

Strategies for Effective Council (and Other) Meetings

Opportunities and Limitations



ILG Mission:

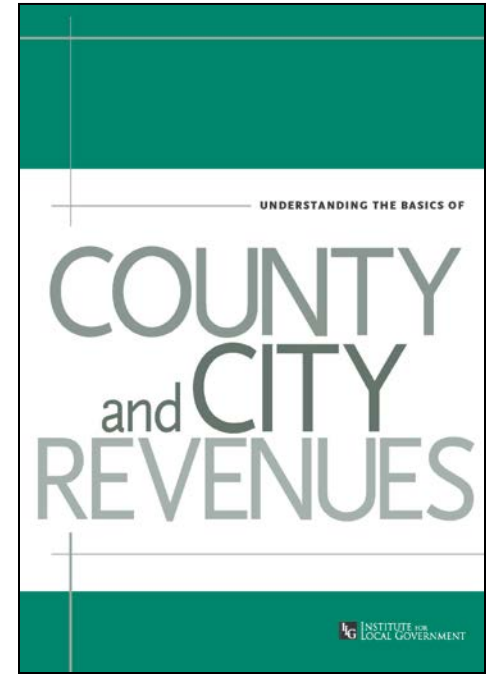
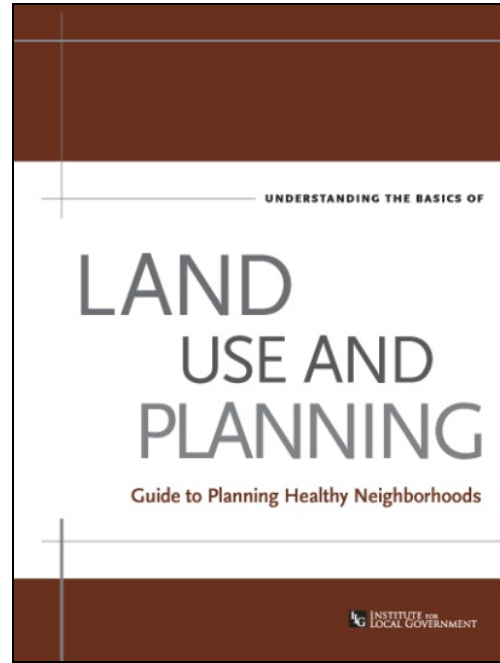
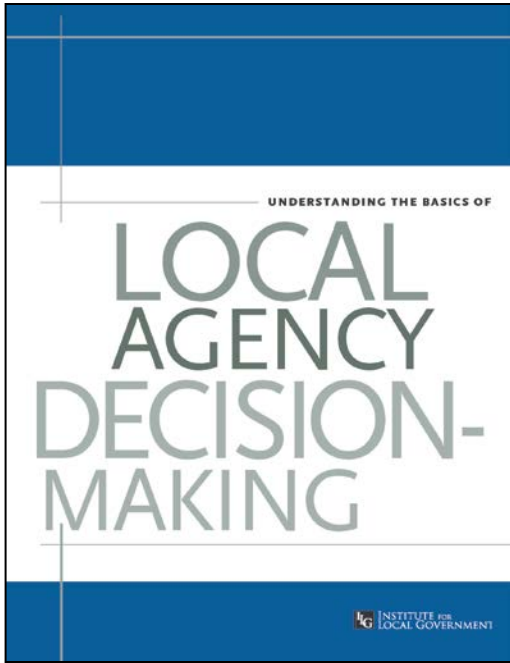
- Promoting good government at the local level
- Practical, impartial and easy-to-use materials

Thoughts Welcome!

- Materials developed through a collaborative process
- Need to know whether we are meeting your needs
- Funded through grants, contracts, publication sales, League of California Cities and California State Association of Counties

Resource Areas





www.ca-ilg.org/localgovt101



Resources

- Public Service Ethics
 - Leading by Values
 - Understanding Ethics Laws
 - Ethics Tools
 - Ethics Education (AB 1224 Training)
 - Analyzing Public Service Dilemmas
 - Campaigning for Office
- California Climate Action Network (CCAN)
- Public Engagement and Collaborative Governance
- Intergovernmental Conflict Resolution
- Healthy Communities
- Land Use and Environment
- Local Government 101
- Honoring Public Service

Public Service Ethics

The Institute's ethics program promotes public confidence and trust in local agency decision-making by helping local officials understand the unique legal and ethical obligations of being a public servant. [Read more »](#)

Local Associations Promote Ethics Compliance
Both the California State Association of Counties and the League of California Cities will help local officials demonstrate their commitment to public service ethics this fall. The vehicle will be sessions on public service ethics laws and principles at each organization's annual conference. [Read more »](#)



American Society for Public Administration Recognizes Institute Ethics Program
In 2009, the Institute was honored to receive national recognition for its efforts in promoting public service ethics. The Institute received the Public Integrity Award, which was presented by the American Society for Public Administration in collaboration with the

ILG is the research and education affiliate of the California State Association of Counties and the League of California Cities.

SITE SEARCH



ETHICS PROGRAM BENEFACTORS
The municipal law firms that made the Institute's Understanding the Basics of Public Service Ethics publications possible. [Read more »](#)



ETHICS LAW PRINCIPLES FOR PUBLIC SERVANTS
(Four-page tooshet). Provides a handy reference on the kinds of issues that ought to trigger a conversation with agency counsel or the Fair Political Practices Commission.



UNDERSTANDING THE BASICS OF PERSONAL & ORGANIZATIONAL ETHICS
Provides thoughts on working through ethical dilemmas and promoting a culture of ethics. [Read more »](#)



Session Objectives

1. To provide a framework for thinking about council and other public meetings
2. To share tips for maximizing their effectiveness
3. To lay a foundation for decision-making about Bell meeting formats

Session Format

(Blue Sheet/Manager's Report)

- Conversation with the community (7-7:30)
 - Answer questions
- Overview of meeting formats, restrictions and issues (7:30-8)
- Interview with Mayor of Artesia (8-8:45)
- Break (8:45-9)

Session Format, continued

- Discussion of role protocols can play for Bell public meetings (9-9:45)
- Public comment (9:45-9:55)
- Next steps/direction to staff/topics for future workshops (9:55-10)

A Note About Handouts

- Agenda packet
- Notebook—color coded
- List with links

Community Questions



The Opportunities and *Limitations* of Council Meetings

The Whats and Whys of Council Rules

“Opportunities and *Limitations*”



Council Meetings—
Today’s Workshop



Public Engagement—
Future Workshop

Key Message #1

- Council meetings essential element (usually an end point) of public agency decision-making
- But are not only or best way of getting public input or having community dialogues

**Key Message #2:
Group Processes Benefit from
Rules and Norms**

Why?



- “Cities” are a geographical concept
- More importantly are a political concept
 - How community makes decisions about services and facilities
- They are also a form of political organization communities choose

[Map showing
incorporated/unincorporat
ed areas of LA County,
with Bell circled within
omitted]

Cities Make Decisions Through Councils

- **City Councils:**
 - A Group of Five or More
 - Elected Representatives of Community
- **Job:** *Make Wise Decisions*
 - Council Meetings Are the Only Place They Can Make Those Decisions

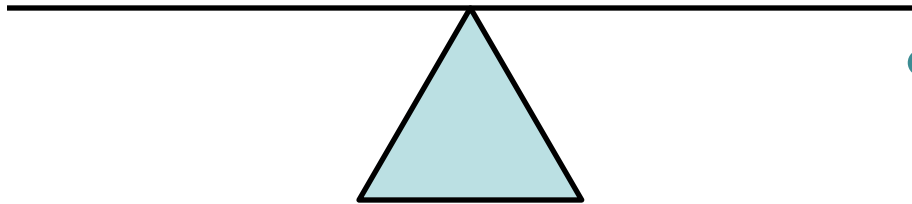
Group Decision-making Is Complex

[graphic omitted]

Rules:

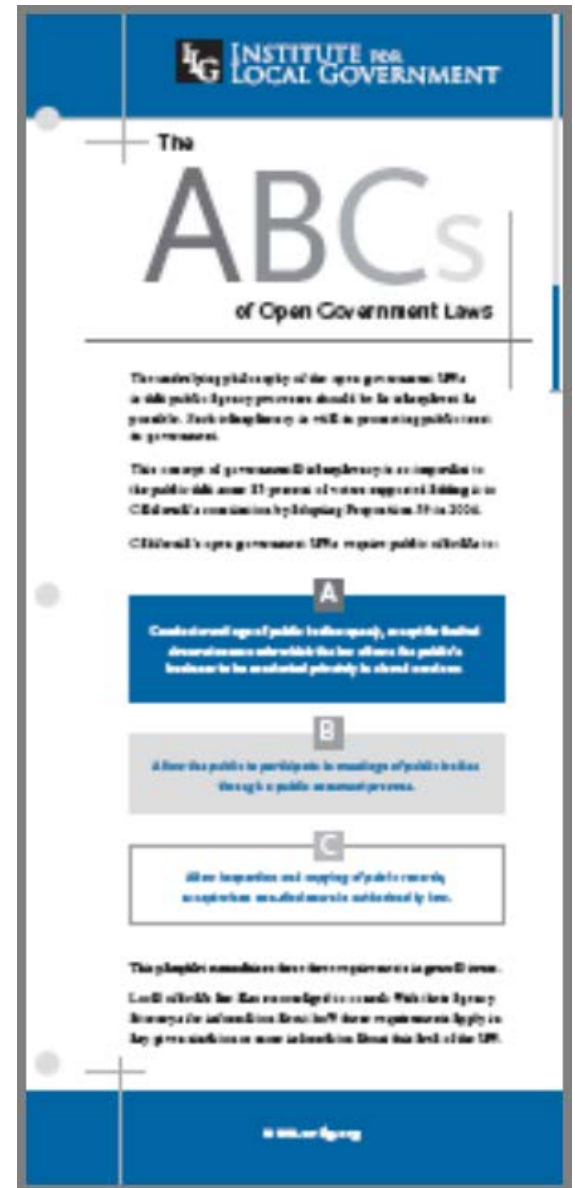
A Balance of Competing Values

- Trust:
Unrestricted
communication
- Trust:
Transparency
- Fairness
- Compassion
- Responsibility



Why Must Public Comment Be One Way?

- Open meeting laws require cities to publish and follow agenda
 - “Should I attend the meeting?”
 - “Dialogue” during public comments would result in discussion of off-agenda items



For All Voices to Be Heard

- Speak one at a time
- Allowing time for others to speak
- Public has a right to hear council discussion under open meeting laws
 - Some council members limit their comments
- No cheers/jeers



Whys No Cheers/Jeers?

- People in room \neq whole community
- May discourage expression of unpopular view

**The ONLY thing
we have to fear
is FEAR ITSELF...
and Snakes.**



- **Tips for Promoting Civility: Handout**

**And Public
Speaking**

The Whys of Time Limits



Role of the Chair: Coach



- Explain process
 - To both council and community
- Listen for developing consensus
 - Ask for motion
 - Announce decision

A Note on Parliamentary Procedure

- Necessary for group decision-making
- The simpler the better
- Resource: Rosenberg's Rules and video www.ca-ilg.org/rosenbergrules



Role of the Chair

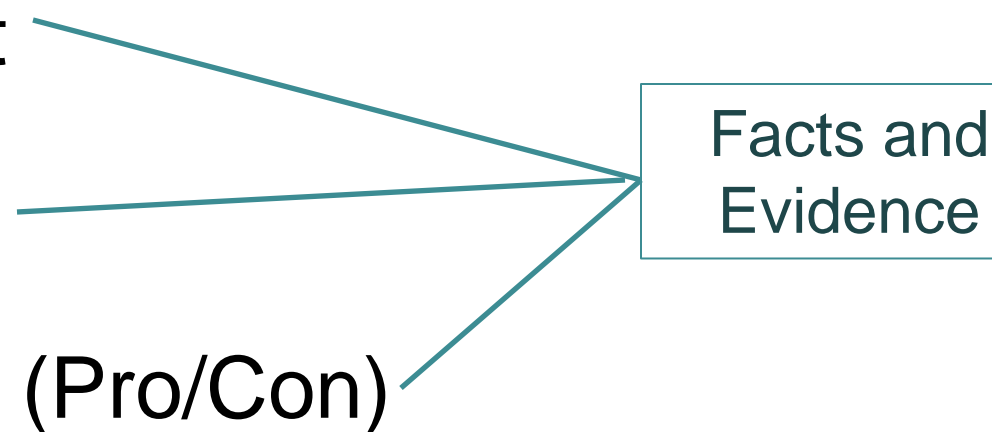
- **Referee:**
 - Enforce rules to achieve fairness
 - The more impartial the more trusted
 - City attorney can be a resource



How Public Hearings Are Different



Distinct Phases of Public Hearings

1. Staff Report
 2. Applicant
 3. Public Input (Pro/Con)
 4. Council Discussion: Law and Analysis
 5. Decision/Findings
 - Based on Evidence in Record
- 
- Facts and Evidence

Land Use

Public Hearing One-Pagers

- Plain language explanations
 - Attach to notices
 - Have at hearing
- Tips for participating in hearing
- In English and Spanish
- www.ca-ilg.org/onepagers

Tips on Dealing with Divisive/Emotional Issues

Sources of Emotion

When people:

- Have been (or perceive they've been) hurt
- Feel threatened/believe their fundamental beliefs/values are challenged
- Don't know "the rules of the game"

Emotions Intensify...

When people feel:

- Weak or powerless in the face of others who have power/authority
- Treated unfairly, disrespectfully or dishonestly

[Graphic of angry fan at sporting event omitted]

Or need express the depth of feeling

Responding to Others' Emotions...

- **Explain process** & how to participate
- **Listen** attentively / show you heard
- Be **respectful**: Invite & acknowledge perspectives
- Be **fair**—everyone gets same chance to speak
- **Explain** what happens next

Listening As a Critical Leadership Skill

- Look for shared goals, interests and values
- Look for differing views on facts
- Goal: Win-win solutions or ways of minimizing harms

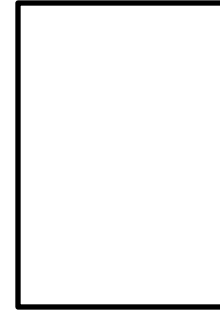
Interview with Mayor and Professor Victor Manalos

Coming to Agreement on Procedures and Shared Norms: Council Protocols

Council Protocols Are a Tool

- **For Explaining the Rules**

- To decision-makers
- Public
- Media



- **Fairness/Transparency—accessible on website**

Council Protocols Are a Tool, *continued*

- **For Managing Time**
- **Goal:** Spend most time on most important things –Frank Benest Handout
 - Rules for how things get on the agenda
 - Council/public time in preparing
 - Staff time/money
 - “Consent calendar” for non-controversial items

Council Protocols Are a Tool, *continued*

- **For Thoughtful Decision-Making**
 - Limit length of meetings
 - Can also promote civility/mutual respect



Council Protocols Are a Tool

- **For Promoting Civility/Decorum**
 - “Do’s”
 - “Don’ts”

Formats Vary

- Resolution
- Pieces
 - Parliamentary rules: Adopt Rosenberg's by reference
 - Civility and Decorum: Can include a pledge
 - Agenda and meeting procedures
 - Easier to find information

Formats Vary, *continued*

- Can be collected into a handbook
 - Include other information: Handouts from AB 1234/Ethics Training
- Caution/Bias: Risks associated with restating state law requirements

Review: Various Tools to Make Council Meetings Effective



- ✓ Strong commitment to **fairness, transparency, inclusiveness and civility**
- ✓ Supporting the **chair** in applying those principles
- ✓ Coming to agreement on which rules and norms make sense for Bell

Questions?



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