



City of Cambridge

33.

IN CITY COUNCIL

March 30, 1998

COUNCILLOR RUSSELL
COUNCILLOR BORN
COUNCILLOR DAVIS
VICE MAYOR GALLUCCIO
COUNCILLOR REEVES
COUNCILLOR SULLIVAN
COUNCILLOR TRIANTAFILLOU

WHEREAS: The City Council will be meeting to discuss goals and objectives; and

WHEREAS: At this session there will also be a discussion of City Council meeting format rules as they relate to the deliberation process; now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the City Councillors are requested to review their Rules of the City Council and Roberts Rules especially those sections that are attached hereto.

In City Council March 30, 1998.

Adopted by the affirmative vote of nine members.

Attest:- D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk.

A true copy;

D. Margaret Drury

ATTEST:-

D. Margaret Drury
City Clerk

Strictly speaking, before the question is stated no comment should accompany suggestions that a motion be modified or withdrawn. In ordinary meetings, however, time can often be saved by brief informal consultation—which the chair can permit at his discretion, provided that he is careful to see that this privilege is not abused or allowed to run into debate. The chair can frequently maintain the necessary control over such informal consultation by standing while it takes place (in contrast to the rule that he should normally be seated during debate unless it would obstruct his view of the members; see pp. 442–443).

The Consideration of a Main Motion—Basic Steps

Once a main motion has been brought before the assembly through the three steps described above, there are three further basic steps by which the motion is considered in the ordinary and simplest case (unless it is adopted by *unanimous consent*, as explained on p. 52). These normal steps are as follows: (1) members *debate* the motion (unless no member claims the floor for that purpose); (2) the chair *puts the question* (that is, puts it to a vote); and (3) the chair *announces the result* of the vote. In addition, while the motion is open to debate, the assembly may wish to take a number of actions as a part of the motion's consideration—which can themselves be the subject of certain parliamentary motions, as explained in 5 and 6. In the following description of the three principal steps in the consideration of a main motion, it is assumed that none of these other motions are introduced.

DEBATE ON THE QUESTION. Immediately after stating the question, the chair should turn toward the maker of the motion to see if he wishes to be assigned the floor first in debate—to which the maker has the right if he claims it

before anyone else has been recognized, even though others may have risen and addressed the chair first.

Except in a small board or a committee, a member who desires to speak in debate must obtain the floor as described on pages 28 ff. The chair in assigning the floor should be guided by the principles explained in the same pages, and in 41. In the debate, each member has the right to speak twice on the same question on the same day,* but cannot make a second speech on the same question so long as any member who has not spoken on that question desires the floor. A member who has spoken twice on a particular question on the same day has *exhausted his right to debate* that question for that day.

Without the permission of the assembly, no one can speak longer than permitted by the rules of the body—or, in a nonlegislative assembly that has no rule of its own relating to the length of speeches, longer than ten minutes.

Debate must be confined to the merits of the pending question. Speakers must address their remarks to the chair, maintain a courteous tone, and—especially in reference to any divergence of opinion—should avoid injecting a personal note into debate. To this end, they must never attack or make any allusion to the motives of members. As already noted, speakers should refer to officers only by title, and should avoid the mention of other members' names as much as possible.

Except in small boards and committees, the presiding officer should not enter into discussion of the merits of pending questions (unless, in rare instances, he leaves the chair until the pending business has been disposed of, as described on pp. 389-390). While members are speaking

*For procedures where greater freedom of debate is desired, see 15 and 51.

in debate, the presiding officer should remain seated unless the view between him and the members would be obstructed. In the latter case, he should step back slightly while a member is speaking. Although the presiding officer should give close attention to each speaker's remarks during debate, he cannot interrupt the person who has the floor so long as that person does not violate any of the assembly's rules and no disorder arises. The presiding officer must never interrupt a speaker simply because he knows more about the matter than the speaker does.

The presiding officer cannot close debate so long as any member who has not exhausted his right to debate desires the floor, except by order of the assembly, which requires a two-thirds vote (15, 16, 42).

(For additional rules and information relating to debate, see 42.)

PUTTING THE QUESTION. When the debate appears to have closed, the chair may ask, "Are you ready for the question?" If no one then rises to claim the floor, the chair proceeds to put the question—that is, he puts it to a vote after once more making clear the exact question the assembly is called upon to decide. Where there is any possibility of confusion, the chair, before calling for the vote, should make sure that the members understand the effect of an "aye" vote and of a "no" vote. In putting the question, the chair should stand (except in a small board or a committee), and should especially project his voice to be sure that all are aware that the vote is being taken. The vote on a motion is normally taken by *voice* (or "*viva voce*"),* unless, under certain conditions, it is taken by

*Pronounced vī' vā vō' sē ['vaɪvə 'vosi].

Councillor Russell ✓

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Whereas: The City Council will be meeting to discuss goals & objectives and

Whereas: This session ^{also} will also be a discussion of City Council meeting format rules as they relate to the deliberative process, now therefore be it

Resolved: That City Councillors be requested to review their Rules of the City Council & Robert Rules especially those sections that are attached hereto.

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Consent Order #33

5-210

Councillor Russell re: City Councillors
to review the Rules of the City Council and
Roberts Rules for a discussion of City
Council meeting format.

In City Council March 30, 1998

ORDER ADOPTED