

# Conservation Commission Meetings - Rules and Procedures

Excerpted from The New York State Conservation Commission Handbook, James E. Kundell, PhD. Published by the New York State Association of Conservation Commissions. 1982.

Although most commissions do not conduct their meetings according to strict parliamentary procedure, nevertheless an understanding of it may prove helpful under certain circumstances. Your commission may find it beneficial to adopt the following rules of procedure (at least rules 1-8).

## **Rule 1: Meeting Time and Place**

The meetings of the Conservation Commission (Advisory Council) shall be at the time and place called at the discretion of the Chairperson by a majority of the members of the Commission. Meeting place, whenever possible, shall be at the Village Hall/Town Hall/City Hall. In addition, the Conservation Commission, as one of its first acts of business after created, shall adopt and establish a permanent time and place of meeting which shall be entered into the minutes of its meeting and meetings thereafter shall be held at said time and place without further order.

## **Rule 2: Quorum**

A majority of the Commission members constitutes a quorum to transact business. Less than a quorum may adjourn any meeting.

## **Rule 3: Attendance**

Absence from three consecutive regular meetings, without excuse, shall automatically vacate the office of any member. Such a vacancy shall be reported by the Chairperson to the appointing agency and the appointing agency shall fill such vacancy. All such vacancies and replacements shall, in addition, be reported to the Village/Town/City Board. Any member may be excused from attendance for good cause by reason of business or absence from the Village/Town/City or other good cause, which shall be entered into the minutes of such meeting.

## **Rule 4: Roll Call**

A roll call vote on any item shall not be necessary unless any member of the Conservation Commission requests the same.

## **Rule 5: Agenda**

(This portion is optional; it depends on how rigidly you want to conduct your meetings). Whenever possible, Conservation Commission meetings shall follow a formal agenda. The Chairperson shall be responsible for the preparation of the agenda. Matters to be placed on the agenda must be presented to the Chairperson no later than 12:00 noon two days preceding the meeting date. No matter other than those listed on the regular agenda shall be open for discussion and vote at any meeting except on the affirmative vote of at least a majority. The agenda shall consist of those items placed thereon by order or direction of any member.

#### **Rule 6: Order of Business**

The order of business at all meetings shall be as follows:

- a. Roll Call
- b. Approval of minutes
- c. Announcements and presentations
- d. Oral or written communications or petitions received
- e. Requested reports (if divided into subcommittees, have reports here)
- f. Unfinished business
- g. New business
- h. Adoption of agenda for following meeting
- i. Adjournment

#### **Rule 7: Public Participation**

Any person interested or affected by any item on the agenda shall be entitled to speak on such subject provided, however, that the Chairperson shall have the right to terminate said discussion at any time where the same is repetitious, irrelevant or adds nothing new to the proceedings. All persons addressing the Conservation Commission at the podium or other place provided for such purpose. Any person addressing the Conservation Commission shall state his or her name and address for the record.

#### **Rule 8: Motions**

- a. Motions to be acted upon must be seconded.
- b. When a motion is made and seconded, it shall, at the request of the Chairperson or any member of the Commission, be restated by the Secretary before a vote is taken thereon.
- c. A motion may not be withdrawn by the maker without the consent of the second and the approval of the Conservation Commission.

## Rule 9: Procedure on Motions

- a. Motions out of order - The Chairperson may at any time, by majority consent of the members, permit a member to introduce a motion out of the regular agenda order.
- b. Division of Question - If a question contains two or more divisionable propositions the Chairperson may, upon the request of a member, unless appealed, divide the same.
- c. Precedent of Motions - When a motion is before the Commission, no motion shall be entertained except the following which said motion shall have precedence in the following order:

1. Motion to Adjourn: A motion to adjourn is not debatable and shall be in order at any time, except as follows:

- a) When repeated without intervening business or discussion.
- b) When made as an interruption of a member while speaking.
- c) When the previous question has been ordered.
- d) When a vote is being taken.

A motion to adjourn to another time is debatable only as to the time to which the meeting is adjourned.

2. Motion to Fix Hour of Adjournment: Such a motion is debatable except as to the time and place of adjournment.
3. Motion to Table: A motion to table shall be for the purpose of temporarily bypassing the subject. If the motion is passed, the matter may be taken from the table at any time prior to the end of the next regular meeting.
4. Motion to Previous Question: The purpose is to close debate on the main motion and is undebatable. If the motion passes, a vote shall be taken on the main motion.
5. A Motion to Amend: This motion is debatable only as to the amendment. A motion to amend an amendment is in order but not one to amend an amendment to an amendment. An amendment modifying the intent of a motion is in order, but an amendment relating to a different matter shall not be in order. Amendments are voted first and then the main motion as amended.
6. Substitute Motion: A substitute motion replaces the main motion. Passage of a substitute motion eliminates further discussion on the main motion.

7. Motion to Reconsider: May be brought before Commission at any time prior to the end of the next regular meeting.
8. Motion to Postpone: A motion to postpone indefinitely is fully debatable, and, if the same is adopted, the principal question shall be declared lost. Motions to postpone to a definite time are amendable and debatable as to the propriety of postponement and the time set.
9. Motion to Refer: Motions to refer are not debatable except for propriety of referring the matter.

#### **Rule 10: Appeal**

Any decision or ruling by the Chairperson may be appealed by request of any member. The Chairperson shall call for a roll call vote to see if the Chair shall be upheld. If the roll call loses, the Chair is reversed.

#### **Rule 11: Motions Adopted by No Objection**

Except where a roll call vote is called, motions may be adopted by the Chairperson stating to the effect that the motion is adopted. If there are no objections the motion shall be deemed adopted by unanimous vote. In the event of any objection by any member, there shall be a roll call vote.

#### **Amendments**

These rules and regulations shall remain in full force and effect until amended or modified by the Village/Town/City/Board.