



Board Chair Welcome Packet

Chair Job Description

The Chair is responsible for multiple activities both during and between meetings, including but not limited to: responding to inquiries from the public, facilitating meetings, team-building, holding other board members accountable and making sure everyone understands and is able fulfill their responsibilities. In this packet, you will find a description of your role and some useful resources to aid in your success.

Some of your main responsibilities are the following:

1. **Leadership:** To function effectively, groups need a leader. The Chair must remain approachable and available; however, they also needs to take the initiative, especially where team building is concerned. It isn't enough to have officer and board positions filled – relationships need to be established between the various individuals participating at the board level. Creating healthy board dynamics involves having social time as a team, time spent thoughtfully engaging each board member and holding everyone accountable for their responsibilities.
2. **Agenda Setting and Notification:** The Chair is responsible for preparing the agenda for general, board, and special meetings. Once an agenda and any additional documents are ready to be sent out, the Chair ensures that proper notification protocols are followed.
 - Resource Materials for Agenda Setting:
 - Tips for Preparing a Successful Agenda **(p. 2-3)**
 - Notification **(p. 4-5)**
 - Sample Agenda **(p. 9-10)**

3. **Meeting Facilitation:** One of the trickiest responsibilities of a Chair is to run effective, productive and welcoming board meetings. As the meeting facilitator, the Chair keeps the discussion on topic, encourages participation, and follows the association's bylaws.

- Resource Materials for Facilitation:
 - Meeting facilitation overview **(p. 5-7)**
 - Robert's Rules of Order **(p. 7-8)**

Tips for Preparing a Successful Agenda

The key to an effective meeting is a well thought-out and strategically planned agenda. As Chair, it is your responsibility, with board input, to craft this agenda. Your agenda will be your time-tracker, your talking points, and guide. Ultimately it is your agenda that will set you up for success as a facilitator.

Below you will find an outline designed to help you think through every aspect of agenda setting. Start with the basics – the things you know need to be included as standing items on every agenda you create.

Possible Standing Items

- Welcome and introductions (if it's a small crowd, try an icebreaker too).
- Ground rules, voting procedures, review and approval of minutes and agenda
- Make sure people know what is expected of them as general members.
- Are there any action items to follow-up on from the last meeting? Now is your chance!
- Ask for additions at the opening of the meeting, before the agenda is approved to ensure that nothing important or time-sensitive falls through the cracks.
- Committee reports
- If you have active committees, ask them if they need time on the agenda to report their activities. If they say yes, make sure you have them send you a short blurb to include on the agenda beforehand.
- Community announcements
- Leave room at the end of the meeting for announcements from the floor.

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Once you've identified the agenda items that will make sense for your neighborhood association to keep on the agenda routinely, you can start filling up the remaining time with additional topics—topics that are relevant and exciting to your neighbors. Building out an agenda is more than filling in timeslots. Consider the format in which you are presenting the agenda.

Format

- Start with a header that includes your logo and a statement about your neighborhood association.
- List any upcoming meetings and events on the bottom or the back of the agenda.
- Always include the amount of time allocated to each agenda item.
- Provide context and anticipated outcome or action
- For an item to be placed on the agenda, collect and include the following: name of presenter, what the topic is, what type of action, if any, is being requested, and links to background information.
- Consider the sequence of topics
- Put important issues such as guest presentations or those that require a vote towards the beginning of the agenda.
- Make sure to give interesting/heated topics a realistic amount of time. And remember to invite speakers from both sides of the issue.

Planning

- Plan out your agenda at least two weeks in advance, asking board members for agenda items and sorting through any requests for time on the agenda that you may have received.
- Send the final agenda out at least seven (7) days in advance to meet the Office of Community & Civic Life requirements within its ONI Standards.

Sample Agenda

See pages 9-10.

Notification for Meetings

Neighborhood associations are required to have their meeting be open to the public and to provide both general and direct notification. As Chair, it is your responsibility to either handle meeting notification directly or to get the necessary information to another volunteer in charge of this task in a timely manner.

What Needs to be in a Notice?

- Date & Time of Meeting
- Location of Meeting
- Brief description of agenda topics

The required method and notification period depends on the type of meeting being held. The following document outlines the minimum requirements set by the Office of Community & Civic Life within its ONI Standards. However, your neighborhood bylaws may have additional requirements.

General, Board, Special & Committee Meetings

General Notice

Notice to the general public and board or committee members must be given a minimum of seven (7) days before the meeting, however, more notice is encouraged.

Methods of notification vary from neighborhood to neighborhood, however, each association is required to make a good faith effort to reach a majority of their membership.

General Notification Methods:

- Website
- Email / listserv
- Newsletters
- Social media
- Door to door flyers
- Public bulletin boards / kiosks
- Online community calendars

Direct Notice

Direct notice must be given a minimum of twenty-four (24) hours before the meeting to people who have specifically requested notice (such as interested media) and applicants in land use and liquor license reviews when their issue is on the agenda. Direct notice may be delivered by hand, mail, email, or when those methods are not practical, by telephone.

Emergency Meetings

What's An Emergency Meeting?

Emergency meetings may be called when decisions need to be made in less than the standard seven (7) days' notice. The emergency matter at hand is the

only topic that may be discussed. Refer to your neighborhood bylaws for specific procedures for calling an emergency meeting.

General & Direct Notice for Emergency Meetings

A minimum of twenty-four (24) hours' notice is required to the public as well as members of the board or committee and any parties who are known to have a direct interest in the topic to be discussed at the meeting. Direct notice should still be delivered by hand, email, or telephone. Additional time may be required by your NA bylaws.

Meeting Facilitation

The key to meeting facilitation is keeping people on time, on task and on board as a group. Meeting facilitation takes time and practice in order to find your best leadership style. Don't be afraid to ask for feedback and suggestions from fellow board members on ways to improve your meetings. Ultimately, meetings that run on time and that are effective will help your neighborhood association make decisions and show that you respect the time and energy of neighborhood volunteers.

8 Tips to Make Facilitating a Meeting Easier

- 1. Be Prepared:** Plan the agenda and make sure notice has gone out at least one week prior to the meeting. Contact presenters to make sure they will be in attendance. Touch base with fellow board members to make sure all tasks are covered and that everyone understands their specific role/responsibility.
- 2. Know your ground rules:** Always state ground rules at the beginning of your meeting as

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a friendly reminder to your board and general membership. Your meeting has a better chance of running smoothly if everyone understands the way the meeting will be run, what will be tolerated and what won't.

- 3. Facilitate Voting and Decision-Making:** Never assume an agreement has been reached without a vote. The Chair should take two minutes to remind everyone how voting works. Make sure people know who is allowed to vote at the beginning of the meeting.
- 4. Stay on Time:** It is often helpful to assign the role of timekeeper to another board member so that time will be better monitored. Remember, your agenda can help you here, too. Let it be the "bad guy" (Ex. "According to the agenda we need to move on to our next topic.").
- 5. Direct the Discussion and Keep People on Topic:** If people repeat information that has already been stated, recap information for the group. If a decision needs to be made, call for a motion from the group.
- 6. Always Maintain your Role as Chair:** Facilitate group discussions, making sure all are being heard. Do not abuse your position and monopolize the floor.
- 7. Wrap-Up at the End of the Meeting:** Briefly review all key decisions made and restate action items. Don't forget to acknowledge any new faces in the room and remind them to sign in.
- 8. Follow-Up after the Meeting:** Offer help to other board members as needed and make a plan for connecting with any new members.

Ways to Make Sure Everyone Feels Heard and Participates

- Minimize crosstalk and consider the needs of different personalities and cultures in your meetings.
- Be flexible and allow time for questions to ensure understanding.
- Control the flow of discussion and guide your group to making decisions and reaching consensus.

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- Summarize the discussion, so far, so that others have a sense of conclusion, i.e. "So far, what I've heard you say is... Is that accurate?"
- Address disruptive influences and make meetings more accessible, welcoming and productive for all in attendance.
- Don't allow others to take over the meeting through intimidation, anger or outrageous behavior.
- Set boundaries but validate participants' contributions. "I see that you are frustrated that this issue is not on the agenda. Perhaps a few of us would be willing to stay after the meeting and establish a good time for having this discussion."

Robert's Rules of Order for Neighborhood Associations

If your association currently lists Robert's Rules of Order as the official procedure used by the group in your bylaws, then you must abide by the core elements of these rules where not otherwise specified.

Figuring out Robert's Rules of Order (RR) is no easy task, so what are the core elements? The goal is to run a meeting as efficiently and as equitably as possible. When paired with an equity lens to uplift underrepresented voices, RR can help everyone to be treated fairly and create a transparent system for making decisions. Here is an outline of how to utilize RR:

To make a motion:

- Say "I move that..."

To amend a motion:

- Say "I move to amend the motion on the floor"

To refer topic to a committee:

- Say "I move we refer this matter to [committee name]"

To table until a specified future meeting:

- Say "I move that we table..."

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Regardless of the motion, the following must occur after it is stated:

- Another board member needs to second the motion
- Chair repeats motion verbatim
- Opportunity for further discussion provided
- Vote is called by Chair
 - "All in favor say 'aye', opposed say 'nay', abstentions?" or ask for a show of hands
 - Vote is summarized by Chair and recorded by Secretary

Example Motion and Voting Procedure

- *Board Member A:* "I move that..."
- *Board Member B:* "I second that motion"
- *Chair:* "It has been moved and seconded that ... [repeat motion verbatim, rely on Secretary if necessary]"
- *Chair:* "Is there any further discussion?" ... [restate motion]."
- At this point further discussion will ensue. If no further discussion is desired, or when discussion has closed, the Chair will proceed with the vote.
- *Chair:* "All those in favor say 'Aye.' All those not in favor say 'nay,' Are there any abstentions?"
- ***Provide summary declaration of vote.***
- If all board members are in favor the motion passes unanimously.

Sample Meeting Agenda



Summer Meadow Neighborhood Association

Monday, April 29, 2021 | 7:00-9:00 PM | Online Via Zoom

Welcome to your Summer Meadow Neighborhood Association (SMNA) meeting. Thank you for joining us! We aim to hold a warm and encouraging space for community action and input. This is a place for neighbors to come together to address various issues and hopes for our neighborhood. The SMNA is not here to act on behalf of neighbors, but rather to create a platform from which all neighbors can effectively work to improve Summer Meadow.

6:50 Social Time - Come meet your neighbors!

7:00 Welcome & Introductions

7:05 Ground rules, voting procedures, review of minutes/agenda

7:15 Approve last month's meeting minutes and current meeting agenda (board vote)

Include link to draft minutes here so board members can review before voting

7:30 Presentation (straw poll followed by board vote)

***Include the following information:**

- Name of organization/individual
- Link to additional/background information
- Provide an explanation describing how/if this might impact neighbors
- Clearly state if input will be solicited from those who attend this meeting, especially if there is a possibility that you will be taking a "straw poll"

8:00 Committee Reports (updates)

***Ensure the following:**

- Include all committees per "standing agenda items"
- Be sure to inform attendees that committees are great opportunities to get involved without committing to board service
- Let everyone know meeting times/dates/locations for committee meetings
- Make sure to include any information about events that are directly related

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committee activities

- Link to additional/background information if applicable

8:30 - Event announcements (Call for Volunteers)

***Example:** Movie in the Park (Christina Irvine) – Friday, July 14th, 8:30pm at Summer Meadow Park (322 SE Flower St)

Help us decide what movie to show this year! If you have additional suggestions on how to make this year's event even more spectacular than the previous years, we would love to hear it! Or consider joining the committee & helping execute this community-building event.

8:45 - Community announcements

9:00 - Recap of meeting & adjourn