



PLANNING A CITIZENS' MEETING

Goals of the meeting:

- Clearly present the issue to attendees
- Demonstrate strong citizen support to the City Council
- Allow the public to express both support and concerns
- Encourage further public participation in the process

Key factors to a successful meeting:

- The meeting is well organized, friendly, and ends on time.
- Strong attendance. This is achieved purely by community group members talking to and turning out their one-to-one contacts.

Planning of the Citizens' Meeting:

1. Introduce the Citizens' Meeting idea in one of the group meetings.
 - a. During the agenda planning meeting, the planning team is trained on the Citizens' Meeting Agenda. They present it to the rest of the community group during the group meeting. *See sample agenda documents.*
2. Community group members sign up for committees. It is expected that most will be on more than one committee. Committee roles listed in detail below.
 - a. Committees:
 - i. Agenda
 - ii. Media Contact
 - iii. Public Officials Contact
 - iv. Research
 - v. Youth Involvement (optional)
 - b. Additional important role:
 - i. Turnout Meeting Chair
 1. This person must be enthusiastic and dependable. Very important role!
3. Carefully choose the date for the Citizens' Meeting. It should:
 - a. work for the majority of the members' schedules
 - b. not occur during a major holiday or other community event (such as the start or end of school)
4. Plan a turnout meeting 4-6 days prior to the Citizens' Meeting. This is run primarily by the Turnout Chair. *See script for turnout meeting document.*
5. Plan a dress rehearsal for the Citizens' Meeting a few days prior to the meeting. Be sure to include both the technical (lights, PA, presentation equipment) and presentation / speaker aspects.



Committee Roles and Responsibilities:

(Committees each have a Chair who is responsible for organizing further meetings and to facilitate communication between the committees).

Agenda Committee:

Responsible for logistics, filling in agenda, & finding suitable location for Citizens' Meeting

Technical Crew

- Stage Manager role (optional)
- Lights
- PA system
- Presentation equipment and screen

Set-Up Crew

- Create signage
 - Ground Rules
 - Group Name / Welcome Banner
 - Time Sign – to signal when time is up during the Public Testimony
 - Parking Signs
 - Directional Arrows for Event Night
 - Program for attendees
- Tables & chairs set up for the presentation, speakers, Public Officials and audience
- Refreshments table
- Media area
- Kids area (optional)

Setting up speakers / roles during meeting:

Emcee

- Gives the "Welcome and Overview"
- Introduces the Speakers
- Reviews the Ground Rules
- Facilitates the Public Testimony Section
- Invites the Public Officials to speak
- Concludes the meeting

Time Keeper (great role for youth involvement)

- Holds up "Time" sign during Public Testimony to indicate when the time allotted has completed

Research presenters

Public Testimony Planted Speakers

- Two or three "ice breakers" from the group to start the public testimony section of the meeting
- Closer: Summarizes what has been said and ends the testimony on a positive note

Media Committee

- Invites the media to the Citizens' Meeting
- Coordinates interviews between the media and group members



- Meets with newspaper editorial board(s) to seek a favorable editorial in the local newspaper(s).
- Meets members of the press during the event and connects them to group spokesperson.

Public Officials Contact Committee: Public relations with Public Officials

Invites Public Officials to the meeting and gives regular reports to the group of the "status" of the Public Officials. It is vital to keep in contact with the Public Officials to:

- monitor their feelings on the issue before and after the Citizens' Meeting.
- answer any questions about the group.
- answer any questions about the agenda.
- ensure they'll attend meeting.

Research Committee

Produces the presentation for the Citizens' Meeting based on research of the issue. Also responsible for writing any informational documents going to the press or Public Officials. This is your group of writers.

Youth Involvement Committee

Youth participation sets a friendly tone and engages the audience. Youth may do such things as perform a short skit, show a youth-created video or sing a song. Youth are also great candidates for the Time Keeper role.

Turnout Chair

Responsible for keeping track of the expected number Citizens' Meeting attendees. This person takes a tally at each group meeting once (based on the number of one-to-one contacts who have committed to attending the Citizens' Meeting). The week of the Citizens' Meeting, the Turnout Chair holds the Turnout Meeting. Crucial that this person is dependable and energetic.