? You're just an out-and-out FOSSIL.
8.	football coach	Well, in my opinion your extreme environmental ideas are just as bad! We're going to be sorry we ever got into the smelly goat business.
9.	dancer	Point of Order, Chair!
10.	chair	State your point!
11.	dancer	Under Robert's Rules of Order, no one may speak a second time until everyone who wishes to do so has spoken once. These members are monopolizing the conversation, and also are using insulting language to each other.
12.	chair	The point is well taken! We need to hear from everyone in turn. All discussion must be respectful. Who else would like to speak?
13.	banker	I predicted that all the "GREEN" nonsense was going to give us problems down the line, and look where we are now! I move that we add the words "at a maximum cost of \$12,000 per year."
14.	football coach	Second!
15.	chair	It has been moved and seconded that we amend the motion by adding the words "at a maximum cost of \$12,000 per year."
16.	dancer	Chair, I'm confused. Does this mean that we've already decided in favor of the goats?
17.	chair	No, the way the process works, a member makes a proposal – a Main Motion. Then other members can move to amend (change) the Main Motion – in order to improve it. We will discuss and vote on the amendment, and then we'll take up the main motion again. If the amendment passes, we'll consider the motion "as amended." If it fails, we'll return to the original main motion.
18.	dancer	Amending the motion in order to improve it, eh? Do they follow that rule in the U.S. Congress?

19.	chair	Ahem...All discussion must be limited to the topic at hand. Banker, do you care to speak to your amendment?
20.	banker	<i>[speaking angrily]</i> As far as I'm concerned the tree-huggers are making it impossible to get anything done. Goats will be expensive to maintain – I've heard stories of them costing tens of thousands of dollars. We could lose our shirts with this. We need to set some fiscal limits.
21.	chair	Any further discussion?
22.	football coach	It's just common prudence to protect yourself with a clause like this. I urge my colleagues to vote in favor.
23.	botanist	Our grounds are pretty big, but I think that \$1,000 a month ought to be enough to keep them in good shape. I'm in favor.
24.	facilities committee chair	In my view that's not enough money. I doubt that we can get the service we need for that amount. Plus, the City Council will be taking final action on this proposal. If they are concerned about the cost, they can set a threshold. I am against the amendment.
25.	chair	Is there any further discussion on the amendment? <i>[pause]</i> Hearing none, we'll take the vote on the motion to amend. If the amendment passes, the motion will read: "that we recommend that a herd of goats from "Rent-a-Goat" be hired to trim the grounds, at a maximum cost of \$12,000 per year." All those in favor, say "aye."
26.	banker, botanist, chair, dancer, football coach	Aye!
27.	chair	All those opposed, say "no."
28.	facilities committee chair	No!
29.	chair	The "ayes" have it, the motion passes, and the main motion is amended. We will now resume discussion on the main motion as amended.

Part 2		
30.	chair	<p>As a reminder, the main motion as amended is before us. The main motion as amended reads:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">That we recommend that a herd of goats from “Rent-a-Goat” be hired to trim the grounds, at a maximum cost of \$12,000 per year.</p> <p>Is there any further discussion?</p>
31.	facilities committee chair	<i>[speaking with enthusiasm]</i> I’m a nature-lover and I think that this is a brilliant solution! I’m all for it!
32.	botanist	It doesn’t seem like such a big deal to me. I like landscaping that has a rough and unfinished look. It’s less artificial.
33.	football coach	A natural look is one thing, but I could hardly get out of my car today because of the blackberry bushes!
34.	dancer	I’m not so sure about this. I think we’re being kind of hasty here. If you studied the zodiac, you’d know that the sun is in the house of Taurus these days. Here’s what my horoscope said this morning: “You need to reach a decision organically — there’s no way for you to rush it!”
35.	facilities committee chair	Point of Order, Chair.
36.	chair	State your point.
37.	facilities committee chair	The last speaker’s remarks do not appear to be germane to the issue we’re discussing.
38.	chair	The point is well taken. Members are reminded that under Robert’s Rules of Order, discussion must be relevant to the topic at hand.
39.	botanist	Well, I think that we can’t really address this unless we look at the Governor’s Report on Climate Change. I was reading it the other day, and I was really impressed with the official recommendations.
40.	football coach	Point of Order, Chair.
41.	chair	State your point.

42.	football coach	I believe that the Governor's Report on Climate Change is not germane to our discussion right now.
43.	chair	The chair will ask the council to decide this question. All those who believe that the Governor's Report on Climate Change is germane to our discussion right now, say "aye."
44.	botanist	Aye!
45.	chair	All those who believe it is not germane, say "no."
46.	banker, dancer, facilities committee chair, football coach	No!
47.	chair	The "noes" have it, the Report is not germane, and we will not discuss it at this time.
48.	football coach	I don't think we need to hire a herd from "Rent-a-Goat" to find the GOATS. A glance around the chambers should be enough.
49.	dancer	Point of Order!
50.	chair	State your point.
51.	dancer	That is an insulting remark.
52.	chair	The point is well taken! Members will refrain from personal and insulting comments, and keep their discussion on topic.
53.	banker	It seems to ME that goats are kind of smelly and messy. I'm worried that this is going to downgrade our professional image.
54.	chair	It seems to the CHAIR that you're worrying too much about appearances. Can't you get down from your high horse and consider what's best for the planet?
55.	banker	Whoa, Point of Order, chair!
56.	chair	State your point.

57.	banker	<i>[speaking angrily]</i> The chair is out of line here! Under Robert’s Rules, the chair has to follow the same rules as the rest of us, and may not make personal remarks.
58.	chair	<i>[speaking sadly]</i> Oh, the point is well taken. The chair apologizes for getting carried away.
59.	botanist	I think this idea is the GOAT – Greatest Of All Time!
60.	football coach	I strongly disagree. In my opinion this is a nutty idea! Don’t come back to me if people start finding rogue goats wandering the city.
61.	chair	Is there any further discussion on the motion as amended? <i>[pause]</i> Very well, we’ll take the vote. All those in favor of the motion “that a herd of goats from “Rent-a-Goat” be hired to trim the grounds, at a maximum cost of \$12,000 per year,” say “aye.”
62.	banker, botanist, chair, dancer, facilities committee chair	Aye!
63.	chair	All those opposed, say “no.”
64.	football coach	No!
65.	chair	The “ayes,” have it, the motion passes, and staff will relay our recommendation to the City Council.