

Topic For Discussion: Communication Agreements

The Goal

- We want the OLCC to provide a setting in which people can speak their mind about issues.
- We want this to be a place where we can build up our sense of community.
- We want this to be a safe place in which everyone can express their opinions.
- We want it to be a place where we will be heard.
- We want to ensure fairness and efficiency in our dialog.
- We recognize the need to put some structures in place that will help us to achieve these goals.

More About the Need

- We are expecting membership in the CPO to grow.
- We realize that we only have two hours (typically) per month to bring up and discuss complex issues. To get the most out of our time available, we have to establish some discipline and order in our communications.
- There's little in the by-laws about the structure of OLCC meetings, so our members will create the structure for our mutual benefit.

The Agreements

The list of agreements (below) are offered *as a starting point*. No one is saying that you have to accept these; we are just considering them as a possible way to make our proceedings work better. Anyone can offer additional items and can give voice to eliminating or changing any of them.

We will discuss and, if we choose, vote on each agreement. Some of the agreements define some self-restraint, so you may be voting to limit yourself in some ways for the benefit of the dialog as a whole.

Once we have agreement, I expect we will want newcomers to abide by the agreements.

We should have a way of amending these agreements.

Some agreements to consider:

Taking Turns

1. You must be recognized by the Chair before speaking
2. You agree not to interrupt others while they are speaking (Robert's Rules of Order provide for a few exceptions)
3. Time limits for each agenda topic and for each speaker will be imposed when necessary.
4. For fairness, each speaker will get the same amount of time.
5. People who have not spoken have priority over people who have already spoken (on a particular subject)

Courtesy

1. Listen to others without interrupting.
2. Address your remarks to the chair or group as a whole.
3. You agree to refrain from personal attacks.
4. You will take side conversations to the hallway.

Effacacy/Efficiency

1. Keep comments relevant to the discussion topic
2. Important off-topic ideas will be noted for future discussion
3. The Chair can intervene when you wander off topic or go over your time limit
4. Speakers will endeavor to keep their comments succinct
5. Speakers should not repeat the same view or comment over and over
6. Everyone endeavors to find mutually agreeable solutions
7. We will use *Robert's Rules of Order* to manage motions, debate, voting, and the overall flow of the meeting.