

Appendix P: Guidelines for Running Effective Meetings

Conducting the Meeting

The facilitator has primary responsibility for moving people through the agenda in the time available and involving as many people as possible in the process. He/she helps the group make decisions at the appropriate time, and encourages everyone to take a responsible part in the meeting. A facilitator plays no role in substantive, issue-oriented discussions.

Here are a few recommendations to help a facilitator:

- start the meeting promptly
- review the agenda and summarize major points
- keep the discussion focused and ask if people are ready to make a decision
- try to involve everyone in the discussion
- avoid making judgments
- keep people from interrupting each other
- help the group make decisions by noting points of agreement
- avoid letting one or two people dominate the meeting

Ending the Meeting

It is important to close a meeting with a sense of accomplishment and direction. Before people leave:

- review all of the decisions that were made;
- determine who is taking responsibility for carrying them out, and by what date
- set a time and place for the next meeting
- encourage everyone to participate in cleaning up the room

Adapted from University of Massachusetts, Citizen Action Fact Sheet No. 2, prepared by Michael Kane, Cooperative Extension, Amherst, Massachusetts, 1982. <http://crs.uvm.edu/gopher/nerl/group/a/k.html>