

# Keys to a Successful Meeting

September 22, 2015

## 1. Before the meeting, be organized, be prepared

### a. The Meeting Leader

- 1) Ensures the right participants are notified in a timely manner
- 2) Determines what must occur prior to the meeting in order to make it successful and what must be accomplished for the meeting to be closed, and shares this with the Scribe which becomes the foundation for the agenda

### b. The Scribe

- 1) Generates the agenda based on the last meeting's old business, still open action items, and any new business the leader wants to discuss or that was suggested at the last meeting without adequate time to address it
- 2) Creates an agenda, and distributes it along with prior meeting minutes and action items before the meeting

### c. The Participants

- 1) Prepare to contribute to the meeting goals/objectives as outlined in the agenda
- 2) Complete previously assigned action items

## 2. During the meeting

### a. The Meeting Leader

- 1) Makes the participants feel comfortable
- 2) Ensures adequate facilities, room arrangement, and maybe refreshments
- 3) Provides welcome and introductions
- 4) Summarizes roles, goals, objectives, agenda, timing issues
- 5) Ensures understanding and implementation of the ground rules (e.g., everyone contributes, number and length of presentations is adhered to, how disagreements or conflicts are handled)
- 6) Conducts the meeting based on the agenda

### b. The Scribe

- 1) Records minutes \*
- 2) Reviews action items and decisions with other attendees prior to close of meeting

### c. The Participants

- 1) Contribute to the success of the meeting by appropriate participation

## 3. After the meeting

### a. The meeting leader

- 1) Requests feedback on how to improve the meeting process (e.g. was the agenda available beforehand as well as minutes of previous meetings)

and were they useful, how to foster better communications/participation, do we have the right attendees)

b. The Scribe

1) Puts minutes into Google Docs > Meetings > Minutes and Google Docs > Docs for Website.

Sends out both Word doc and link to Google Docs to all BOD members and designated park members in a timely manner for review and comment; timeliness is especially critical to keep absent participants up to speed, to remind participants of action items they need to be working on, and to broadcast the date of the next meeting to allow participants time to adequately plan ahead. Also put copy of minutes into Google Docs folder Docs for Website so that minutes will be available and transparent to our constituents. Because the minutes will be public, care must be exercised in presenting an accurate and professional accounting.

2) Ensures actions items are tracked in a tracking system or database and reviewed for closure

3) Actively assists the other Board members in keeping official records

4) Assists as needed in generating and tracking any documents needed by the group

5) Keeps the members' contact information current

c. The Participants

1) Respond to the Meeting Leader on how to improve the meeting process

2) Respond to the Scribe on corrections to the minutes

3) Complete action items by due date

\* Taking minutes means documenting what happens in a meeting, who was there, what decisions were made, what needs to be done and by whom – basically the document that keeps everyone on track, and a critical step to success. Minutes are the official record.

The chairman of the meeting will be too busy leading the meeting to take good enough minutes. Anyone, other than the leader could be assigned to do this most important and not difficult task. A Scribe can be elected to serve a period of time, the duty can be rotated among the participants, or someone can volunteer at each meeting.

Minutes are not meant to be an exact accounting of everything in the meeting; that would be too onerous and not really useful, and no one would read them. But it is important they are accurate. They are meant to capture highlights of discussions, the final decisions, actions taken and actions yet to be done, and who was there. It's a record of your progress, and keeps you from re-inventing

the wheel, or missing important deadlines.

It's important for the scribe to have the most current agenda as the minutes should follow the agenda outline and should have a section for each agenda item, even if that item is tabled or deleted, which should be noted in the minutes. Minutes should include:

- a section for each agenda item (even if that agenda item was not addressed)
- the highlights of the discussion of that item
- what decisions are made
- progress/status of current action items and actions to be done, and by whom

Action Items are a means to keep track of what needs to be done, who is supposed to do it, and progress made. At each meeting the meeting leader will be reviewing the progress of these action items, so the scribe needs to make sure she/he gets them right and keeps track of them. A simple Action Item database would include:

- Description of action
- Date assigned
- Date due
- Person responsible
- Disposition or status to date

Needless to say, following a good agenda makes taking good minutes easy.