



**VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING
AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**
Partners for Better Communities

Strategies for Conducting Effective Community Meetings

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Ramona Chapman
Capacity Development Specialist

Our Focus

Preparation Process

confidence + framework
allows
leadership to emerge



Outcome

Each of us will be
better prepared for and
more comfortable in
guiding group meetings & processes



Agenda

- Use our OARRS
- Key Ingredients & 4 Ps for Effective Meetings
- Outreach and Engagement Tools
- Planning & Conducting the Meeting
- After the meeting & Evaluation
- Design your next community meeting
- Interventions



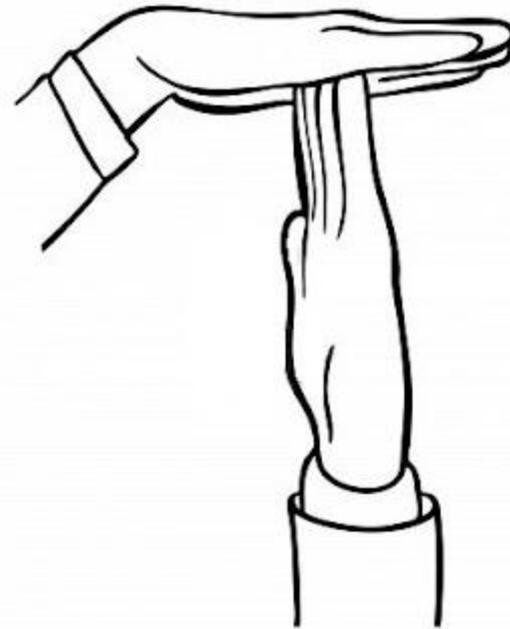
Meeting Challenges

What specific challenges have you had in facilitating or conducting community meetings?



Tool Discussion

*The process
break*



Tool Discussion

OARRS

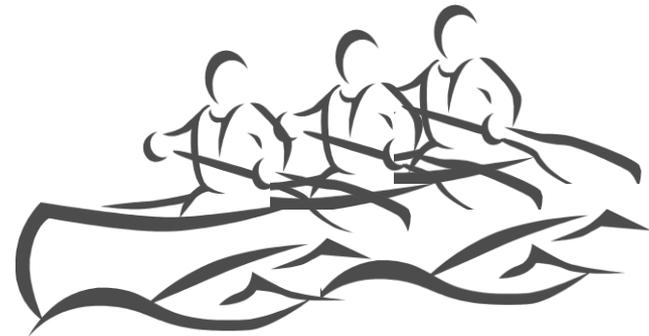
Outcome

Agenda

Roles

Responsibilities

Scope



Tool Discussion

OARRS

Outcome



*Each of us will be
better prepared for and
more comfortable in
guiding group processes*

Agenda

Roles

Responsibilities

Scope



Tool Discussion

OARRS

Outcome

Agenda



*How we're going
to get there.*

Roles

Responsibilities

Scope



Tool Discussion

OARRS

Outcome

Agenda

Roles →

Responsibilities

Scope

Who does what
to make the
meeting effective.



Tool Discussion

OARRS

Outcome

Agenda

Roles

Responsibilities →

Scope

*What are our
shared
responsibilities as
members of the
group?*



Tool Discussion

OARRS

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*What are we
empowered to
do?*



Shared Responsibilities

Ground Rules

Participant Guidelines

Group Norms

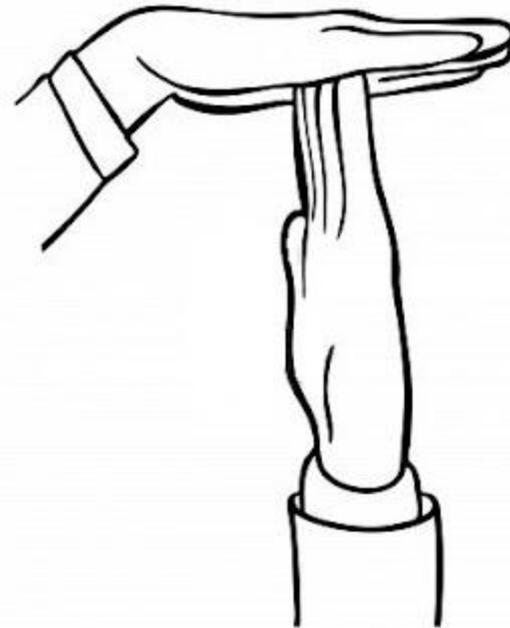
Some prompts:

- *How will we agree to act as a group?*
- *What are our responsibilities to each other?*



Process Break

*Let's discuss
what we just
did.*



Tool Discussion

The Check-In

Check in to confirm:

- understanding
- agreement

Are these clear?

Are these easily understandable to a person joining the group?

Do we agree to use these guidelines moving forward?



Tool Discussion

The Negative Poll

Is there any reason not to use this list?

Is anyone not willing to use this list?

Is anyone not willing for the group to take this action?

To ask specifically for any disagreement or dissent.



Community Meetings

Importance of Community Voices:

- Evaluate goals and objectives
- Keeps participants updated on current events
- Allows the group to pull resources together for decision making
- Provides opportunity for opinions and ideas to be expressed



Meeting Facts

- *~11 million meetings held each day in the US*
- *The “higher up” you are in an organization or system’s infrastructure, the more time you spend in meetings*
- *Most organizations spend 7-15 % of their personnel resources on meetings*



Beginning to Plan

- Find people to work with to help plan
- Preliminary questions
- Think about logistics
- Assign tasks



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Anatomy of Effective Meetings

GETTING READY:
PREPARATION



GETTING UNDERWAY:
GROUP FOUNDATION



GETTING IT DONE:
GROUP WORK



WRAP UP



FOLLOW - UP

| GETTING READY: PREPARATION | GETTING UNDERWAY: GROUP FOUNDATION | GETTING IT DONE: GROUP WORK | WRAP UP | FOLLOW - UP |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose made clear • Roles clarified • Logistics planned • Collect information on context, work, participants • Agenda determined and communicated • Deliverables defined • Prepare opening statement | <p>Begin with opening that :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarifies session objective • Gives results to be achieved • Explains the roles • Provide overview of agenda and/or process • Establishes Ground Rules | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group works towards achieving purpose and outcomes • May include group discussion, problem solving, and decision – making • Most of the meeting time spent in the body • Managing group dynamics • Manage the process and progress | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recap outcomes • Next steps clear • Evaluate group process | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting record/outputs produced and distributed • Informing and communicating with others • Monitoring implementation work • Identifying further needs for group work |

Key Ingredients

- Meet people where they are—convenient time & place
- Use language, exercises, games, visuals
- Allow time & space for participants to talk with one another & build relationships
- Get neighborhood involved before the meeting



Key Ingredients

- Partner with local groups to increase potential for follow up
- Focus on turn out...attendance is critical
- Involve facilitators and community leaders
- Use staff to manage logistics
- Provide food, transportation, childcare, homework support if appropriate



Good Meeting Planning...4Ps

Preparedness Checklist:

- Who should be in the meeting?
- Why?
- What information do they need to be prepared?
- By what date should they get the information?



4Ps

Purpose Checklist:

- Is this meeting important? Why?

Process Checklist:

- How will the meeting be conducted?
- Content & clear outcomes
- Setting
- Time management
- Facilitation
- Summary of closure



4Ps

Payoff Checklist:

- How does the meeting payoff for clients and customers...?
- *For the organization*
- *For oneself*
- stakeholders



Communication

- Have a system of communication worked out between staff and keep your team leader updated on all progress to avoid any confusion or conflicting plans



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Location

Possible locations:

- Community College or University
- Library
- Local Community Center
- School
- Town Hall
- Church, synagogue, etc.



Outreach & Engagement Tools

Outreach Tools

- Phone calls
- Social Media
- Email
- Fliers
- Signs/banners
- Door hangers
- TV & radio announcements



Outreach & Engagement Tools

- Invite Elected Officials and Local Policy Makers
- Explain what the issue(s) you will be discussing, why it's relevant to them
- Give them the opportunity to offer opening remarks...send talking points
- Explain what you'd like them to say
- Send formal Thank you after the meeting



Creating an Agenda

Agendas should include:

- Meeting date, time, location
- Meeting Purpose, Objectives, Outcomes
- Topics for discussion
- Time allotment for each topic
- Presenter or discussion leader
- Decisions & action items



Creating an Agenda

Agenda Outline:

- Welcome (5min)
- Introduction (10 min)
- Opening Remarks (10 min)
- Agency Rep. or Panel (10 min)
- Topic Discussion (30 - 45 Min)
- Question & Answer (15-20 min)
- Call to Action/ Next Steps (10 min)
- Adjourn



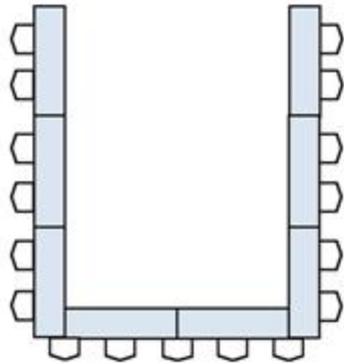
What to Bring...

Checklist of items to bring to the meeting:

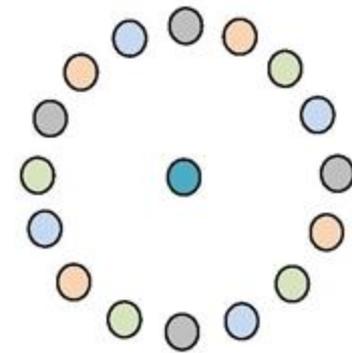
- Copies of the agenda
- Informational materials about the topics
- Flip chart w/markers, paper, pens, markers
- Sign-in Sheet
- Name tags



Meeting Room Setup



Wide U-Shape



Interactive Circle Set-Up



Focus Question

Identify something you have done to make a meeting more effective.



Facilitating the Meeting

- Listen to understand
- Stay in your role
- Don't be defensive



Before the Meeting

- Go into the community early, convene a small group meeting of local advocates & leaders ...let them help develop the agenda
- Set up meeting at a time, place & frequency agreeable to local conditions
- Plan 2-hour meetings and 20-minute presentations



Facilitating a Hostile Group

What are some practices that don't work well?



Facilitating a Hostile Group

Collaborative approaches often lead to sustainable outcomes

- Include key stakeholders from the beginning
- Work in the best interests of all
- Build relationships and trust
- Practice open, honest communication



Facilitating a Hostile Group

- Consider multiple ways to engage the public...engage a neutral facilitator
- Determine whether or not a public meeting is the best approach
- Be honest about the purpose...don't seek input if a decision is already made
- Determine what info/expertise is needed



Dealing with Adversarial Behavior

Why individuals are adversarial

- Taken by surprise
- They perceive something isn't fair or unresponsive public process
- Stakes are high and they want to “win”
- Sources of info are untrustworthy or “experts” don't agree
- No alternative avenue to express their concerns is available



Dealing with Adversarial Behavior

Controlling One's Own Emotions

- Take responsibility for own emotions & behaviors
- Work to de-escalate the conflict, not escalate it
- Be prepared mentally
- Be aware that stress weakens your behavioral control



Before the Meeting

- Organize and practice your presentations...keep them at a level most members of the community can understand
- Know when to use audio/visual equipment...bring what's appropriate
- Use a facilitator who is familiar with local conditions



During the Meeting

- Anticipate conflict ahead of time
- Be clear about the meeting process
- Be clear about who the decision makers are
- Be clear about next steps and how communication will occur afterwards
- Be as specific and concrete as possible

During the Meeting

- Arrive early to greet, meet, & mix with the local people as they arrive
- Have an agenda, nametags, key points and FAQs distributed before the meeting begins
- Make it clear to the audience that information should go both ways; local input on the issue is critical...use ground rules & microphones
- Record issues of concern on a flip chart for all to see and add to



During the Meeting

- Leave quality time for public comment and interchange of ideas
- Admit when you don't know something or not certain
- Ask a local official everyone knows and respects to open the meeting
- Agency staff should stay at the meeting to take part in the conversation
- Use local geographically & socially familiar examples in pp presentations



During the Meeting

- Mix up seating so agency reps don't sit together
- Use clear slides that illustrate the point
- Discuss the strengths, weaknesses, & uncertainties about the issues or the proposal



Concluding the Meeting

- Set a finish time and stick to it
- If more time is needed, move the spill-over discussion to after the last agenda item or plan another meeting
- Keep working groups under 30
- Conclude with a summary and announce the next meeting
- Celebrate success!



After the Meeting

- Be accountable to commitments
- Meeting Minutes stand as the record of a meeting and should list the decisions made, follow-up action and direct statements to avoid misquoting
- Minutes should be readily available to citizens...



After the Meeting

- Monitor local media broadcasts to ascertain community reaction
- Prepare a written summary of issues, suggestions and/or questions raised by attendees...distribute the report to all meeting participants, policy-makers & other interested parties
- Keep going back to the community to earn their trust



Evaluate

Evaluate the process and outcome

- Surveys, polls, mailed questionnaires
- Set a time to debrief or meet with partners and staff to discuss how the meeting event went



Group Exercise

Design Your Next Community Meeting

What is the purpose of the meeting?

What are the key issues & concerns?

Who should play a role in the planning?

Do you need a facilitator?

Who, When, where, time, how long?

What's the outreach & advertising strategy?



Role Play: Managing the Meeting

Preventions and Intervention

Preventions- help avoid disruption from the start

Interventions- use when confronted with disruption or problems during the meeting



Resources

www.ideapartnership.org

<http://Mrsc.org>

www.ctb.ku.edu

www.meetinggenie.com

www.mindtools.com

www.joe.org

www.orau.gov

www.sitepoint.com



Adjourn

“Treat people as if they were what they ought to be, and you help them to become what they are capable of being.

Goethe



Contact

Ramona Chapman, M.Ed.

- Capacity Development Specialist
- Ramona.chapman@dhcd.virginia.gov
- 804-371-7167
- 434-249-2288 (cell)

