

Top Ten List of Do's and Don'ts for Managing Public Meetings

Do:

- Come rested and on-time
- Take a break if you need one or ask others for help
- Engage and be engaging
 - Be open, accessible and approachable (e.g., not on your phone)
 - Don't huddle with co-workers in a way that excludes others
- Reinforce that their question is a good one
 - "We have heard that a lot..."
 - "This is a reasonable concern..."
 - "That's a new one for me, interesting..."
 - Write it down
- Lean on your colleagues and their knowledge
 - "Let me introduce you to..."
 - Qualify what others will know; "this staff person may know more..."
 - Don't answer substantively in areas not in your expertise
- Start at the beginning to better understand
 - Have a conversation, not a lecture
 - Ask questions
 - Provide concise and clear answers when asked questions
- Agree to disagree; we are not seeking alignment on values
 - I don't have much more to offer on that point...
 - I can understand where you are coming from, it was nice talking with you...
 - We are trying to balance all perspectives and I will make note of that...

Don't:

- Assume you are ever out of earshot
 - Say things that might be overheard
 - Joke and laugh with co-workers off to the side
- Talk down to people
 - Display condescending facial expressions
 - Cross your arms
 - Roll your eyes
 - Use jargon, technical terms and acronyms whenever possible
- Disregard, dismiss, or downplay concerns
 - That's not important
 - That's incorrect
 - You are wrong
 - Be negative and unempathetic
- Lose your cool

- Get visibly agitated
 - Raise your voice
 - Swear
 - Get defensive
- Make it personal
 - Your personal views
 - Talk about politics/political perspectives
- Try to answer questions you don't know the answer to
 - Make stuff up
 - Give an answer when you are unsure or unclear
 - Speak to things you know little about
 - Speculate
- Make assumptions about others
 - Assume the person you are talking to lives in your world
 - Assume the person understands or cares much about the intricacies of zoning and planning
 - Doesn't have a unique view informed by their values and experience