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ABSTRACT

This guide defines the concept and function of the public meeting as conducted by a public agency. It offers advice on selecting appropriate meeting places and when best to hold these meetings to encourage maximum citizen participation. The guide discusses the conduct of both formal and nonformal meeting formats. The communication techniques useful in preparing for and conducting the meeting are discussed with suggestions for enhancing preparation and participation by the public. Methods of gathering feedback from the meeting and reporting to the agency and to the public are presented as well as methods for evaluating the effectiveness of meetings. A chapter is devoted to considerations of budgeting for the public meeting. A checklist for preparation for a public meeting is provided. An appendix provides an annotated bibliography for further reading. (RE)

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

DATE: MAY 17 1977

SUBJECT: Guides for Successful Public Involvement in Water Quality Management

FROM: Edmund Notzon, Acting Director, Water Planning Division

TO: All Water Division Directors

TECHNICAL GUIDANCE MEMO 38

THRU: All 208 Coordinators

PURPOSE

This memorandum transmits three Guides intended for use by State and areawide agencies in the development of their water quality management programs. The Guides are numbered and titled "Effective Public Meetings," "Working Effectively with Advisory Committees," and "Effective Use of Media."

GUIDANCE

These Guides give planners and other 208 agency staff useful, in-depth information about running effective public meetings, making the best use of advisory committees, and using sound media techniques. Each is organized to provide basic practical tips as well as guidance for organizing a public participation program over the long term. These Guides are meant to be used as reference materials with a full range of suggestions to fit many specific local situations.

These Guides complement the Public Participation Handbook for Water Quality Management, June 1976. Further questions regarding their use should be directed to Inez Artico, Office of Public Affairs (755-0720).

cc: State and areawide agencies

The Effective Public Meeting in Water Quality Planning

When to hold it

How to. . .

Design it

Prepare for it

Conduct it

Use and report on the information obtained from it

Evaluate it

Budget for it

Prepared for the
United States Environmental Protection Agency
Washington, D.C.

By James F. Ragan, Jr.,

May 1977

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

You are charged with providing for, encouraging, and assisting public participation in water quality management planning. Most of you are probably using advisory committees, public meetings, public education efforts, and an occasional survey. Many of you are relying heavily on public meetings as your principal means to involve the public. Theoretically, they are the best means to reach large numbers of people with varied interests at one time. They avoid the "elitist" label of most advisory committees, where membership—and, therefore, participation—is controlled. On the surface, public meetings are the easiest of all citizen participation techniques—schedule them, get a meeting site, publicize them, throw some informational material together, and hold them.

So. . .why a guide on public meetings? Well, there is considerable disenchantment among agency personnel and citizens about public meetings. They feel they are not effective forums for citizen participation. Agency personnel often hold them as something "which must be done." The citizen response is often just to stay away. And yet, most of us have attended some public meetings which were stimulating and valuable. Public meetings can be practical and useful forums offering people the opportunity to become better informed and to comment on subjects placed before them. If even one public meeting is valuable, the implication is that they all can be, if they. . .

. . .are selectively used only when no other citizen participation technique would work as well,

. . .are fully integrated with other citizen participation techniques and with water quality management planning, and

. . .are suitably developed and tailored to fit a specific situation.

If you agree, this guide may help you make your public meetings better. It presents detailed guidance on:

- when to hold and when not to hold a public meeting
- how to integrate public meetings with other citizen participation techniques
- how to select the right type of meeting
- how to design a meeting format for different purposes
- how to prepare for a public meeting
- how to conduct a meeting to assure that you and the participants get the most out of it
- how to use and respond to citizen comments within the context of your planning efforts.
- how to assess meeting effectiveness
- how to prepare budgets for public meetings.

This guide offers a step-by-step series of choices. There is no single, tried and tested public meeting model. What model you choose depends on what you want to accomplish, citizen interest, timing, available funds, the nature of the issues to be addressed, and your own willingness to respond to participants in a meeting format. So, this guide proposes choices for each step in the public meeting development process. The choices you make are less important than your understanding of the reasons for them and their probable effects.

The context for this guide is citizen participation in State and areawide water quality management planning. For the most part, it will be useful to both State and local agencies. However, State agencies do have public meeting problems peculiar to them. Most people are unwilling or unable to travel long distances to a State-sponsored meeting. In many areas, State agencies are less well known than their local agency counterparts, making it more difficult to ignite citizen interest. And, sometimes statewide water quality issues seem less important than local problems. State agencies need to be more selective in their use of public meetings than local agencies. Still, they do have a use at the State level, particularly in water quality planning for nondesignated areas, and even occasionally for statewide planning. Throughout this guide you will note instances where the choices for State agencies are different than those for local agencies. Whenever there is no distinction, the guidance applies equally to both.

This guide is written for public meeting planners, leaders, and moderators—from the inexperienced to the highly experienced. The inexperienced should find most of the information they need to put on effective public meetings. An annotated bibliography in the appendix is provided to help increase both your knowledge and your confidence. The experienced should find it a valuable "refresher course"—helpful in evaluating your experiences to date and in trying new approaches. All public meeting planners may wish to consider using the Public Meeting Checklist (see Appendix).

Before proceeding to the specific guidance, it seems appropriate to. . .

. . .define public meetings—to assure that both the author and the reader are talking about the same thing,

. . .summarize requirements of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as to when public meetings must or should be held, and

. . .summarize EPA requirements for public meeting development and conduct whenever they are held.

Public Meetings Defined

A public meeting is any agency-sponsored assembly of persons, open to everyone, held to *inform* and/or *involve* the public in the formulation of a plan.

A public hearing is a formal and highly structured public meeting. The public includes all individuals and organizations, other than the sponsoring agency, possibly affected by or having an interest in the planning process and its products.

When to Hold a Public Meeting

EPA intends that public meetings including hearings be important parts of a continuing program of citizen participation in water quality management planning. EPA's intentions are found in its rules and regulations for this process.* The requirements are:

1 An opportunity for public meetings or hearings at key points in the planning process—40 CFR 131.20(a)(1).

2 State-conducted public hearings for review of water quality standards at least once every three years—40 CFR 130.17(a).

3 Formal (i.e., public meetings or hearings) public participation prior to any substantive plan revisions—40 CFR 131.22(d).

4 Public meetings or hearings for potential designation of areas and agencies for water quality planning in a State—40 CFR 130.13(d)(3)(i-ii).

5 "Appropriate" public participation (which might include public meetings) prior to adoption of a State's continuing planning process—40 CFR 130.40(a).

Requirements For Development and Conduct

EPA's rules for public meetings are.**

1 Informational materials concerning public meeting subjects are to be provided at the earliest practicable times at accessible locations—40 CFR 105.4(a).

2 Agencies must have arrangements to provide technical and information assistance to public groups—40 CFR 104.4(b).

3 Agencies must maintain a current list of interested people and organizations for meeting notification and distribution of materials—40 CFR 105.4(d).

4 A notice of each hearing or public meeting must be well publicized and mailed to interested or affected people and organizations as soon as the meeting is scheduled. If it is a hearing, notice must be mailed at least 30 calendar days before the hearing date—40 CFR 105.7(d).

5 The location and time of public hearings should consider travel hardship, accessibility by public transportation, and assurance that a cross-section of citizens will attend—40 CFR 105.7(e).

6 Information to be discussed at a hearing must be available to the public for a reasonable time prior to the meeting. If the information is complex, a summary Fact Sheet must be prepared and distributed—40 CFR 105.7(f).

7 The notice of a public hearing must contain the meeting agenda, a time schedule, and any rules to be imposed on those testifying—40 CFR 105.7(g).

8 Public hearing witnesses should be scheduled in advance to permit all to testify. Consideration should be given to evening and weekend meetings—40 CFR 205.7(h).

9 Public hearing witnesses need only identify themselves (i.e., no qualifications are required). Witnesses may be required only to submit for the record one copy of their statements—40 CFR 105.7(i).

*Code of Federal Regulations, Title 40, Subchapter D, Parts 130 and 131, November 28, 1975.
**Code of Federal Regulations, Title 40, Part 105, August 23, 1973.

1 THE PLACE OF PUBLIC MEETINGS

Public meetings are not events unto themselves, but part of a continuing citizen participation program. This chapter discusses the place of public meetings in that program, specifically:

- When should we hold public meetings, and when not?
- What types of public meetings are there?
- How do they relate to other parts of the citizen participation program?

When Should We Hold Public Meetings?

The most obvious answer is: Whenever they are required. EPA says that a public hearing should be held whenever the opportunity for a public hearing is required by PL 92-500, and in other "appropriate" instances, if there is significant citizen interest. When in doubt, continues EPA, hold the hearing (or at least provide some other opportunity for citizen participation).

Consider holding one whenever. . .

. . .you want to inform people or clear up misunderstandings on an important part of the plan,

. . .you want people's comments to be heard by others with similar or opposing views,

. . .you want people with different points of view to discuss their opinions in order to increase their and your understanding,

. . .you want to reach and listen to a larger number of people than members of advisory committees, and/or

. . .one or more issues have reached the point where several different interests would like a meeting for information and discussion.

When Should We Not Hold Public Meetings?

There are at least four situations where you should reject a public meeting:

First, don't hold a public meeting when your purpose is primarily public education. News releases, newsletters, fact sheets, speeches, slide shows, motion pictures, and personal appearances on radio and television will work just as well.

Second, don't hold a meeting if it is unnecessary to have comments from each person or interest group heard by all others. This is especially true at the start of a planning process when you want recommendations about what should be studied. Personal interviews, correspondence, telephone conversations, and discussions with representatives of a single organization are likely to result in better information.

Third, don't hold a public meeting when there is insufficient time to consider seriously what is said before you must make important plan decisions. Generally, you should schedule such a meeting at least 30 days before a decision point. If you cannot meet such a schedule, the public is better served by distributing a summary of those decisions and to rely on the comments you received in other citizen participation forums (e.g., advisory committee meetings, surveys, interviews, and correspondence).

Fourth, don't hold it when you have nothing new or important to present. There are times in any planning process in which information gathering and analysis would not interest many people. If it is important to maintain citizen interest during these "dead" periods, the use of newsletters, speeches, and other public appearances is more appropriate.

What Types of Public Meetings Are There?

There are both informal and formal public meetings, depending on the meeting atmosphere you want to create. There is a wide variety of formats to facilitate meeting presentations and discussions (detailed in Chapters 2 and 3).

Informal Public Meetings

Forums for people to talk over and argue various points of view are, by definition, informal. While they have structure (an agenda, leadership, a schedule, and issues to cover), the primary criterion that an informal meeting puts people at ease. Informal meetings may be for any number of people, but should provide the flexibility to break up into small discussion groups.

Meeting Purposes

While the primary purpose of informal public meetings is to encourage discussion and even argument, they may also be useful to clarify information. In water quality management planning, informal meetings may be appropriate during:

1 the development of the Work Plan

2 major phases in the planning process such as establishing goals and objectives, identifying and designing alternatives for projects and management, assessing impacts, recommending the final plan, and revising the plan

3 consideration of highly visible, controversial, and/or unresolved issues.

Meeting Structure

Informal meetings are organized around four basic principles. First, they are structured only enough to encourage discussion. Second, no participant comments are considered final and definitive unless the speaker says so. Third, participant consensus on any issue is neither expected or sought. Fourth, some form of record is made and maintained. (See Chapters 2 and 4).

Formal Public Meetings

Forums for large numbers of people (50 or more)—to present or clarify information and/or to hear testimony representing definitive positions—are, by definition, formal.

Meeting Purposes

Within the water quality management planning process, formal public meetings may be appropriate:

1 to introduce and stimulate interest in the planning process

2 to inform people and clarify issues prior to another formal public meeting held to hear comments and testimony

3 prior to decisions at critical points in the planning process, such as near the conclusion of each of the planning phases.

Meeting Structure

Formal meetings are organized around several basic principles. First, they are structured to permit everyone to express fully his or her position. These meetings generally follow rigid agendas and have rules for the presentation and receipt of information. Second, all comments are considered definitive unless the speaker indicates otherwise. Third, participants' communication with each other is largely limited to questions and answers. Fourth, EPA rules for public meetings and hearings are followed. Fifth, for meetings held to receive comments and testimony, a verbatim record is made and maintained. (See Chapters 3 and 4)

Meeting Format

Formality need not mean dullness. There are many formats, including the traditional public hearing, the information meeting, the forum, and the colloquy. These are described in Chapter 3.

How Do Public Meetings Relate to Other Parts of the Continuing Citizen Participation Program?

Public meetings do not compose a citizen participation program. Such a program should have advisory committees, public education efforts, surveys, and public meetings. The effectiveness of each element can be greatly enhanced if supported by the others.

Advisory Committees

EPA rules and regulations for water quality management planning require that the planning agency be advised by a policy committee which includes representatives from the public. In addition, EPA encourages establishing another advisory committee—of citizens. Some agencies have also set up a third committee especially to advise on technical matters. While detailed guidance on advisory committees is provided in *208 Guide No. 2*, there are suggested principles for advisory committee relationship to public meetings.

First, either the policy or the citizen advisory committee should approve, and, if possible, help with the planning and conduct of each public meeting. As representatives of organizations or interests, committee members add a valuable perspective to judge whether, when, and what kind of a meeting is needed.

Second, policy and citizen advisory committee members should attend and be highly visible at all meetings (for example, presiding, making presentations, moderating discussion groups). Their involvement will assure that comments made are considered, that presentations are simple and easily understood, and their presence will emphasize the importance of the session to the participants.

Third, technical advisory committee members should attend to explain technical points to facilitate understanding and discussion.

Fourth, both policy and citizen advisory

committee members should encourage the people they represent to attend.

Finally, the comments received at each meeting should be presented at the next meeting of the policy and citizen advisory committees for discussion and recommendations.

Public Education Efforts

Stimulating, timely, and well-placed information is necessary to assure well-attended public meetings and to publicize the results. Agency staffs in citizen participation and public affairs must coordinate their efforts. Suggestions for publicizing meetings are presented in Chapters 2 and 3. *The 208 Guide No. 3* on media relations provides more detailed guidance on effective public education efforts.

Surveys

In a citizen participation program, random surveys are occasionally conducted to identify the goals and values, determine awareness and understanding of water quality issues and the planning process, obtain selected factual data, or test alternative plan solutions. In addition, some agencies have used an elite type of survey—the Delphi Panel. This is a group of experts selected to resolve an issue by responding to a series of questionnaires in light of answers which others have given.

If you use surveys,* you should use the questions and responses as public meeting issues. Because you can never be sure that participants represent all community interests, surveys are valuable to validate or refute comments made at the meetings. Survey results are important information at meetings to place comments in perspective.

*For most instances of data gathering (where more than 10 individuals are involved) under Federal Grants, a clearance requirement is imposed by the Office of Management and Budget. Agencies should consult with their appropriate EPA Regional Coordinator before undertaking such activities.

2 INFORMAL PUBLIC MEETINGS

This section discusses the design, preparation and conduct of informal meetings.

The Design

Selecting the Meeting Theme and Topics

There are several criteria to use in selecting meeting topics. First is the time available. The tendency to cram too many topics into too short a period, often results in participant frustration. An informal meeting should last no more than three hours and should cover only one topic—defined narrowly enough to permit participants to discuss two or three questions on that topic. If you cannot so confine the agenda, you should consider scheduling additional sessions.

Second, the topic should be timely, appropriate to the planning phase currently underway. Moreover, because full discussion is a principle of informal public meetings, you must schedule them sufficiently in advance of when decisions are made to permit full consideration of comments.

Third, the participants should consider the topic important. Test their interest by discussing it with members of the policy and citizen advisory committees and with representatives of groups likely to be concerned with the issues. If you find little interest, consider alternative methods such as advisory committee discussion, personal interviews, and surveys, or redefine the topic.

Topic Examples

The list of potential topics is long:

- Identifying and ranking water quality problems
- Relating water quality problems and goals to the community's other problems and goals
- Using water quality management to pursue other community goals (e.g., in growth, recreation, air quality)
- Assessing the impact on the community of employing alternative water pollution control technologies

- Assessing the financial impact on the community and its individual residents by implementing alternative water quality management projects

- Assessing the capability of alternative water quality management agencies to implement the plan (e.g., financial capacity, practicability, managerial capacity, responsiveness, and accountability to the public)

- Determining the desired uses of particular bodies of water

- Setting target dates and schedules for pollution abatement

- Assessing the social, economic, and environmental impacts of alternative plans

- Discussing specific issues such as extending sewer trunk lines into an area, locating land disposal sites and sewage treatment plants

- Discussing the basic assumptions behind technical analyses (for example, population growth projections)

- Assessing alternative ways to finance water quality improvements

If you are a State agency and are considering a public meeting on statewide issues, orient your topic to how local water quality problems (in the area where the meeting is held) relate to the State program.

Selecting a Meeting Format

There are many ways to structure an informal public meeting, but this guide summarizes only the most common formats. If you want to experiment, consult a professional in group discussion dynamics, perhaps at a local university.

There are several factors to consider in selecting a meeting format. First is the time available. Complicated meeting structures are not appropriate for a two-to-three-hour period. Second, the structure should permit maximum discussion. (Minimize information presentations unless you feel that participant knowledge is low.) Third, you need to know how much experience participants have had in such meetings. If people are used to informal gatherings, they may view new and innovative formats as manipulative. Use a simple format, unless you have a compelling reason to try something else.

The Workshop

The most common informal public meeting format is the workshop. Its agenda is three-part:

1 An opening session for all participants, 15 to 30 minutes, for a description of the meeting purpose and presentation of information necessary for discussion.

2 Discussion sessions, 60 to 90 minutes, in which participants break up into small

Some Specialized Terms

The layman may find some unfamiliar technical terms in this guide. Here are a few with a brief explanation of how they originated:

Charrette - This term is used by specialists in public meetings to describe an informal session or series of meetings where a group must resolve a specific question within a given time.

The word means "cart" in French and onginated with architecture students in Paris who were assigned in teams to design projects under pressure of a deadline. When the completion date arrived, the university would send a cart to the student quarter to pick up their project scale models. Gradually the word "charrette" came to mean a team effort in a meeting to reach a solution to a question by a certain deadline.

Samoan Circle - This phrase is used to describe a large gathering where participants in a room can express their views after being seated in turn at a central table. They normally leave the table after speaking to make room for others.

The inventor of this expression, Lorenz Aggens of the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission, said he coined it one day based on his recollection of a popular book about South Sea islanders, not necessarily from Samoa. The natives used to sail their outrigger canoes to an island for periodic tribal meetings and confer while seated in a large circle. After several days, many natives would grow restless and leave after naming delegates to represent them in a smaller circle. Today the Samoan Circle technique is useful in meetings where no moderator is present.

Delphi Panel - Originally Delphi referred to the place where the oracle of Apollo in ancient Greece foretold the future.

The modern phrase was popularized in the 1950's by the Rand Corporation whose "Project Delphi" was an Air Force-sponsored study to estimate the probable effects of a nuclear attack.

The technique involves the use of questionnaires to obtain a consensus of opinion from a panel of experts about some future event or problem. The method of forecasting is now widely used in government and industry to study problems in defense, science, and other areas.

groups to talk over various points of view on the questions asked.

3 A closing session for all participants, approximately 30 minutes, to hear summaries from all discussion groups.

You can organize workshop discussion groups in many different ways. The most common format is for each group to deal with the same topic and questions in the same order. This is most appropriate when all participants share an equal interest in all the questions.

A variation is to give each group different discussion priorities. For example, if there are three questions to be discussed, group one might discuss them in 1, 2, 3 order; group 2 in 2, 3, 1 order; and group 3 in 3, 1, 2 order. This format is appropriate when participants have different interests in the topic, when the agenda of questions is long, and/or when participant trust each other and the agency permits a division of responsibilities.

A second variation is to make an absolute division of group discussion responsibilities. Group one would discuss only the first question, group two the second, and so on.

A third variation is to physically rotate each discussion group. Periodically, the group moves to a new spot, but the moderator and resource people stay in the same place. While this "musical chairs" takes time away from discussion, consider it when expert guidance is needed to guide discussion and there are too few experts to sit in each group.

The Conference

At critical stages in the planning process, think about a day-long meeting. It permits more extensive presentation of information and discussion. It also allows consideration of more topics and questions. But use the conference sparingly, few people will give many full days to discuss water quality management issues.

Conferences combine education and discussion. There are several formats:

The lecture/discussion—Speakers and/or audio/visual presentations are made in the morning, with discussion in small groups in the afternoon or alternate lecture and discussion throughout the entire day.

The panel/discussion—In the education portion of the meeting, a panel of experts from different professions or representing different points of view discusses the topics and questions followed by a small group discussion.

The symposium/discussion—In presenting information to the participants, experts speak to the full assembly on the topic. A question and answer period follows each speech or after all the presentations are made. Small group discussion follows, with the experts participating.

Some Workshop Innovations

The Nominal Group

If the primary purpose of the workshop is to assure that all citizen ideas are identified and ranked according to importance, the nominal group might be considered. The format does not permit discussion (other than to clarify), assuring that no one will dominate the discussion and that everyone has the opportunity to list his concerns without challenge or judgment.

Each member of the group is given a set of blank file cards and asked to list one idea (in response to the question) on each card. The group moderator then goes around the room, asking each participant to express one idea, which is written on a chart or blackboard. This process continues until all ideas are expressed.

Each member is then asked to review the group's list of ideas and, on a card, list the ten most important to him in priority order.

The moderator again goes around the room, asking each participant to state his most important idea, repeating this process until each member has stated his ten most important ideas.

The priorities are tabulated to obtain a group sense of what is most important.

The Samoan Circle

When the group is large and the subject so controversial that no one would be accepted as a disinterested moderator, and people are reluctant to break up into smaller groups, consider the Samoan Circle. The meeting room chairs are set up in concentric circles. In the center—the smallest circle—is a round table with five or six chairs. Anyone may speak, but to do so he must come to the table and take a seat.

The individual may then join the discussion, make a statement, ask a question, support or refute the position of another at the table, or try to raise a new topic. When an individual is finished, he leaves the table and his place is taken by someone else. If an individual desires to speak and there is no vacant chair at the table, he stands behind one of the people seated and takes his place once the individual is finished. People may return to the table as often as they wish.

The Samoan Circle discussion continues until there is no one left at the table or until a previously agreed-upon closing time.

The Charrette

In most informal public meetings, you only want participants to discuss and debate ideas. The time is too short to expect the group to reach consensus or make recommendations. (That is the task of advisory committees.) Certain components of the planning process, however, may be strengthened when you ask the citizens themselves to agree on solutions they may prefer. This may help you build support for carrying out the plan. Potential citizen task areas include identification and ranking of problems, and selection of alternative projects or plans. While you can ask your advisory committees to recommend solutions, there are times when it is important to involve more people.

The *charrette* is an informal meeting format in which participants are asked to come up with a product or a set of recommendations. Representation of all interests is the key—to include the agency, elected representatives, other government agencies, and special interest groups. Size is not necessarily important, because the participants will undoubtedly break into subgroups, usually to deal with parts of the task. Charrettes have been known to last from 5 to 10 days, but that has usually been to develop a complete (if simple) plan and implementation strategy. In water quality management planning, a two-to three-day session, perhaps over successive Saturdays, may be sufficient. The charrette requires maximum agency staff participation and support and usually consists of information presentations, discussions, and negotiation of final positions among discussion groups.

Before deciding to use the *charrette*, however, consider carefully the consequences. Participants are giving up a substantial portion of their free time to help you solve a problem. Most of them will expect the agency to accept their recommendations or, at a minimum, to convince them as to why they had to be changed. The participants will expect agency personnel to contribute actively to their deliberations, revealing all information which could affect the group's recommendations.

Identifying Potential Meeting Participants

Despite your best public meeting promotional efforts, most people will ignore them. Citizens are interest-oriented. If they have an interest to promote or protect, they may join with others, be responsive to the positions of an organization with similar interests without joining it, or—in rare circumstances of crisis—take part in some demonstration of solidarity. If a person is not involved in one of these ways, he will probably not attend a public meeting.

Identifying Interests

Participation in public meetings will come largely from or through organized groups. In identifying potential participants, apply this principle. While you must invite the general, "unaffiliated" public, concentrate your efforts on identifying organizations which represent people likely to be affected by or interested in water quality management planning.

Identify interests. First, categorize the likely impacts which might result from decisions on any proposed public meeting topic and questions. Examples are agriculture production, water-based recreation, property taxes, land use, forest preservation, employment, fish and wildlife, transportation, etc. Allow for categories to be added as you learn more.

Second, identify for each impact category the types of organizations and individuals likely to be affected by or interested in the impact. For example, within agricultural production, organizational types include farmer associations, farm labor groups, businesses and their associations serving the farmer, agricultural colleges, extension services, government agencies, and consumer groups.

Methods for Identifying Participants

Ways to identify potential participants by organizational type include:

1. Self-identification—many people will have identified themselves by attending previous meetings, corresponding with the agency, speaking out in other forums, and initiating legal action. The local newspapers are excellent sources for identifying them.

2. Advisory committee identification—ask members to list organizations and individuals according to type.

3. Snow-ball identification—identify well-known organizations within each type, ask their representatives to suggest other names, and then ask the newly identified people to propose others, etc.

4. General mailing lists—consult the mailing lists of the agency and other institutions.

5. Research—peruse community information publications, directories, and the Yellow Pages.

Some organizations and individuals have a statewide interest; others confine themselves to a region; and still others to a local area. You should identify them by type and geographical interest. For areawide planning (designated and nondesignated areas), you are concerned with organizations and individuals who primarily have regional or local interests. For statewide planning, concentrate on those who are concerned with statewide issues.

Once you have identified potential participants by type, make certain that all types are represented on the invitation list. If the list is meager in any category, repeat one or more of the above identification methods.

Selecting Meeting Sponsors

In the majority of cases, your agency will sponsor and host the public meeting. There may be situations, however, where you should consider asking another organization to be the sponsor. One is where your agency has become so identified with one side of a controversial issue that potential participants on the other side are skeptical of receiving a fair hearing. Asking a neutral, well-known, and respected organization to sponsor the meeting may help increase your agency's credibility and defuse criticism.

Another situation concerns State agencies. People may ignore your public meeting simply because they know little

about you. Meeting sponsorship by a neutral and respected local organization will help convey the local importance of the meeting issues.

If you ask another organization to sponsor a meeting, you should be prepared to involve it in meeting design, preparation, and conduct.

Selecting Leaders, Speakers and Discussion Moderators

Meeting Leadership

Well-respected individuals in recognized positions of authority attract more people to meetings than do staff members. Agency chiefs and elected officials are good candidates to chair public meetings. You should consider them for all conferences, at least to introduce the topic. For workshops, however, their leadership can place them in a prematurely difficult position. Workshops are exploratory affairs, and some participants may pressure high ranking officials to commit themselves before they realistically can do so. Other candidates to chair workshop meetings include the chairperson (or well-known members) of advisory committees, the head of the areawide planning program, the chiefs of key components of the program, and leaders of major local organizations.

Speaker Criteria

Speakers should be selected to increase understanding and to stimulate discussion and should:

- have recognized topic expertise
- publicly be perceived as spokesmen for a particular point of view
- adapt their remarks to the knowledge and experiences of the audience
- limit their remarks to the meeting topic and questions
- discuss or debate their points with meeting participants.

Moderator Criteria

Moderators should assure the full expression and exchange of ideas, and should be individuals who:

- are recognized as "neutral" to the questions posed (or can assume a neutral stance)
- nowledge about the topic and
- have had experience as discussion leaders—demonstrating an ability to draw people out, facilitate rather than dominate the conversation, and clarify and summarize what is being said
- are committed to the purpose of the meeting
- are willing to participate in a moderator orientation session (see Chapter 4).

To the extent possible, select members of the policy and citizen advisory committees as moderators.

Inviting Speakers and Moderators

As soon as the public meeting is scheduled, invite these key participants personally, following up with a formal letter signed by a well-known agency executive.

You should consider paying the out-of-pocket travel expenses for speakers and moderators, particularly for volunteers.

Selecting the Time, Place, and Space

Criteria for Choosing a Meeting Time

Meetings need people, many people. If you want a diversity of interests represented, hold the meetings during nonworking hours. During the week hold meetings in the evening (but not on Friday) or during the day on Saturday (usually appropriate only to an all-day session).

Schedule meetings at least 30 days in advance to minimize personal calendar conflicts and to permit sufficient time for meeting preparation. Also, consult appropriate community calendars to avoid conflicting events which might lower attendance.

Criteria for Choosing a Place

Public meetings are not coveted social events. Some people will travel long and far because they want to be heard. Others will attend if they have an interest, the place is convenient, and they are comfortable when they get there. Hold your meetings in a place which:

- is central to the majority of potential participants (i.e., not more than 30 minutes travel time one-way); this may require more than one meeting on the same topic at different locations
- is accessible by public transportation during the meeting hours
- has suitable parking facilities, free if at all possible
- is in a location which assures the safety of people as they walk to and from the meeting hall
- has space for socializing, adequate restrooms and drinking fountains, and no barriers to the movement of handicapped people.

Preferable public meeting places include schools, libraries, convention facilities, and community centers. Private clubs and fraternal halls are not usually appropriate because people may perceive them (rightly or wrongly) as exclusive.

You can rarely hold meetings on statewide issues in a sufficient number of places to confine participant travel time to 30 minutes one-way. Most organizations and individuals with a statewide interest live in the State capital or in major metropolitan areas. Inasmuch as they are the most likely participants for your statewide public meetings, consider holding the meetings there.

An alternative is to ask (and fund) a respected, well-known statewide organization (preferably with local chapters) to sponsor a series of informal public meetings throughout the State.

Another alternative is to hold occasional meetings of citizen representatives of local programs. If the statewide program is largely the completed puzzle of many local pieces, both the State and the local programs would benefit from occasional meetings on State issues and their local effects. If you choose this alternative, consider paying the travel expenses of the local citizen representatives.

Finally, alternatives include advisc / groups (particularly when group members communicate with their constituencies), surveys, and individual sessions with statewide interest organizations.

Criteria for Choosing the Space

You must have adequate space for the general meeting and for individual group sessions (separate them in individual rooms, by sliding panels, or by much space . see Chapter 4).

The Preparation

Developing the Agenda

Once you select the topic, prepare the agenda. Here are two examples of meeting scheduling.

Evening Meeting

6:30-7:00 p.m.
Coffee, informal conversation among participants, signing the meeting registry
7:00-7:30 p.m.
Welcome, presentation of the meeting purpose, the topic and questions to be discussed (and why), introduction of moderators and technical experts, description of discussion format, assignment of groups
7:30-7:45 p.m.
Break
7:45-9:30 p.m.
Small group discussion
9:30-10:00 p.m.
Full group session for presentations from each group, participant written evaluation of meeting, announcement of how the results of the meeting will be reported.

All-Day Meeting

9:00-9:30 a.m.
Coffee, informal conversation, registration
9:30-10:15 a.m.
Welcome, presentation of the meeting purpose, the topic and questions to be discussed (and why), introduction of the speakers and moderators, description of the meeting format, assignment of groups
10:15-10:30 a.m.
Break
10:30-12 noon
Panel Discussion
12:00-1:00 p.m.
Lunch (if you don't provide lunch, offer information on restaurants)
1:00-2:15 p.m.
Small group discussion, session I
2:15-2:30 p.m.
Break
2:30-3:45 p.m.
Small group discussion, session II
3:45-4:00 p.m.
Break
4:00-4:30 p.m.
Full group session for presentations from each group, participant written evaluation of meeting, announcement of how the meeting results will be reported.

In choosing the topic questions for discussion, decide carefully what you want to know. The wording of the question is equally crucial. It should deal only with one issue, be brief but provocative, and avoid ambiguous or hard-to-define terms.

Developing Meeting Background Information

If participants are to contribute meaningfully, they must receive or have access to necessary background information beforehand. In the meeting itself, speakers and moderators should assume that participants have read the summary background information. The time is too short to repeat it.

Decide what information will be made readily available to meeting participants. Assume that participants have limited knowledge about the topic. Determine wh[illegible]mers should know in order to ma[illegible]ned comments, such as:

- What background on the total planning program?
- What background of the area and its water quality problems?
- What information on the relationship of the topic to the total program?
- What information to define the topic and questions and why they are important?
- What statistical data?
- What technical explanations of terms and concepts?

Consult members of the policy and citizen advisory committees for the answers.

Information Development Criteria. Information produced by and for the planner and for the decisionmaker is generally too lengthy and technical for broad public distribution. In most instances, you must summarize information for public meetings. Be brief and straightforward, reducing all technical concepts to simple language (see Chapter 4).

Make longer and more technical information available at easily accessible locations.

Information Distribution Suggestions

First, mail the summary information to all organizations and individuals invited to the meeting and make it available to others on request. Such a massive distribution might stimulate more people to attend.

Second, mail the summary information only to those requesting it. This is less costly than the first method but it might mean that people will not have sufficient time to review the information prior to the meeting.

Third, ask newspapers to publish the summary information—or write a story and

announce its availability.

Finally, make both the summary and more detailed information available for public review at convenient (no more than 30 minutes travel time one way) depositories throughout the area—agency offices, city halls, community organization offices, and information centers, and public and university libraries. All places should offer facilities for reading, and copying services at reasonable cost.

Getting the Public to Participate

Innovate! People are bombarded with invitations, offers, notices, advertising, and television.

Publicity Criteria

First, post the invitation visibly—where people can be expected to see it. Second, make it provocative so that people will want to attend. Direct the invitation's theme to people's senses or their pocketbooks. Third, make your publicity sufficiently broad to assure that people representing many different interests will see it. Fourth, to make certain that key people attend, direct personal attention to them. A public notice in a newspaper's classified ad section satisfies none of these criteria.

Publicity Methods

Possible ways to reach the public are almost endless. Here are a few suggestions. They are presented in two parts: methods to invite representatives of important interests; and ways to stimulate participation from the general public.

Inviting Interest Groups

You should probably begin with a written invitation to everyone identified as being potentially affected by or interested in the issues to be discussed. Policy and citizen advisory committee members should encourage the people they represent to attend.

You can supplement these methods by speaking to various organizational meetings and placing articles and/or advertisements in organizational newsletters (if their publication schedule permits).

Finally, at least a week before the meeting, you, other staff personnel, and advisory committee members should personally contact people whose participation is important.

Luring Others

The media—newspapers, radio, and television—are the primary conduits to the broader public. Although costly, newspaper display advertising is often effective. You can reduce the costs by placing ads in widely-read neighborhood "throw-aways," rather than in large metropolitan dailies. Radio and television spots may reach a large audience. But they may not since public service ads often are aired at times when few people are listening or viewing. While paid television advertising is costly, radio ads may not be.

News releases may be used by newspapers—depending on the paper's policy and how your agency has distributed news releases in the past. If an agency employs the release method sparingly, the newspaper editor may sense its importance for a forthcoming public meeting. Press conferences may be appropriate, but the issues to be discussed must be newsworthy or a meeting speaker well known.

In general, you can enhance media support for citizen participation in the water quality planning process through frequent informal contacts with reporters and editors to talk about issues and their importance.

There are other methods to attract people to public meetings. Utility companies might enclose meeting invitations with monthly telephone, gas, electric, or water bills—all the more effective if the issue to be discussed is the financial impact of plan alternatives. School officials might permit their students to take home meeting invitations to their parents. And, don't ignore the "sound truck" or overt publicity stunt. One agency drew a large crowd to a meeting by offering free watermelon, a speech by an EPA "bigwig," and music from a country band. The guidance—INNOVATE!

Making Meeting Arrangements

For the General Session

In addition to chairs, tables, lecterns, and the like, you may need:

- microphones—at both the podium and in the audience
- an easel (with newsprint and felt-tip pens) or a blackboard (with chalk and erasers)
- a film or slide projector (with or without sound), an overhead projector, a screen, and a tape recorder
- space for wall displays
- an adequate sound system so that speakers can be heard from any place in the room.

Some places may provide some or all of this equipment as part of the basic rental—or for a nominal fee. Audio/visual equipment rental firms exist in most communities, but if you need projectors or tape recorders, make sure you find experienced operators.

For the Small Group Sessions

In addition to chairs and tables, each discussion session requires:

- an easel (with newsprint and felt-tip pens) or a blackboard (with chalk and erasers)
- paper and pencils for the participants
- masking tape or thumbtacks, if the facility allows them, to display what people have said.

Final Arrangements

At least several hours before the meeting (preferably, the day before), complete the following tasks:

1 Assure the delivery, setting up, and testing of all sound and visual aids.

2 Assure all physical arrangements of chairs and tables (see Chapter 4).

3 Assure adequate ventilation and room temperature (check the rules on smoking. If it is not allowed, identify where people can go to smoke. If it is allowed, consider setting up smoking and non-smoking areas)

4 Arrive at the meeting place early enough to make certain it is unlocked, the lights are on, etc.

Orienting Public Meeting Leaders

Recording the Proceedings

Informal public meetings, both in general and small group sessions, are normally recorded in two ways. First, they can be tape recorded, providing a complete record. In informal sessions, however, participants may not wish to be recorded when they are discussing and debating issues in depth. Moreover, taping has limitations: some voices may not be heard, and valuable staff time is later needed to listen to the tapes.

Or, you can assign people to both the general and small group sessions to summarize comments, agreements, and disagreements. A potential problem with this method: all the important comments may not be identified.

Some agencies have combined the two methods: recording the comments and having people summarize them. The tapes are played only if the group's recorder wants to verify a statement.

If you use tape recorders, assign a person to operate each one. If you select people to summarize, familiarize them with the subject.

Orienting the Discussion Moderators

At least a week before the public meeting, convene all the discussion moderators to discuss the purposes of the meeting, the topic and questions, and their responsibilities as group leaders. Following this, each moderator should:

- prepare a discussion outline (or you might prepare a draft)
- prepare a few appropriate questions to start the discussion
- prepare brief opening remarks concerning the discussion purpose, expected results, importance of the topic, and the responsibilities of the participants (i.e., assumption that each person has prepared for the meeting, wants to share ideas, will accept criticism of those ideas, will be as specific as possible, and will respect the opinions of others).

The day of the meeting, call the discussion moderators together again to review their responsibilities and proposed remarks.

The Conduct

The time has arrived. The meeting will shortly begin. Here is some general guidance in greeting the participants, conducting the opening session, leading discussion, and directing the closing session. You will find more detailed suggestions in Chapters 4, 5, and 6.

Greeting the Participants

The meeting coordinator should:

- have enough people in the entrance area to greet people, thank them for coming, and direct them to a registration desk to sign in and obtain informational materials
- have enough people for registration so that no one has to stand in a line longer than a few minutes, and make sure the space is adequate.
- consider offering coffee, tea, etc. to people as a way to convey informality and appreciation for attending
- consider supplying name tags (preprinted for those who have preregistered) to make it easier for participants to identify each other
- have visible name plates for each speaker
- give special attention to media representatives to help them conduct interviews, identify participants, and understand what is going on.

Conducting the Opening Session

In making introductory remarks, the leader should project the idea that the meeting is a working session. An informal public meeting should have little protocol. Avoid excessive use of welcoming remarks and general statements by people in authority. Instead of formally introducing speakers and other dignitaries, you can pass out a written summary of their experiences and achievements.

In informal meetings, speeches, statements, and media presentations are made only to provide essential information—supplemental or reinforcing to the written background information previously provided—to stimulate discussion. (See Chapter 4 for effective oral presentation.)

Leading Discussion

Discussion is at the heart of informal meetings. All moderators must understand and effectively use group process dynamics (detailed in Chapter 4). If moderators seek more detailed guidance, they can consult one or more of the references presented in Appendix B.

Directing the Closing Session

The closing session should include:

- a summary, from a representative of each small group, of their comments, agreements, and disagreements
- the opportunity for group participant rebuttal to or amplification of the summary comments, if necessary
- meeting evaluation by the participants, if desired
- announcement of how the meeting results and their use will be reported back to the participants.

3 FORMAL PUBLIC MEETINGS

This chapter will help you design, prepare and conduct more effective formal public meetings.

The Design

Selecting the Meeting Theme and Topics

First, determine that the topic of the meeting is timely to the planning process you are engaged in.

Second, consult with policy committee members and members of citizen advisory groups to determine that the topic is relative and significant.

Third, when the purpose of the meeting is to hear citizen comments, be sure the topic is one that citizens can, in fact, influence.

Fourth, when the purpose of the meeting is to inform and educate, select a topic that lends itself to oral presentation before a large audience.

Topic Examples and Timing

Formal public meetings may be appropriate:

- near the end of a phase in the planning process but before recommendations are made to the decisionmakers
- near the end of the total planning process before final recommendations are made
- at the beginning of a phase in planning when your purpose is to communicate necessary information, clarify information, and/or stimulate interest and participation
- at any time when the subject is of great interest or issues are controversial
- on separate parts of the plan (for example, nonpoint sources, the management program, the plan's relationship to the regulatory program).

If you are a State agency planner and are considering a formal public meeting on statewide issues, focus your meeting topic so that it relates local water quality problems to the overall State program.

Because formal public meetings limit discussion, they do not constitute a citizen participation program within the letter or spirit of Section 101(e) of PL 92-500. Their primary value is to supplement other citizen participation efforts and to validate or refute what was heard in other forums.

Selecting a Meeting Format

Traditionally, formal public meetings have followed a predictable format. Speeches are made; audio/visual presentations are given; questions are answered; comments are heard. Such meetings are criticized more than any other type of meeting—by citizens and planners alike. Criticisms are that few people attend, presentations are dull, and that nothing new is said. And yet, in many planning programs formal meetings may dominate citizen participation. They theoretically allow the planning agency to reach many more people at a single seating. One formal meeting is cheaper to produce than several informal meetings which might be more appropriate.

Despite the criticism, a few well-placed formal public meetings are crucial to an effective citizen participation program. You can stimulate people to attend; your presentations can be interesting and lively; new comments can surface. In selecting a meeting format, consider:

- the time available—most formal meetings should not last more than three hours
- ways to assure that everyone will have an opportunity to be heard (if that is the meeting purpose)
- ways to stimulate and maintain audience interest.

Here are some of the most common formal meetings:

The Public Hearing

The public hearing is important to areawide water quality management planning. Once in any planning process is probably enough, however, geographical considerations may necessitate several hearing sessions in different parts of the area. Hold the public hearing near the end of the planning process—for definitive

citizen comments on final plan recommendations. Used in this way, the public hearing is the climax to the citizen participation effort. The public hearing is a forum for people to express their final, definitive position on the recommendations for the record. If there has been active and intensive citizen participation up to the point of the public hearing, then the desired result from the hearing itself is—no surprises. In other words, while the plan recommendations may not have incorporated all citizen desires, you can respond to each hearing comment, "Yes, we considered that."

The hearing itself normally is conducted in three parts: an opening statement which includes a summary of the major recommendations and a confirmation of hearing rules, questions and answers on the recommendations, and citizen statements. While most public hearings have one general session, some agencies have experimented with breaking the group up into smaller sessions to hear and record testimony. If there are many people who want to speak, this might be preferable to lengthening the entire session either on the same or successive days. One agency has set aside a microphone hooked up to a tape recorder for people who wish to make a statement—but not in front of the total audience.

To avoid confusion, you can ask people to let you know their intention to make a statement. They should do so in writing, either by mail or immediately preceding the hearing. This also helps assure that most statements will be well reasoned and developed. You may make the order of speakers random or perhaps in the order in which they signed up. If there is still time at the end of the meeting, you can call on others who want to speak.

If you expect many people to speak, set a time limit for each statement. You must publish this rule as part of the hearing notice and invitation. Encourage speakers to summarize their positions orally and submit a written copy of their full statements for the record.

Keep the hearing record open for at least two weeks following the session to permit people to revise their statements, and to permit citizens who could not attend to submit their statements."

Idea for Facilitating Comments

One agency uses the telephone to make it easier for people to testify without attending the hearing. Citizens are encouraged to call a toll-free number and make their statement into a tape recorder.

The Information Meeting

This type of session is only to inform, educate, and/or clarify. It can achieve its purpose when the topic is of significant public interest and the information is presented in an interesting way. Information meetings may be beneficial preceding a public hearing to increase citizen understanding of the recommendations and to clarify ambiguous points. Several formats are possible:

The Lecture

A well-known person gives a speech intended to educate, explain, or influence. Lecture candidates include a high EPA official, a well-known elected representative, a high State government official, or a recognized expert from outside government.

The Symposium

It's an imposing label for a simple variation on the lecture. Four to six experts, representing different disciplines or points of view, each speak on some aspect of the topic.

The Panel

Four to six experts, again representing different disciplines or points of view, discuss the issues surrounding a topic before the audience. They do not make speeches. A lively panel discussion can hold audience interest.

The "Flicks"

Frequently a well-produced motion picture, or a lecture/slide show or a synchronized slide/tape recorder presentation will inform more effectively than any other method.

The Debate

Individuals respected for their knowledge and speaking ability debate an issue or proposal.

The Inquiry

People representing various interests question, on behalf of others in the audience, key agency officials about various aspects of the plan and proposals—good as an information meeting preceding the public hearing.

The Colloquy

This format can be developed from a lecture, symposium, panel, or debate. Once the formal presentation is made, previously selected "non-expert" representatives of the audience engage the experts in dialogue—asking questions, making points, and, in general, saying things that others might express. This "expert/nonexpert" discussion can increase citizen understanding.

The Forum

This format serves a dual purpose, both to inform and to gather public comment in a large group session. Because of the short time available and the number of participants, the information delivered must be brief, and not every person may have the opportunity to comment fully. There is also little chance for discussion.

Despite the drawbacks, the forum can be effective—particularly near the end of a planning phase, when citizens should have the opportunity to comment on interim recommendations which will affect future planning. If citizens have participated in other ways prior to each forum, you might expect results similar to those of a public hearing.

A forum can be based on any of a number of formats used for information meetings: lecture, symposium, panel, "the flicks," debate, or inquiry. When the session is opened to comments from the audience, speakers are normally called upon as they raise their hands rather than asking them to make a formal request to speak. However, the meeting moderator may set a time limit for each comment to assure that the maximum number of people will be heard.

*Public hearings as defined and required in water quality management planning are different from public hearings which may be required in other government actions. In other situations, the public hearing is frequently used as an official session, conducted by an impartial hearing officer, to hear testimony and make formal recommendations on that testimony. In such circumstances, testimony is normally taken under oath, and the legal rules of evidence apply.

The Public Forum
An Innovation

A case history from water resources suggests how the forum format might be adapted to a specific issue.

The setting. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers planned a reservoir to protect downstream farmers from flooding. The plan also called for a new water supply for a water-deficient community and for fishing, boating, and swimming. The proposed reservoir was vigorously opposed by upstream farmers whose land would be taken out of production and by a group of environmentally concerned citizens who viewed the reservoir as damaging. They obtained an injunction to prohibit further reservoir planning. Because of the downstream flooding problems, the Corps and the State agreed to study flood control alternatives to the reservoir.

The forum. Citizen interest in the problem was already established. The various interests—downstream farmers, upstream farmers, recreationists, environmentalists, and those wanting a new water supply—were clearly identifiable. Before commencing the additional study, the State and the Corps approached representatives of each interest individually to make certain that their concerns were expressed clearly. The studies, conducted within the context of those concerns, produced five alternatives. To present them to the public, the State designed a *forum/debate.* Representatives of each of the five major interests were invited to debate the alternatives before a public meeting. Prior to the meeting, the speakers met to negotiate among themselves the debate rules. State and Corps professional personnel would participate only to explain the alternatives and to answer questions on them. The forum was attended by an overflow crowd of more than 300 people. Discussion was spirited. The debate itself lasted two hours. Members of the audience were highly attentive as they personally identified with speakers they knew and who represented their viewpoint. Following the debate, the forum was opened to comments from the audience. Press coverage of the forum was substantial, including a live radio hook-up.

Identifying Potential Meeting Participants

Participation at formal meetings will come largely from or through organized groups, so you should place greater emphasis on trying to interest the general, unaffiliated citizen to attend. This is particularly important for the public hearing, which is the last chance for someone to speak.

For both public hearings and forums, try to assure broad interest representation. When proposals are being considered, comments tend to be dominated by persons who oppose the recommendations. People supporting the recommendations may be silent or not even show up. As a result, an erroneous impression may be created that opponents outnumber supporters. This could lead to honest mistakes by journalists covering the story. The result is bad press about an "unresponsive" agency.

Balanced representation is not so important for information meetings. Interests will be variously represented depending on how strongly people feel and how motivated they are toward becoming better informed. But since citizen statements are not a part of information meetings, there is no problem of comment balance. A major goal of information meetings is maximum attendance.

Methods for Identifying Participants

The methods suggested for identifying potential participants for informal public meetings generally apply to formal meetings as well. Self-identification, advisory committee identification, "snowball" identification, general mailing lists, and research are all appropriate. If you schedule a formal public meeting relatively late in the planning process, self-identification assumes a more prominent role. Most people will have already evidenced their interest by participating in some way.

Selecting Meeting Sponsors

In the majority of cases, your agency will sponsor and host the formal public meeting. It definitely should sponsor the public hearing—one of the last chances to go public with its recommendations. Agency sponsorship is not so important for information meetings and forums. Occasionally, sponsorship by a neutral, well-known and respected organization may add to the credibility of the agency and the planning program.

If you are in a State agency and want to hold an information meeting or forum, local organization sponsorship helps convey to potential participants the local importance of the issues and helps overcome your limited recognition in many areas.

Selecting Leaders and Speakers

Meeting Leadership

Formal public meetings need leaders who are respected individuals in recognized positions of authority. They stress the importance which the agency gives to the session, and they may help to attract more people to the meeting.

Your agency or the chairperson of your governing board should always lead the public hearing. They will preside over final plan decisions. Leader candidates for information meetings and forums include the chairperson or well-known members of advisory committees, elected officials, the head of the areawide planning program, the chiefs of key components of the program, and leaders of major local organizations. Even if agency directors or governing body chairpersons do not preside at information meetings and forums, you should encourage them to make brief presentations.

Speaker Criteria

As with informal public meetings, speakers at larger gatherings in more formal settings should have recognized expertise, be publicly perceived as spokesmen, be able to relate their remarks to the audience, and be willing to be questioned. In addition, speakers at formal public meetings should have some experience in addressing large groups. While ability to speak well, interestingly, and provocatively should be a criterion, it is sometimes difficult to apply.

Elected officials, agency executives, and advisory committee chairpeople and members are also speaker candidates.

For formal public meetings, consider neutral experts from appropriate disciplines—people recognized by title, profession, or name for their experience, achievement, and/or scholarly positions. They add credibility to the meeting and may present a more objective position.

Invite speakers personally, following up with a formal letter signed by your agency director.

Selecting the Time, Place, and Space

Criteria for Choosing a Meeting Time

The same considerations apply in choosing a time for informal and formal public meetings. Some agencies have scheduled public hearings for two or three sessions on the same day—i.e., a morning and/or an afternoon session, and an evening session. The advantage is that it gives people more options about when to attend. The disadvantage is that representatives of government agencies may attend the day sessions, while most citizen-organization spokesmen must attend in the evening. This reduces the opportunity for people to hear each other. However, most public hearings are "swinging door" events—that is, people come to testify, and then leave.

Criteria for Choosing a Place

The criteria suggested for informal meeting places apply to formal public meetings as well, including the comments on special problems of State agencies. The place must be centrally located, accessible by public transportation, have suitable parking, be in a safe location, and have adequate facilities. There must be adequate space for the seating arrangement desired (see Chapter 4) and for registration and social activity.

The Preparation

Developing the Agenda

The agenda must include a clear, concise statement of the meeting's purpose, the schedule of events, the speakers, and any special meeting rules. (For example, whether questions will be taken, a time limit on statements, whether people must indicate beforehand their intention to speak, the order of their statements.)

Developing Meeting Background Information

Guidance for developing and distributing background information for informal public meetings generally applies to formal meetings. The information must help participants to get the most out of the meeting. It must be summarized in brief, straightforward, and simple language. Both the summaries and more detailed information must be easily available.

Background information may not be necessary for the information meeting. Its purpose is information-giving. However, you must provide information to audience participants in the *Inquiry* and the *Colloquy* (see page 14) to assure that they comment from a sound base.

Getting the Public to Participate

Publicity Criteria

The considerations for informal public meetings are also appropriate here. Make the invitation visible and provocative and give it as much exposure as possible. Assure the public that key people will attend.

While an official public notice is not terribly effective, insert it for the public hearing (in addition to other methods). Public notices officially document that you notified the public.

Publicity Methods

Those suggested for informal public meetings also apply to formal ones. They include written invitations, advisory committee actions, speeches to organizations, articles or ads in organizational newsletters, personal contracts, use of the media, pamphlets sent home with children, and publicity stunts.

You cannot assume that plan supporters will testify at public hearings. You must encourage them to do so. Also refer to previous meeting attendee lists for organizations and individuals interested earlier and encourage their participation. If some key organizations have not previously participated, personally encourage them to attend.

Making Meeting Arrangements

Equipment needs for formal meetings are similar to those of informal meetings. Microphones, an easel or blackboard, space for wall displays, and audio/visual equipment should be available.

Recording the Proceedings

There are three methods for recording the proceedings of formal public meetings: a court stenographer (who records all testimony verbatim), a tape recorder (the tapes must be transcribed), or personnel to summarize the comments. The appropriate methods are identified below:

Method	Public Hearing	Information Meeting	Forum
Stenographer	Yes	No	No
Tape Recorder	Yes	Yes	Yes
Personnel to Summarize	No	Yes	Yes

The Conduct

How you greet the participants and direct the session are important. Here is some guidance; detailed suggestions are in Chapter 4.

Greeting the Participants

You should

- have enough people in the entrance area to greet people as they come in, thank them for coming, and direct them to a registration desk.
- have enough people for registration to assure that no one has to stand in a line longer than a few minutes
- consider offering refreshments
- give special attention to media representatives to help them conduct interviews, identify participants, and understand what is going on
- consider setting up a press room for the media if substantial meeting coverage is expected

Directing the Session

Easing Anxieties

In public hearings or forums, participants may be nervous about speaking before a large group. You can make them more at ease by placing microphones and lecterns to hold papers at several locations in the aisles. In forums where formally prepared statements are not made and information meetings where only questions are asked, consider having several portable microphones that can be used where the person recognized is sitting. The moderator should repeat each question asked before it is answered to assure that it was heard correctly.

Keeping to the Agenda

In a formal public meeting, your principal roles as leader are as a traffic engineer and timekeeper. People come to the meeting expecting that it will begin and end on time and that no one part of the agenda will run on so as to short change another part.

Principal speakers will normally adhere to the time allotted to them if they know beforehand how much time they have. What do you do when a speaker goes over his allotted time? Some judicious planning before the meeting helps. For example, place a small timepiece on the lectern. It allows the speaker to pace his remarks and is a gentle reminder of allotted time. You may also assign a person to sit in the back of the hall and time the presentations. The speaker is introduced to the timekeeper and told that the timekeeper will signal approximately two minutes before the allotted time expires. The timekeeper will make some mutually agreed upon sign.

In closing a question-and-answer period or an informal comment session (as in the forums), approximately five minutes before the end of the period you should say something like:

"We're close to the end of our time. I'll take two more questions (or comments)—the gentleman frantically waving his hand in the third row, and the woman in the yellow dress in the rear."

If agreed upon beforehand by the principal speakers or meeting leaders, you can add:

"We promised you that we would end by 10 p.m. And we will. However, I see so many people wishing to speak who have not had a chance that our speakers have agreed to stay until 10:30 to talk informally with anyone who wishes to remain."

If the meeting rules include a time limit for each statement from the audience, you must rigorously enforce that rule to be fair to everyone. A gentle enforcement method is to use a musical triangle to remind a speaker that this time is almost up. If the speaker does not get the message, you must interrupt:

"I'm sorry, Mr. Filibuster, but we have to go on to the next speaker. We do want to consider your entire statement, and we hope that you will give it to us in writing, either now or during the next few days."

In most public meetings, all participants will respect the rules. The time has passed when agencies feared disruption, demonstration, or personal attacks at many meetings. These situations could occur, however, and you should deal with them immediately (see Chapter 4).

Closing the Meeting

In a formal public meeting it is futile to try to summarize what was said. Instead, announce (1) the schedule for completing the remaining planning steps and where future citizen involvement fits in, (2) any citizen participation events already scheduled, and (3) how, when, and where the results of this meeting will be reported. It is helpful if future planning steps are diagrammed and distributed as background information given to the participants and/or if they are displayed on a large chart.

4 COMMUNICATION DYNAMICS OF PUBLIC MEETINGS

This chapter offers guidance in writing information for the public, speaking formally to the public, using graphics to tell the story, seating people effectively, facilitating discussion, and dealing with hostility.

Writing Information for the Public

Criteria for Writing Information

A writer's purpose is to be read and understood by his audience. Writing about water quality planning is difficult. To deal with the complexity and be understood professionally, planners, including engineers and scientists, have developed their own language. Now they are asked to translate that language into words that will be readily understood by nonprofessionals, that will stimulate people to read on, and will highlight the points citizens need to know to assess past and future planning decisions. It is difficult because citizens vary greatly in their knowledge about water quality issues. Given these circumstances, consider the following criteria in writing for the public. *First*, write for not more than an 8th-10th grade reading level.

Second, your information should run no longer than 5 pages, double-spaced (approximately 1500 words). If you cannot condense your material to 5 pages, prepare a one-page "summary of the summary."

Third, make the more detailed and technical information readily available for review. Include a list of references to this information and indicate where and during what hours it may be seen.

Specific Suggestions

Wherever possible, use pictures rather than words.

Prepare an outline. It will keep you to your subject and avoid unnecessary points.

Keep your sentences short. Use periods more than semicolons. 10 to 15-word sentences are the maximum. Use brief paragraphs.

Begin with something that will attract attention—a provocative question or an astonishing statement.

Early on, state the points you intend to cover.

If you have to use a few complex terms or concepts, help the reader understand by defining them with analogies.

Use descriptive illustrations and examples; try to relate them to the experiences and feelings of your audience.

Use conversational English. For example, use "do" for "accomplish;" "because" for "in view of the fact that"; "how do we want to use and enjoy Lake Elsinor" for "what water quality goals do we want for Lake Elsinor."

Use the active (e.g., "we believe that" or "scientists believe that" (instead of the passive (e.g., "it is believed that").

Play around with variations in print and format (e.g., different type faces, underlining, capitalization).

Unless a member of the technical staff has had experience writing for the public, get a professional writer to prepare the first draft—after talking to appropriate technical personnel. The writer and the planner can then jointly review the copy.

Speaking Formally to the Public

If you are to speak at a public meeting, here are some suggestions which may be helpful.

•Present useful information. Don't just repeat material included in the written background information. Assume that most people have read it. Highlight or expand on points in the background material—or present new information.

•Limit your talk to 10 minutes, 15 minutes at most. A 10-minute speech is about 1200 words or a little more than 4 double-spaced typed pages.

•Never read a report.

Preparing a Speech

•Prepare an outline stating subject, purpose, and leading ideas and sub-ideas in sequence.

•Begin with a provocative question or an astonishing statement (although not the same point that was written in the background information).

•Prepare your speech. In fact, write it out. This gives you confidence and it will assure that you will say everything necessary within the time limit. Use short sentences, define complex terms, use illustrations and examples, and use the active tense.

•Practice your speech. You might rehearse before others or into a tape recorder to check for length, logic, understanding, interest, rate of delivery, voice level, and conversational pattern.

If you expect to do considerable public speaking and are nervous or unsure of yourself, consider a public speaking course.

Giving the Speech

There is nothing wrong with reading a speech. Some speakers speak from notes which include an outline and key words or phrases, even though they may have initially written out the entire speech. Do what feels most comfortable to you. In speaking,

•Breathe normally.

•Vary your volume, pitch, and speed to avoid monotony.

•Speak distinctly and use correct grammar.

•Place your hands on a lectern or at your sides, allowing gestures to flow naturally.

•Stand comfortably to maintain balance, moving about if it is natural or if you need to get closer to your graphics.

•Look at the audience. Don't concentrate only on one or two friendly-looking faces.

If you are not a good speaker or are completely uncomfortable before an audience, you may want to find a different role for yourself.

Using Graphics to Tell the Story

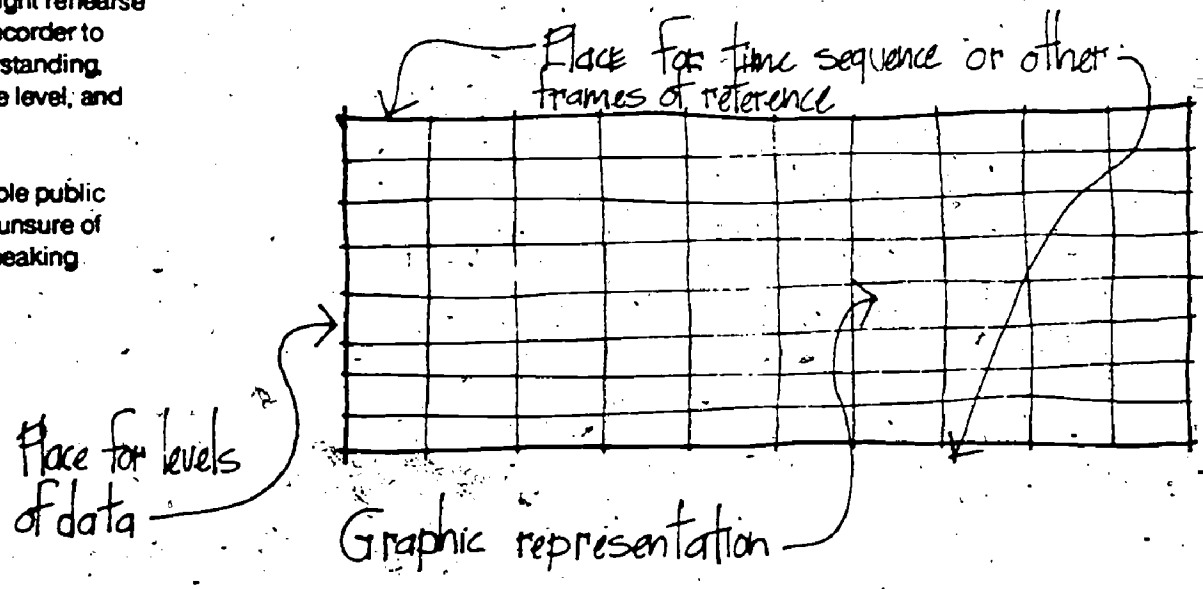
You can get a lot of mileage out of using pictures to help tell your story. You can use various types of graphics to accompany written and oral presentations. There are different techniques for oral presentations, and graphics can be used as working tools in small discussion groups.

Types of Graphics

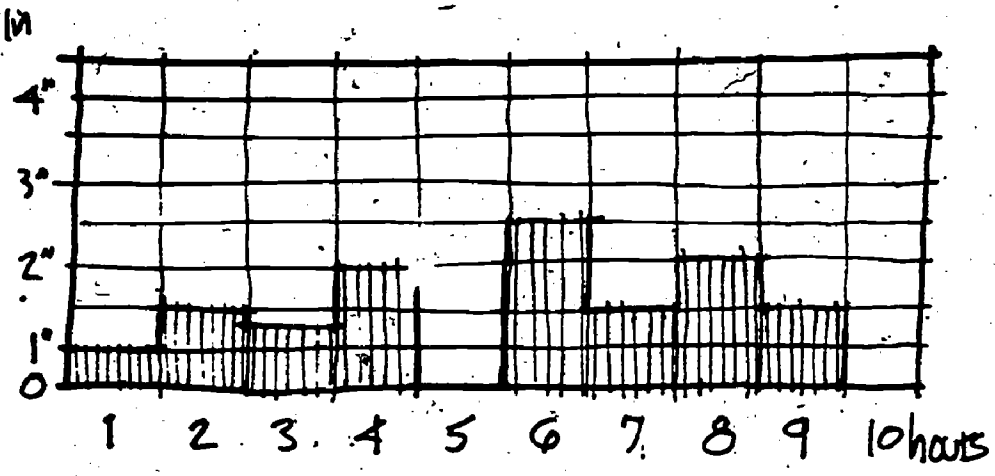
Charts

Matrix Graphs

Some display numerical relationship; the matrix graph presents time-sequence measurements.

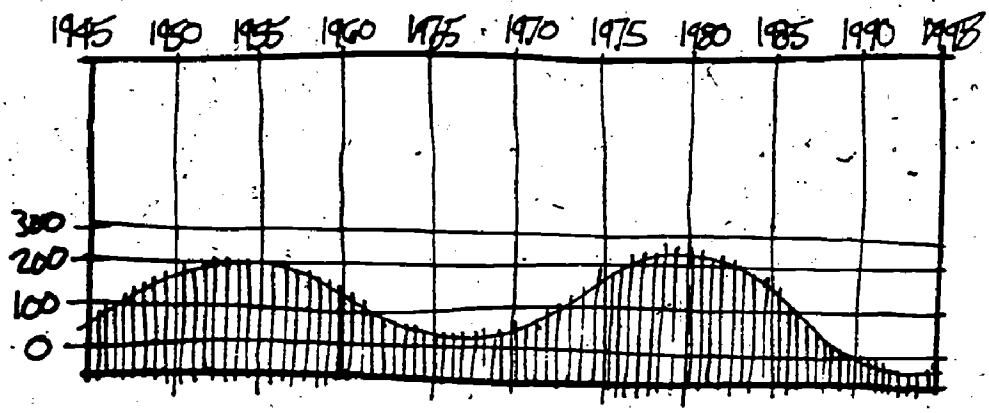


Examples, one to show precipitation, the other a fish harvest, are:



Rain in inches/hour

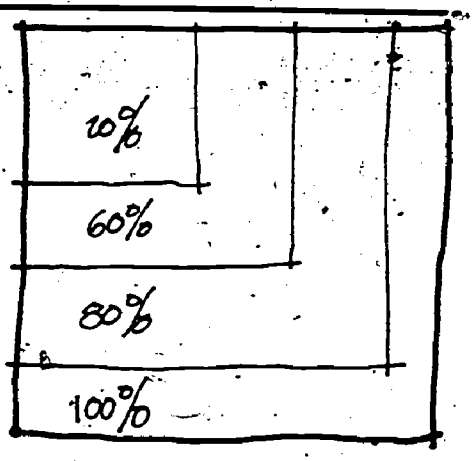
Chart 3



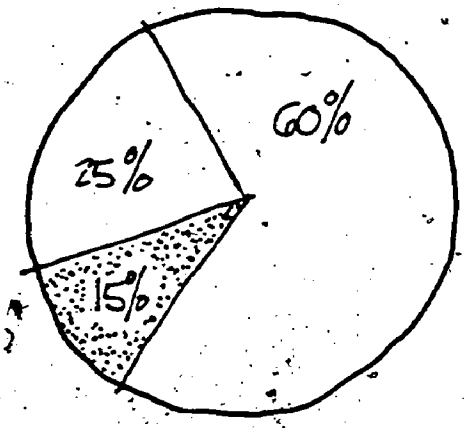
Number of fish caught in Stream A per year

Proportional Graphs

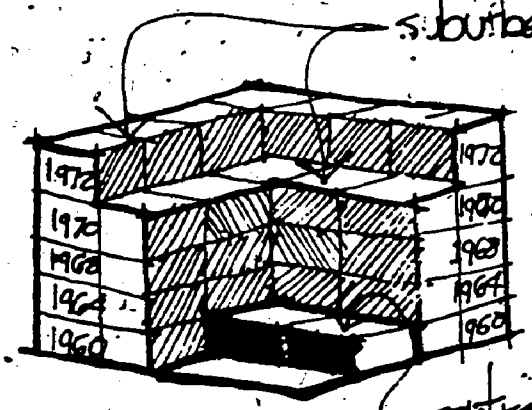
These display the proportional relationships between quantities. The first sample is drawn as an overlay, usually to show size relationships.



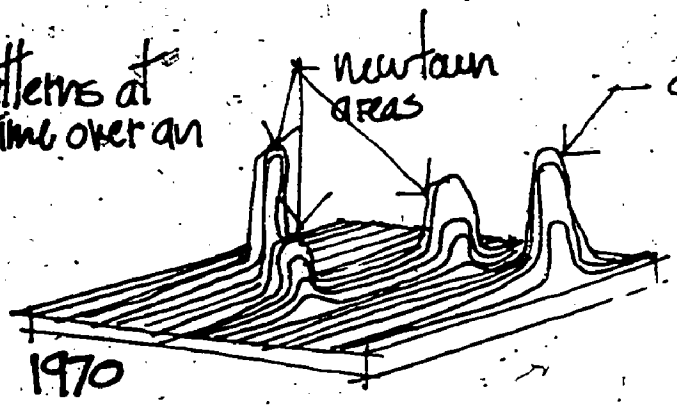
The circle version is appropriate when presenting the direct relationship between a total area and its separate parts.



Proportional graphs can also be presented as *three-dimensional* objects. Two samples are:

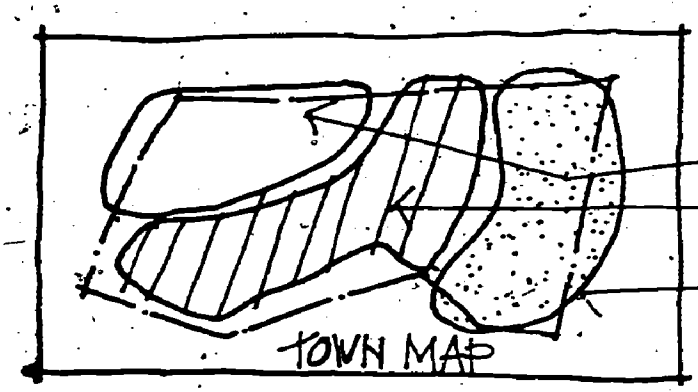


Growth of population in central city and suburbs



Growth patterns at points in time over an area

Proportional graphs can also display volume and quantity relationships, as:

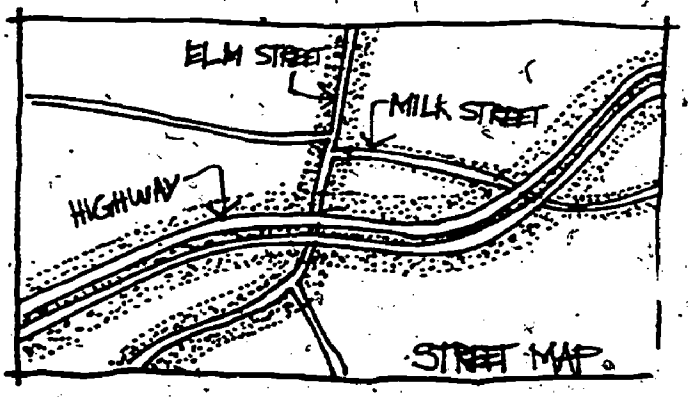


Map of area population densities.

60 persons/acre / 200 acres

10 persons/acre / 400 acres

20 persons/acre / 500 acres

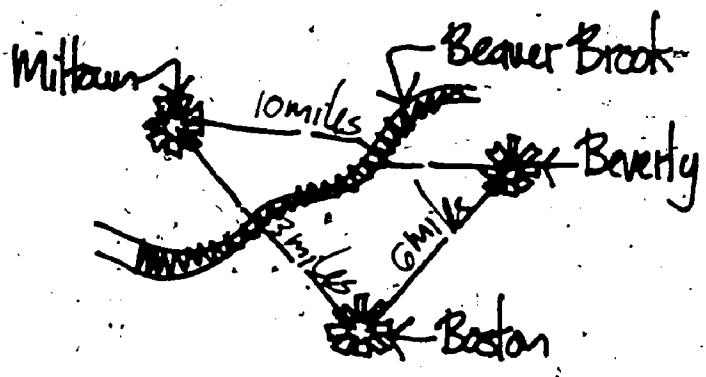


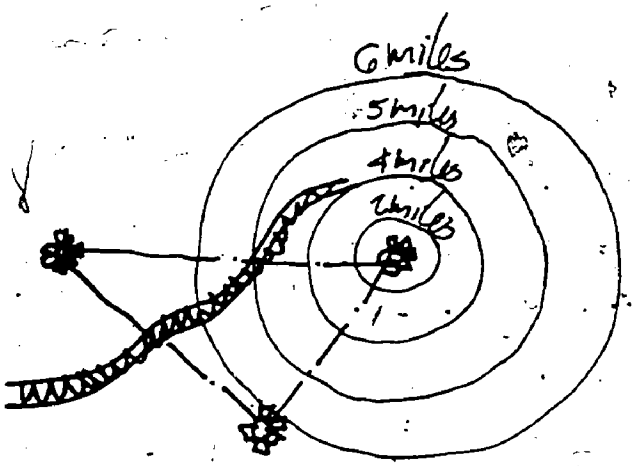
20,000 cars/day

10,000 cars/day

5,000 cars/day

Or, they might show distance relationships:



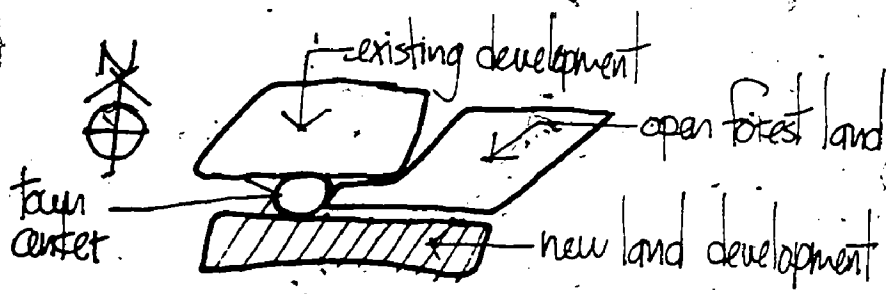


Diagrams

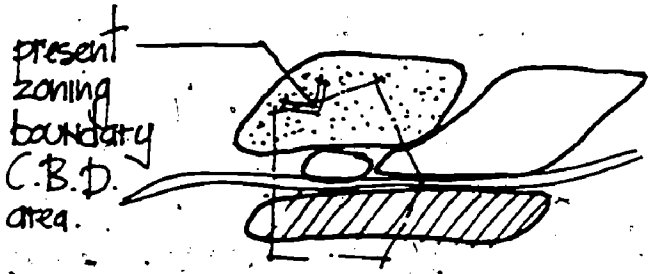
There are various diagrammatic forms for presenting plans and designs. They can display relationships conceptually or in terms of physical reality.

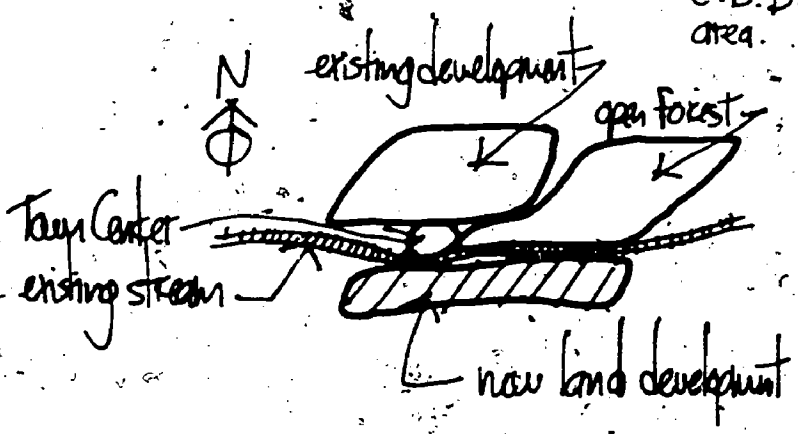
Showing Concepts

The following example presents a simple conceptual relationship.

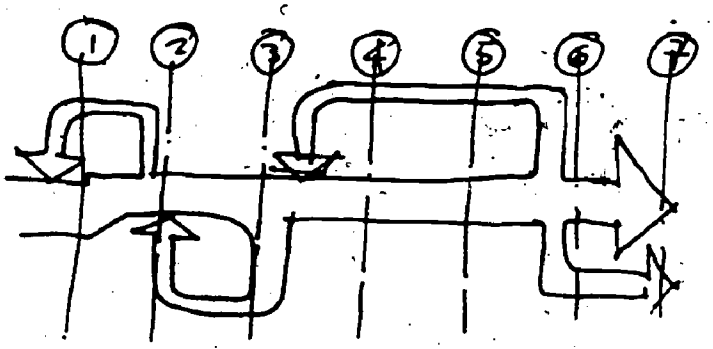


You can build on this diagram (using overlays or successive diagrams) to show more complex relationships. The sample at the left adds a stream. The one at the right further adds the present zoning boundary.



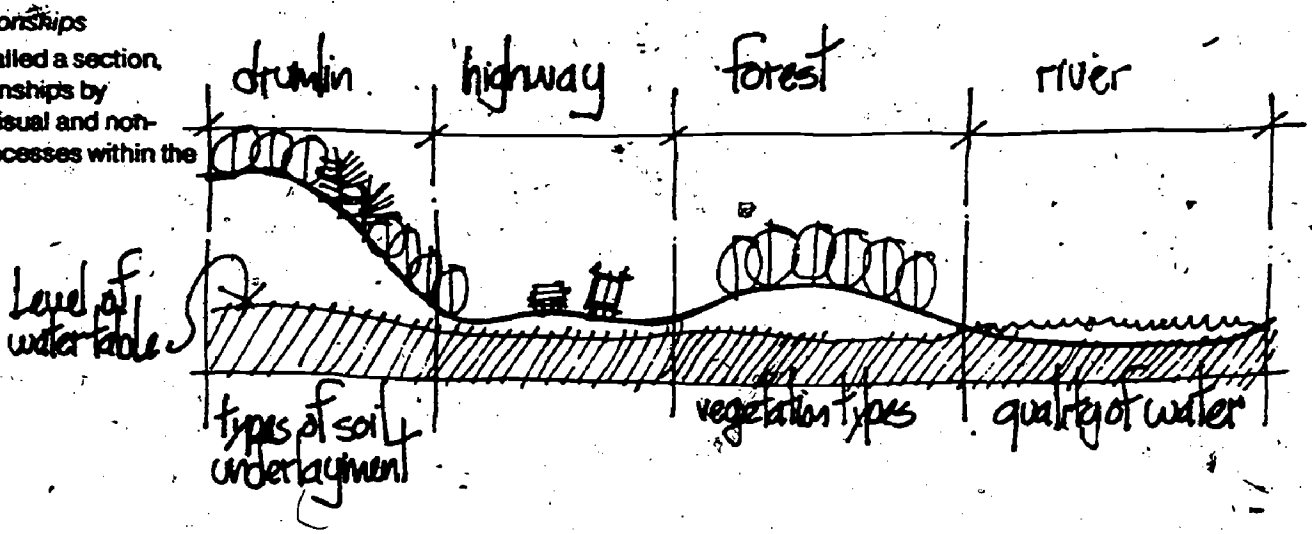


Diagrams can also depict a process. For example, they might display the process planning stages with feedback loops.



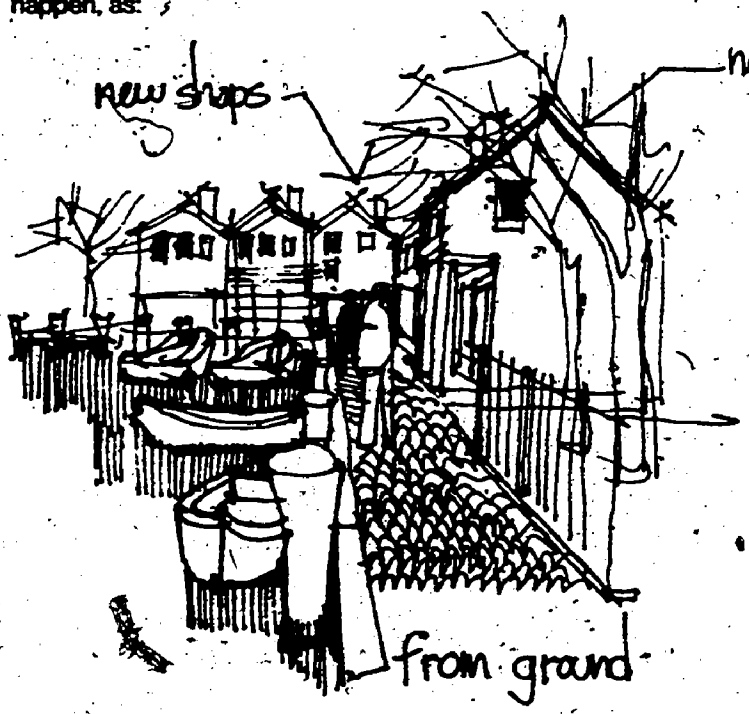
Showing Physical Relationships

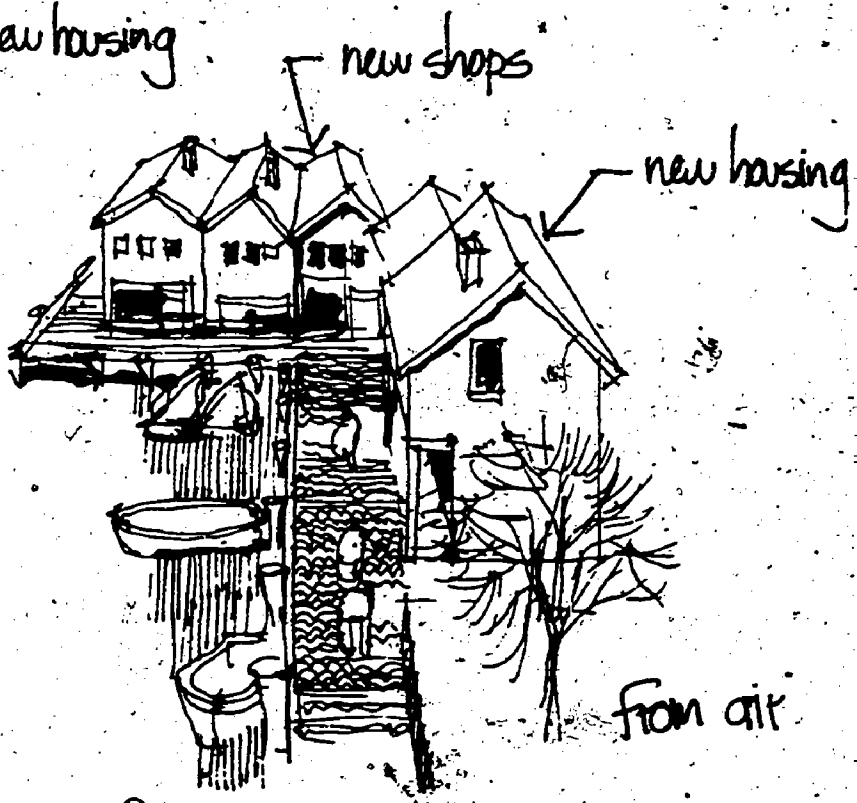
The following sample, called a section, displays physical relationships by illustrating parts of the visual and non-visual reality that are processes within the environment.



Perspectives

Sketches of proposed alternative projects can help citizens visualize what might happen, as:

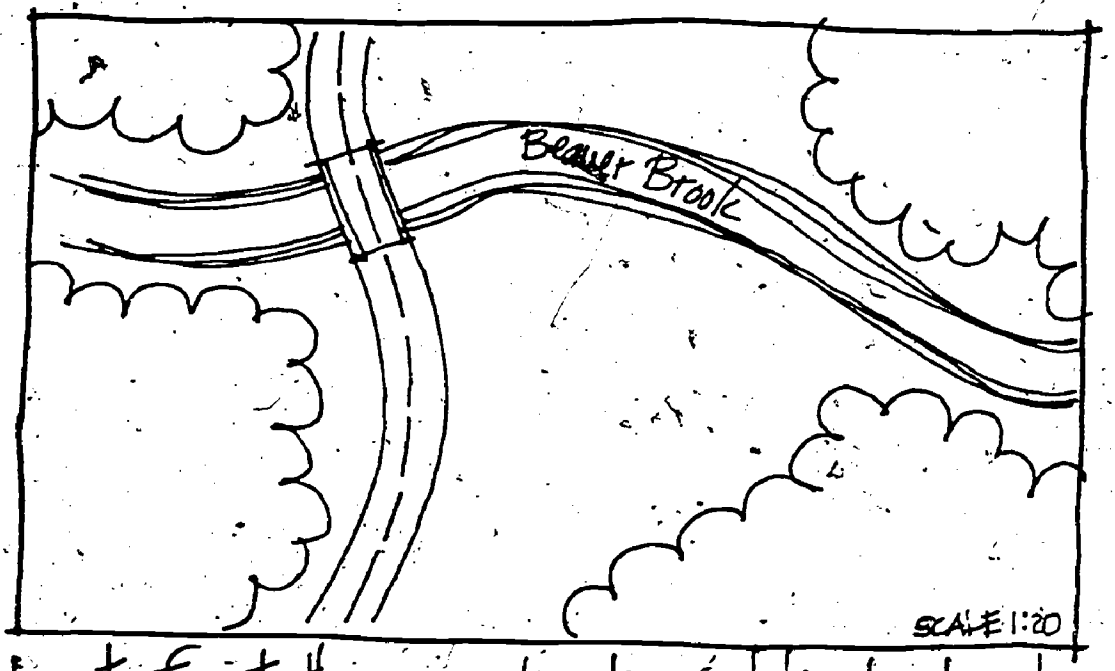




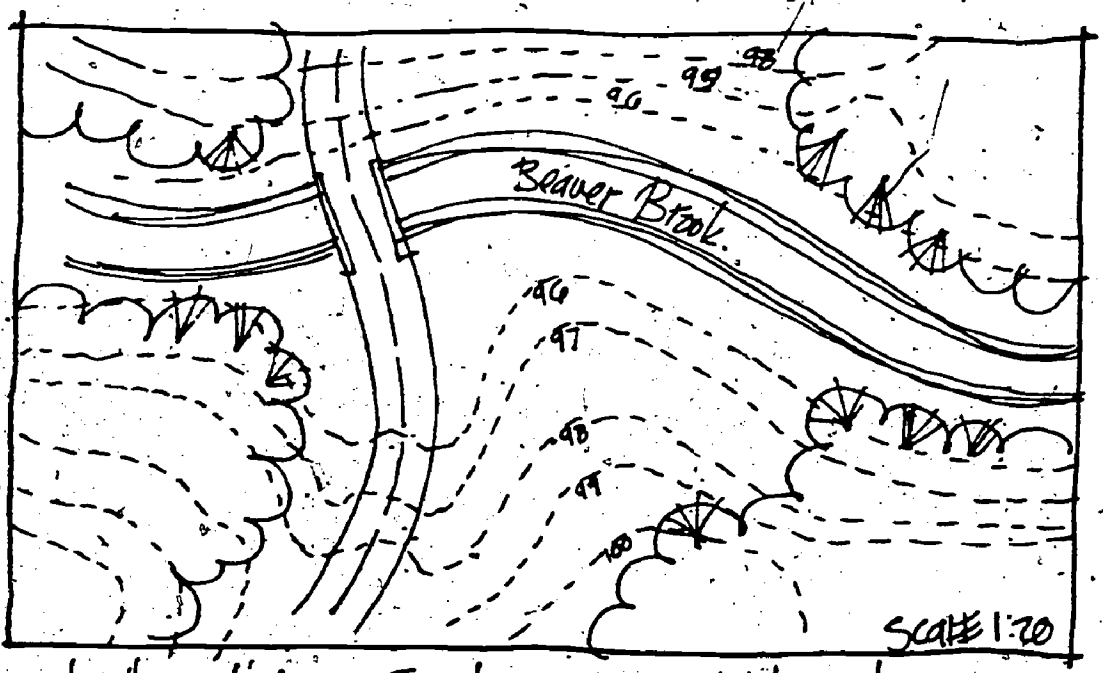
new waterfront development

Physical Plans

These are useful to help people visualize plans, particularly when a simple plan is built upon to add more and more features (using overlays or successive drawings). To illustrate, three successive plans are presented.



layout of just the major elements vegetation, brook and road: it is only valuable for distance measurments and size relationships.



with the addition of contour lines, vertical land forms can be indicated if one is familiar with reading this type of graphic representation.

rendered plan that emphasizes the vertical changes in elevation, the textural differences, and the horizontal land dimensions.

Photographs

Photos show existing conditions. If earlier photos of the same subject are available, combine them with current ones to tell a story.

Cartoons

Humorous illustrations sometimes stress a particular point far better than the written word. Moreover, they can entertain as well as inform.

Different Techniques for Displaying Graphics

All of the suggested graphic methods are easy and appropriate for written materials. While you may not include photographs in handouts (because of reproduction methods and cost), try them in printed brochures and major reports.

Graphics can be used in several ways at the public meeting:

- mounted on large display boards
- converted into slides
- prepared for use in an overhead projector (if prepared on transparencies, overlays of diagrams and plans are possible).

Use graphics to illustrate a speech, make them large enough to be easily seen by people in the back row.

Graphics as Working Tools

Graphics can be used to make a complex issue more understandable. The overlay technique can be used when there are different levels of information that bear on the points, issues, and questions being discussed, where there are numerous solutions to a particular problem and when people can affect both problem analysis and solutions by adding, subtracting, or changing information.

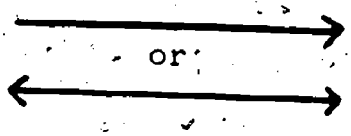
Several years ago a National Forest District used overlays to enable forest users to negotiate among themselves non-competitive places for various forms of recreation. Fishermen, hikers, campers, bicyclers, and off-road vehicle enthusiasts were given simple maps of the area to be developed—each map with a transparent overlay for crayon marking. The participants drew lines, talked about them erased some of them, and drew new lines—repeating the process until they had come up with their own plan.

In water quality planning, maps and colored pencils can be distributed to participants to draw locations of treatment facilities, sewer trunk lines, and effluent disposal sites. Both before and after the exercise, the types of impacts that might result from alternative locations can be discussed. A variation on this method is for each group to have one large map (covered with an acetate sheet). Using crayons, people work together drawing various routes and locations, discussing impacts as they go along.

Seating People Effectively

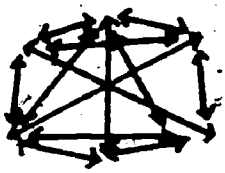
An article which appeared in *Public Administration Review* argued that "not the persons or subject but the arrangement of chairs determines the success of a meeting."*

Seating arrangements must be appropriate to the communication purpose of the meeting. Formal public meetings are one- or two-way communication affairs. Informal public meetings are omnidirectional.



or

Formal Public Meetings



Informal Public Meetings

In formal meetings, leaders and speakers give information to people in the audience who in turn direct questions or comments to the leaders. In informal meetings—particularly the small discussion groups—participants should be able to talk with each other easily.

Seating Arrangements for Formal Public Meetings

One- or two-way communication is served by arranging seating theater or classroom style. (Diagrams are presented on page 27.)

Theater Style

If you expect large numbers of people (more than 100), theater style is most appropriate. For a large group the classroom style requires so much more space that the people toward the rear would be a long way from the speaker's table.

For a theater arrangement try to use a site where chairs can be arranged to advantage. Fixed seating arrangements as in a school auditorium are seldom appropriate for formal meetings.

Arrange the chairs in semi-circular rows rather than in straight lines. This focuses attention on the center table. Make several aisles, particularly if the audience is to have an opportunity to speak. Allow enough space between rows so that people can move freely.

Classroom Style

If less than 100 people are expected, the classroom style is less formal and more comfortable.

The Podium

The principal speakers may talk from the front of the room either at the same level as the audience or from a stage or platform. Some observers feel a stage expresses too much of a "we-they" confrontation. However, if the meeting is large, much of the audience may not see speakers at a podium on the same level.

Seating Arrangements for Informal Meetings

In the general sessions of informal meetings, theater or classroom style arrangements are appropriate.

For Small Discussion Groups

There are three factors to consider in making seating arrangements for small discussion groups.

First, how many people will be in each session. Discussion observers have found that:

- if the group is 5 to 7, participants generally speak to each other,
- if the group is 8 to 12, "quiet" participants talk only to the "top" people, and
- if the group has more than 12 people, from 5 to 7 tend to dominate the discussion.

Obviously a small group is better, but it poses problems—getting enough qualified moderators and recorders or enough space separation to prevent interference among groups.

Second, should the participants be at tables? Tables project a working environment. They permit people to spread out materials and to take notes easily. If the discussion groups meet in the same room as the general session, don't use tables unless people are seated at them from the beginning. Rearranging the meeting room will waste valuable time.

The Design

Third, how should you arrange the chairs? A circle draws people together. Since there is no "preferred" seating in a circle, all participants are in a equal basis.

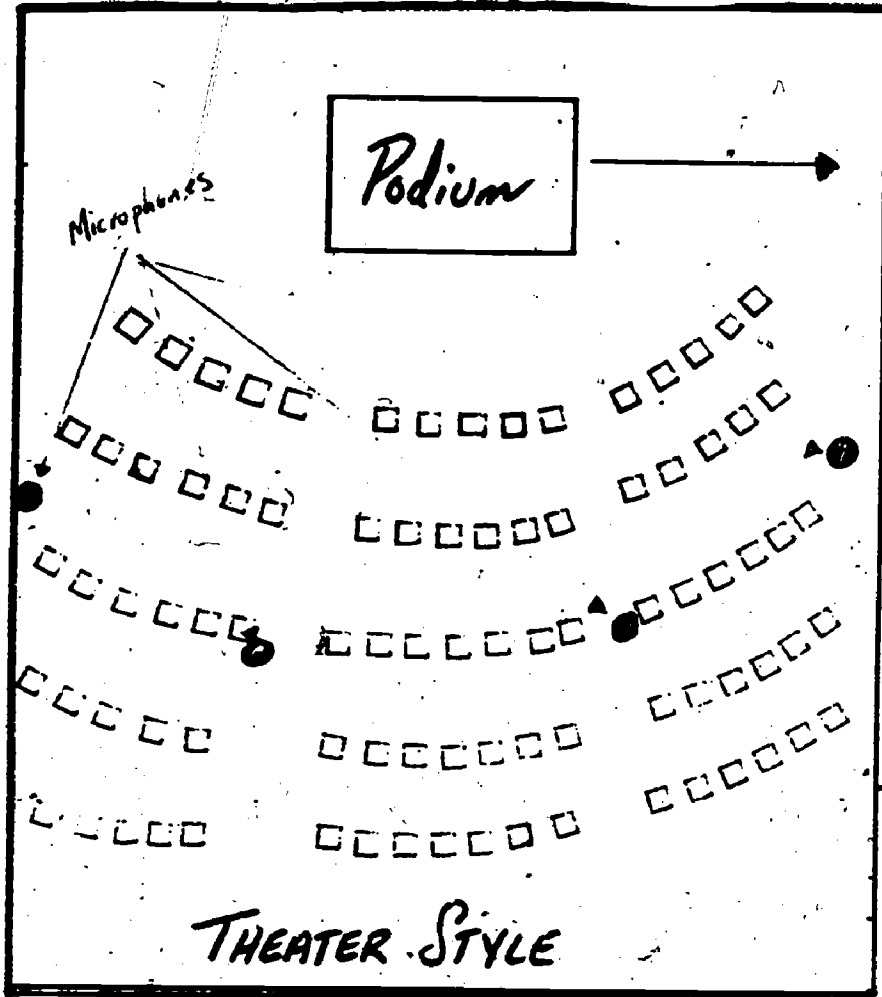
If you seat people at tables, round ones are preferable. Most round tables are not larger than five feet in diameter and will accomodate six people comfortably. Square tables are the next choice for they also bring people together. For larger groups, rectangular tables can be put together to approximate a square. The diagrams suggest alternative seating arrangements, scaled to indicate generally how many people you can seat comfortably (allow approximately two to three feet between each participant).

Space Requirements

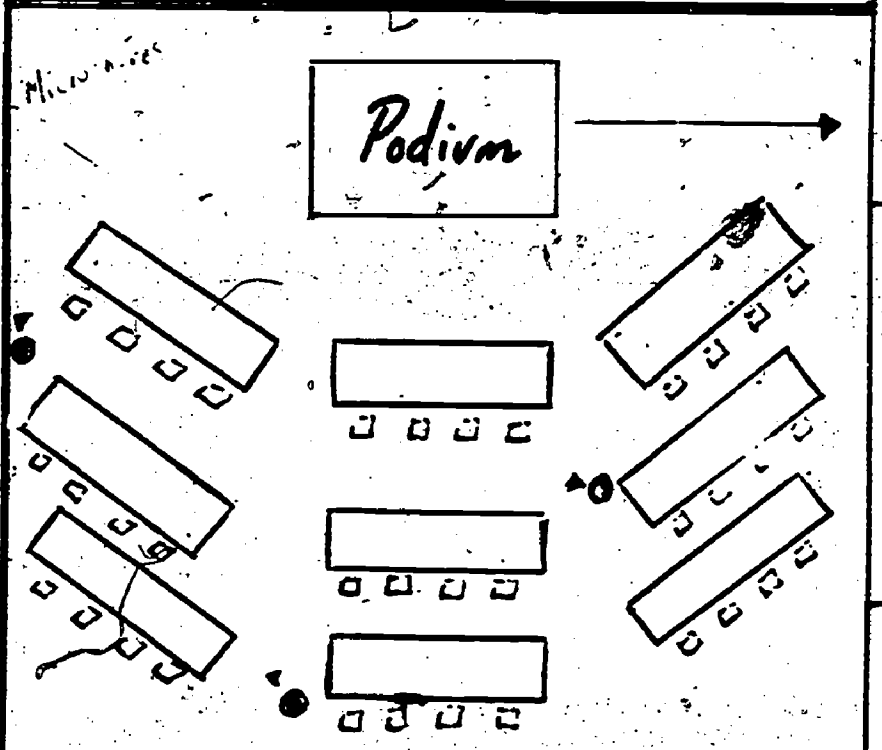
The room size is important. Allow enough space for people to move about freely and not feel closed in. Space requirements can be tailored to seat various room configurations, but ideally you should allow:

Seating Style	Requirements	Example
Theater	6-7 sq. ft. per person	700 sq. ft per 100
Classroom	15 sq. ft. per person	750 sq. ft. per 50
Discussion	20 sq. ft. per person	200 sq. ft. per 10

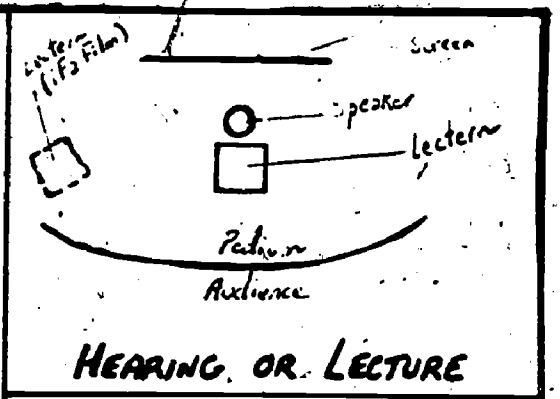
*Donald and Alice Stone, "The Administration of Ch... c Administration Review, Jan... ary 1974, pp. 71-77.



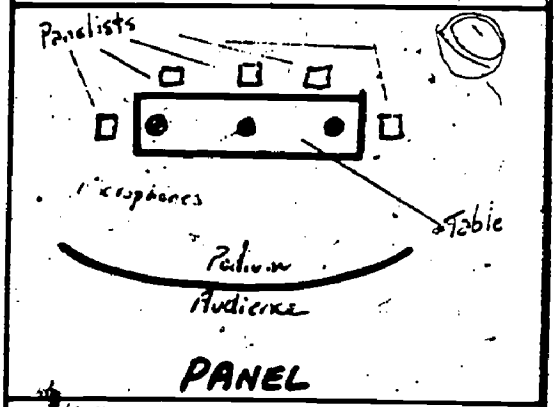
THEATER STYLE



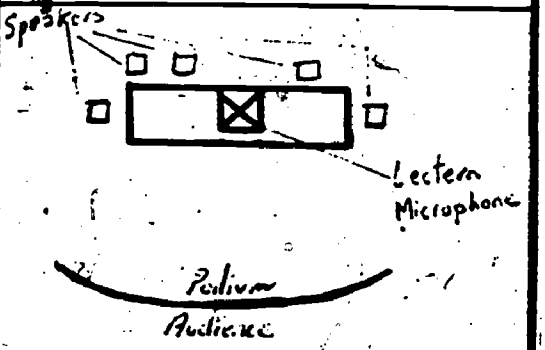
CLASSROOM STYLE



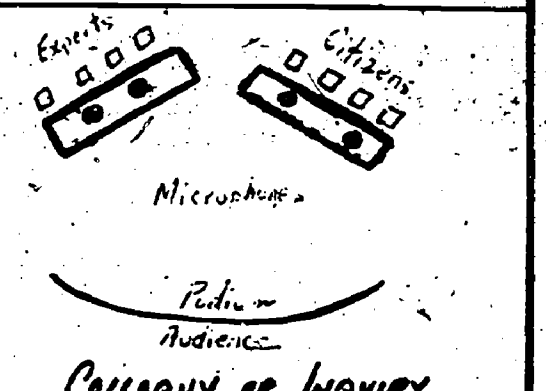
HEARING OR LECTURE



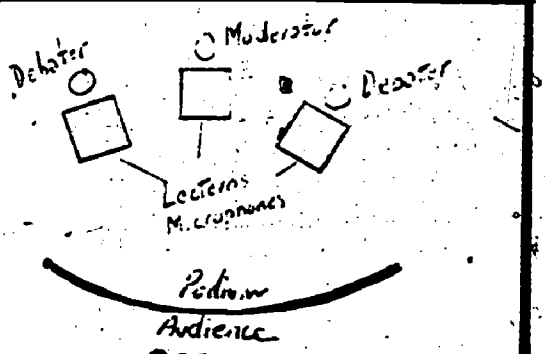
PANEL



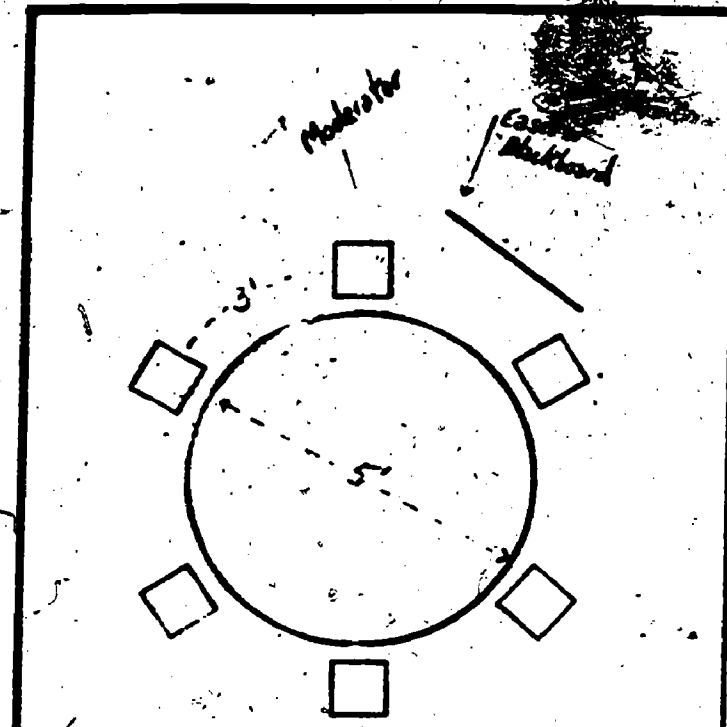
SYMPOSIUM



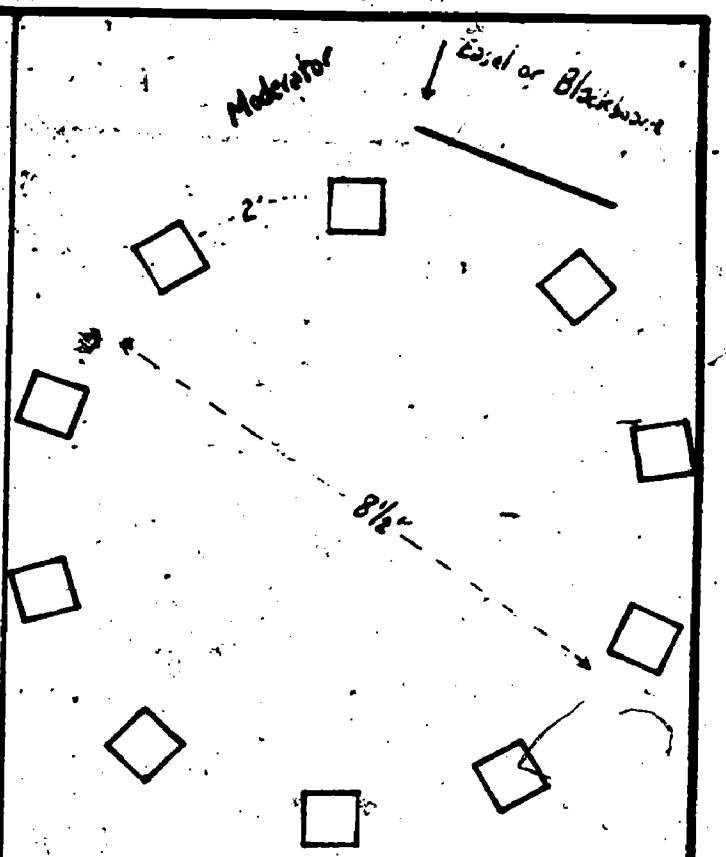
COLLOQUY OR INQUIRY



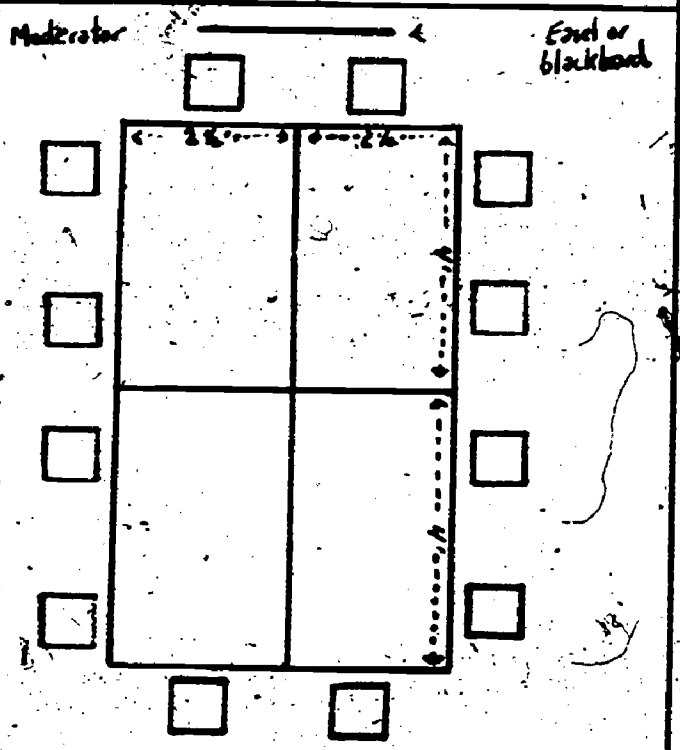
DEBATE



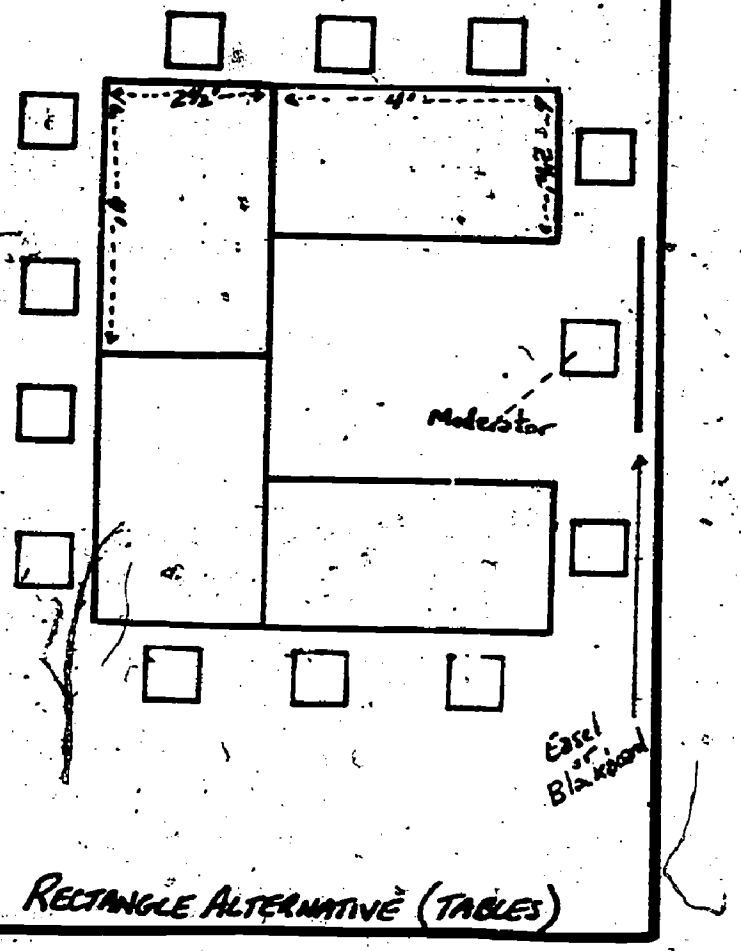
ROUND TABLE AND CHAIRS



CIRCLE (CHAIRS ONLY)



RECTANGLE ARRANGEMENT (TABLES)



RECTANGLE ALTERNATIVE (TABLES)

Dialogue: The Exchange of Information

This section presents suggestions for making small group discussion effective.

The Nature of Ad Hoc Discussion Groups

An informal public meeting brings together for a brief period a group of people representing a wide variety of interests. These participants constitute an ad hoc group—that is, they are called together for a specific situation. People enter such groups with their own expectations, perceptions, personal stature, roles they will play, and attitudes. Unlike continuing group processes (as with advisory committees), there is little opportunity in ad hoc groups to work out and accommodate "personal agendas." In ad hoc groups, discussion will not always be orderly. There will be many excursions, some of which are beneficial. Conflict is inevitable.....and desirable.

Consensus among people brought together briefly is rarely possible. People express opinions with little chance that they can be reconciled with different opinions expressed just as strongly. The discussion goal is in water quality planning is:
To obtain the full articulation of views and (perhaps) to reach some sense of agreement and disagreement.
Consensus is not a goal.

Facilitating Discussion

This section is directed to the small group discussion moderator—suggestions for making discussions productive. The remarks that follow are intended to stimulate moderators to be creative and resourceful. To get the most from the groups, the moderator must move the group toward specific objectives; draw out all participants; keep the discussion balanced; clarify comments; and summarize. In doing this, the moderator must also maintain a low profile.

Beginning the Session

Open with a concise, articulate, and strong statement about the discussion purpose, the importance of the topic, and the responsibilities of the participants. Then ask participants to identify themselves and encourage people to address each other on a first name basis. (Use of name tags—the first names in bold letters—makes identification easier.)

Keeping to the Agenda

The purpose of an agenda is to get all topics discussed, but it need not be followed rigidly. There will be times when it is better to permit the group to explore fewer questions than to abort a fruitful discussion by insisting that they move on to the next agenda item. The first requirement is to set the rules, as:

"We have an hour and forty-five minutes to discuss three questions. I'd like to set a limit for each—thirty minutes. Then we'll have fifteen minutes to summarize. I'll tell you when the time is up. Then we can decide whether we should move on."

The discussion on a particular question may be so provocative that the group could use more time. You can say:

"Necessary" Excursions

"This discussion really seems to be getting somewhere. But we might not complete what we were asked to do if we spend much more time on it. But...your comments are so good that I don't want to turn them off. As a group, we can agree to suspend the agenda for the time being, or we might set a time limit on this question. What do you think?"

Comment Repetition

At other times, you may see the discussion bogging down because people are repeating themselves or what others have said. You can say:

"Let me see if I can summarize the points that we have made. (Summary) Is there anything someone would like to add before we move on to the next question?"

Straying from the Question

Some participants may say things which appear to have little to do with the question at hand. You should allow a limited number of such comments. They reinforce the desired natural, calm, informal atmosphere. But don't let them get out of hand. You can say:

"Can I interrupt for a moment? Your points seem to be (Summary). Can you be a bit more specific about how we can help the planners deal with those points in answering the (question)?"

Or, you can say:

"You are making strong points. (Summary) But they seem to me to be straying from our question. Does anyone else agree? Should we add them to our agenda?"

Separate Agendas

A few participants may bring up matters that are outside the capacity of the water quality planning agency to resolve. People who do this usually feel so strongly that they will continue to repeat their concerns until they believe they are heard and someone will do something about them. Try to respond to their problems even though the agency has no responsibility there. You can say:

"You have hit on a matter that concerns a lot of us. Unfortunately (agency) can't do anything about it directly—at least as far as I know."

and either

"Could you see me after the session? We could talk about how and where to get your point made."

or

"I will, however, bring it up with the agency staff and see if there might be some way to help. I promise you an answer."

Keeping the Discussion Balanced

Try to involve everyone. Don't let anyone dominate the discussion. Try to give all ideas a fair hearing. When it becomes

clear that the group has resolved its opinion, move on to the next agenda item. Your task in keeping the discussion balanced is easier if you know the background and interests of the majority of participants.

The "Silent" Participant

Try to draw out the "silent participant." Once the silent participant speaks, help build his confidence to speak again by clarifying and perhaps defending his comments.

The Non-stop Talker

At the other extreme is the participant who goes on too long. You can shut him off by putting a time limit on all speakers or by asking other participants to comment on what's been said by the "non-stop talker."

The Skewed Discussion

What about those times when you sense that the discussion is going only one way and yet you know that there is another point of view? You can say:

"Could I interrupt here? What I've been hearing is (Summary). From what I've been reading in the papers, some people don't agree. Am I wrong?"

Or, more directly:

"Wait a minute. Isn't there another point of view? (State it)."

Using Conflict

Differing opinions—reasoned, fairly calm, focusing on ideas—is what discussion is all about. Your task is to assure that all opinions are expressed and that participants understand the areas of agreement and disagreement.

Clarifying

One method to help assure this understanding is to use a blackboard (or display board) to list the points of agreement and disagreement on various issues. You may go a step further—clarifying the nature of the comments by listing agreements and disagreements according to whether the group considers them fact or opinion. At times it is helpful to have the group consider the strength of the agreements and disagreements—by listing them in priority order.

Clarifying Comments

You must assure that all comments, whether or not there is disagreement, are understood. Occasionally you will see participants confused because they are not talking about the same thing.

By the Moderator

One method to resolve the problem is for you to clarify what a participant said.

By the Group

At other times, you can ask members of the group to clarify points which apparently are confusing others.

Summarizing Comments

Frequently, you must summarize what has been said (1) when it appears that no new points are being made, (2) at the conclusion of a discussion of any question, and (3) at the end of the session in preparation for reporting back to the full group.

The session recorder can greatly facilitate your summary of points at the end of a discussion.

Discussion Failure

At times, a discussion group will get little done no matter how hard you and the participants try. When such a situation occurs, relax—and wait until next time.

Dealing with Hostility

In both formal and informal public meetings, the conflict of ideas is desirable; hostility isn't. If permitted to get out of hand, hostility can disrupt the meeting, prevent the group from achieving its goals, and send people away determined not to attend the next meeting.

Hostility has many forms: demonstrations, challenges to someone's motives or integrity, personal derision, sarcasm, constant interruptions, or attempts to monopolize the discussion.

Opening Statement

In both formal public meetings and the general session of the informal meetings, you should forcefully state the rules from the outset:

"Our purpose tonight is to provide the opportunity for everyone to express his or her opinion. We expect and want diversity and the identification of all differences among us. I want to stress, however, that we can only achieve our purpose if we limit our comments to facts and ideas, and not get involved in personal criticism."

No Anger

If hostility surfaces, remain calm. Tempers can't be cooled off if the moderator loses his cool, too.

Meeting Disruption

At times, hostility from a small number of people may be so great (e.g., a demonstration) that the future progress of the meeting itself is threatened. Offer to meet separately with the disrupters to talk about their concerns. Sometimes, however, that won't work. Then you should consider calling a recess. The value of this approach is that you are enlisting the assistance of the majority, who may be able to convince the minority to change its tactics.

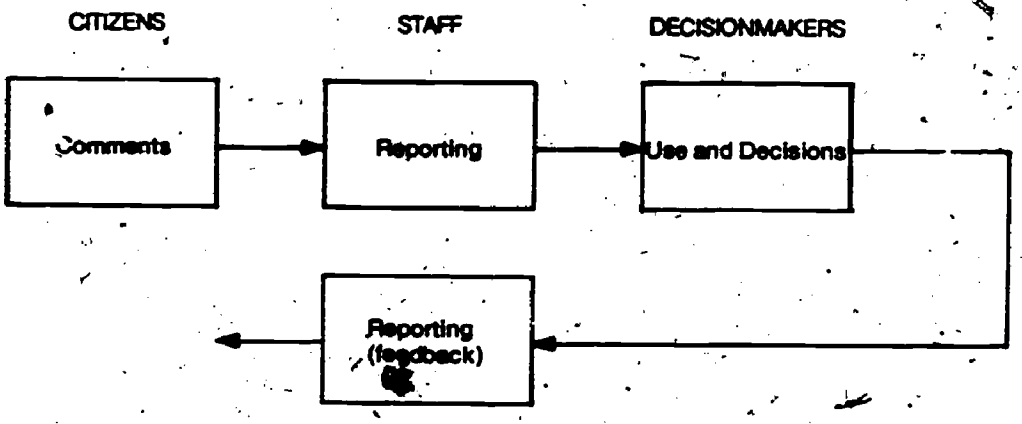
Personal Attacks

When a speaker begins to deride another, you must stop it quickly.

5 INFORMATION FEEDBACK

"Feedback" is a term invented by computer technologists to describe returning a part of a system "output" to be used as later "input." Planners have adopted "feedback" for their own use—in this case to:

- ensure that citizen comments (output) are reported to decision makers in a form that will be used (input), and
- report to the public how their comments were actually used (a new output).
- Schematically, information feedback in citizen participation appears:



Principles of Information Feedback

First, you must report all public meeting comments to the appropriate decision-making body in a readily useful format.

Second, the decision-making body has an obligation to consider all substantive points made. This does not mean that the decisionmakers must incorporate all citizen opinions into the plan, but simply that they must consider them. *Not to do so makes citizen participation a sham.*

Third, you must report how the citizen comments are actually fed back to the public in timely fashion, using reporting ques to insure that the information and understood.

Reporting Comments to the Decision-making Body

Selecting the Appropriate Body

Early in the planning process the agency must establish lines of communication between citizens and the decisionmakers. This requires identifying the organizational units that will consider citizens' comments. Options include:

- the Policy Advisory Committee, particularly if it must adopt or recommend the plan and its components
- the Citizen Advisory Committee, particularly if it is responsible for channeling all public comments received from public participation processes to other units and/or if it will make its own recommendations
- the agency staff, particularly if it is directed to consider public comments in its planning activities
- public officials (i.e., representatives of government units who must adopt the plan) to keep them informed about citizen attitudes.

Reporting should go to more than one of these organizational units and, you should tell participating citizens which bodies will consider their comments.

Formats for Reporting

You have a responsibility to ensure that citizen comments are reported to the decision-making body in an easy to use form. The decision-making body, of course, must select the format it prefers to use. There are three major options.

Written Summary/Oral Presentation

The agency staff reviews all comments, synthesizes them and prepares a narrative summary which highlights the key points—e.g., items that "must" be considered and those that "should" be considered. The principal advantage here is that the information is reduced to manageable proportions. The disadvantages are that staff interpretation may miss key points, or there may be bias.

Listing All Comments

Using a summary chart format, the agency staff reviews and summarizes all comments, categorizing them by topic and type of comment (e.g., question, fact, desire, opinion). The chart also identifies who made the comment and has a space for the response.

The advantages to this method are that the information is reduced to manageable proportions and it specifically focuses the decisionmaker on the issue raised. The disadvantages are that the information synthesis and reporting is time-consuming for staff and the summaries may misstate some positions.

Providing the Full Record

The decision-making body is given copies of the meeting notes, the verbatim transcript (for public hearings), or tape transcripts. The advantage here, of course, is that all information is presented; there is no interpretation or filtering. The disadvantage is that the information may be unmanageable and few people will read it.

COMMENTS	BY WHOM?	PAGE _____ RESPONSE
Question Discussed:		
What uses do we want to make of Lake Muir?		
Questions asked:		
1. When did swimming stop in the lake?	45	In 1961
2. How many people now boat on the lake?	4,13	12,000 a year
Desires presented:		
1. We should be able to swim in it.	1,6,10,14,29,30	Feasibility will be studied.
2. Fishing regulations should be enforced better.	36, 40,58.	Fish and Game will be advised.

Summary Comments

Numerical identification of who made the comment. A numbered reference to specific people is also provided

Left blank for response by decision-making body unless the staff has the definitive answer.

Reporting to the Public

Reporting for all Citizen Participation Processes

The public meeting is only one avenue of citizen participation. The suggested reporting formats that follow might be used for all such processes (for example, advisory committee deliberations, survey results, individual interviews and correspondence as well.) The report to the people should indicate how and to what extent public meeting comments are supported or refuted by comments received in other ways.

Formats for Reporting

There are at least seven major methods for reporting to the public. More than one might be used to assure broad coverage.

Specifying the Use

If you use the summary chart for reporting to the decision-making body (see pages 32), that same chart—with the response column filled in—can be a "feedback" report to the people. All the charts should be mailed to meeting participants, the media, and other interested people and be available for review at convenient locations.

The advantages are that it is a brief, easy-to-read format; and people can see whether their comments are accurately portrayed. The principal disadvantage is that reproduction and distribution costs may be substantial.

Providing Summaries

You summarize the decision-making body's responses before sending them to meeting participants and others interested along with summaries of the meeting. The advantage is that this method reveals what the decision-making body considers important. In other words, if a comment is not addressed, the implication is that it is not important. The disadvantage is that this report may also be bulky and too much to read—with high printing and distribution costs.

Providing Verbatim Records and Responses

You make available for inspection at central locations copies of the verbatim meeting record and a written response to the comments made.

The advantage is that people can see and review the full, unfiltered record. The disadvantage is that very few people will read it.

Summarizing in Newsletters

If the agency has a newsletter, it is a forum for summarizing meeting comments and responses. The advantages are that (1) broad distribution has already been established; (2) it forces concise, well-written summaries that are likely to be read; and (3) the costs are minimal. On the debit side, newsletter space constraints may not allow adequate exposition. If cost is a factor, the newsletter summary can be combined with other methods (i.e., people could specifically request the more detailed "report to the people").

Using News Releases and/or Press Conferences

If the issues discussed are newsworthy, the media may help. On the other hand, media interpretations could distort the record or ignore it. Reserve news releases or press conferences for significant issues, never rely on them alone.

Reporting to Subsequent Public Meetings

Oral presentations, perhaps supplemented by written summaries, on what was said at previous meetings and how it was addressed should be made to people attending the current public meeting. This brings people up to date, and sets a good tone for the meeting at hand (i.e., people can see how they can have an impact). But this method only reaches the people attending and may be time-consuming.

Building the Public Record

Over the course of a two-year, multi-phase planning process, citizens will come and go. A frequent complaint is that each time new people enter he or she must be oriented to what went on before or they are apt to discuss resolved issues. One method to help solve this problem is to build, publish, and periodically update a public record.

The Seattle District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers uses this method, called the "Seattle Brochure," as part of its citizen participation process in water resources planning projects.

Over the course of a three-year project, the District publishes up to seven editions of its brochure, each incorporating information from the previous editions and new information subsequently developed. Two pages are devoted to each project alternative being studied—the left page presenting factual information on the alternative, the right page summarizing citizen comments (segregated according to "pro" or "con") on the alternative. The District updates each edition—adding to the factual information and listing new citizen comments as they are received in public meetings, from advisory committees, and from interviews and correspondence.

Other agencies have also built this type of public record by using a citizen workbook. The agency provides factual information and copies of its decisions. Citizen participants record their own and other public comments.

The public record is a valuable tool. In water quality planning, you can adapt either the brochure or workbook models to supply or information at the beginning and end of each planning phase.

On the other hand, there are disadvantages. First, water quality planning may be so complicated that the record itself can be too complicated to use. Second, the public record eventually becomes formidable. Third, publication and distribution costs are high.

6 PUBLIC MEETING EVALUATION

Most organizers know instinctively whether a meeting was successful. Did all the people we expected attend? Did they deal with the issues we wanted them to deal with? Were their comments useful? So why be more systematic about meeting evaluation?

One reason is that evaluation may spotlight why a meeting failed. "Monday Morning Quarterbacking" can lead you to make changes for subsequent meetings.

Evaluation of "effective" meetings may also lead you to identify elements which you should repeat.

Another reason is that public meeting evaluation can suggest other needed citizen participation processes to complement public meeting results, i.e., surveys, interviews, public education.

Evaluating Informal Public Meetings

There are three basic approaches to evaluating informal meetings: by the participants, by the staff, or by a third party.

Participant Evaluation

Whatever your goals for public meetings, people will continue to attend only if they find the meetings interesting, provocative, and useful. Participant evaluation is intended to feed back to the organizers the extent to which the session met needs and expectations.

Oral Evaluation.

Set aside some time at the end of the meeting to discuss the process. Ask people to comment on:

- the importance and relevance of the topic and questions
- the relevance and interest of the information presented
- their capability to deal with the questions in the time available
- the group discussion format
- the opportunity for each participant to speak
- leadership direction and support
- physical arrangements

The problem with oral discussion (in addition to taking up valuable meeting time) is that some people may hesitate to criticize in front of others.

Written Evaluation

Near the end of the meeting, give participants a questionnaire to complete (voluntarily) on meeting effectiveness. People may answer the questions before they leave or mail it back. Evaluation questionnaires are usually "yes/no" or multiple choice questions to make tabulation and analysis easier. Many participants will resist the highly structured format which prevents them from commenting or expanding on their answers. It is a good idea to have a structured questionnaire include an open-ended question. Written evaluations are useful only if you have time to read, analyze, and use the responses.

Formats vary widely. A two-question evaluation used sometimes by the League of Women Voters:

- what did you like best about the meeting?
- what did you like least about the meeting?

This forces participants to think and choose. Aggregating the responses will tell a great deal about various parts of the meeting.

Structured questionnaires may be short and simple—or they may be more complicated and lengthy. Here is one sample.*

*Adapted from Paul Bergevin and Dwight Morris, *A Manual for Group Discussion Participants*, New York, 1965, p. 56.

1. How did you like today's meeting? It was

6	5	4	3	2	1	0
excellent	fine	good	fair	not so good	poor	very poor

2. How did you like the written background information given to you? It was

6	5	4	3	2	1	0
excellent	fine	good	fair	not so good	poor	very poor

3. Were you interested in the meeting topic and discussion questions?

6	5	4	3	2	0
very much		quite a bit		not so much	not at all

4. How many new things did you learn from the discussion?

6	5	4	3	2	1	0
many	several	quite a few	some	not many	few	none

5. Did the discussion help clarify any problems? It was

6	5	4	3	2	1	0
very helpful		of some help		not too helpful		useless

6. How well do you think that you and the other participants worked together?

6	5	4	3	2	1	0
very well		fairly well		average		poorly

7. How would you rate your discussion moderator?

6	5	4	3	2	1	0
excellent		good	fair		poor	very poor

8. How would you rate the meeting facilities?

6	5	4	3	2	1	0
excellent		good	fair		poor	very poor

9. What suggestions do you have for future meeting topics?

10. If you have any other suggestions, write them here.

Staff Evaluation

Whether or not the participants evaluate the public meeting, the meeting organizers and leaders (including discussion moderators and recorders) should conduct their own evaluation.

Oral Discussion

Following the meeting, have them focus on such questions as:

- Did we get what we wanted? If not, why not?
- Were the participants prepared?
- What information did they appear to have difficulty with?
- Was there sufficient time to deal with the questions?
- Was there any group hostility? Where did it come from?
- Did the format help or hinder discussion?
- What changes should we make?

Analyzing Citizen Comments

If participants also evaluate the meeting, either orally or in writing, analyze the results to identify meeting strengths and weaknesses, and recommend changes in future meetings.

Third-Party Evaluation

Occasionally, an independent evaluation of meeting effectiveness is appropriate. If meetings have been ineffective, a third party (a professional in group process) can add a new dimension. Let the independent evaluator establish his own criteria and techniques after you brief him on the meeting purposes.

Evaluating Formal Public Meetings

Because of the number of people, participant evaluation is rarely feasible. The staff must evaluate the formal meeting—by talking about it.

Evaluation Criteria

Numbers

First, did the number of people expected actually show up? If not, what are the reasons? — date conflict, poor location, poor time, topic of insufficient interest, indifference, inadequate publicity?

Attentiveness

Second, did the people appear restless? Was there a great deal of commotion? Did people come and go? If any of these problems existed, what were the reasons?

Citizen Comments

Third, were the citizen comments relevant to the topic? If not, what were the reasons? Were there any surprises? At e

late stage public meeting or hearing, there should be no surprises, the planners should have heard and addressed all the comments before.

Stimulation

Fourth, meeting organizers can wait to complete their evaluation of a formal public meeting until other meetings have been held. For example, did attendance at subsequent meetings increase after the formal meeting? If not, was that formal meeting really needed? (The answer may help you decide whether to hold another.)

If the formal meeting was held for educational purposes only, in subsequent meetings did the participants seem better informed about the subjects presented? If not, was the earlier meeting needed? Or, can you improve subsequent information meetings by changing the format?

7 PUBLIC MEETING BUDGETING

The design, preparation for, and conduct of public meetings costs money. You must budget for them to determine the costs, whether there is sufficient money, and what might be changed or cut to reduce costs. Budgeting for public meetings also permits rudimentary cost-effectiveness analysis—i.e., comparing the cost of a public meeting with alternative citizen participation processes in terms of purpose and results.

Budget Items

The best budget guidance is to begin with average "price tags" for different types of public meetings. Unfortunately, there are too many variables to make even an educated guess. Costs will vary depending on the geography (e.g., "New York City costs more"), cost of goods and services in the area, advertising rates, what can be rented or donated, etc. Thus, this guidance identifies probable budget items and, for each, suggests a formula for calculating the costs. These budget items are presented as direct and indirect expenses. Direct expenses are those which you must pay when incurred. Indirect expenses are normally incurred as part of the general agency budget (i.e., not normally allocated to public meetings or other citizen participation efforts). They are identified here to enable you to develop total, comprehensive meeting costs to compare with other citizen participation efforts.

Direct Expenses

1. Printing
   a. publicity for meeting: No. of brochures/ leaflets/ news releases? etc. x unit cost
   b. background information for meeting: No. of pages x No. of copies x unit cost
   c. reports to the public: No. of pages x No. of copies x unit cost
2. Postage
   a. publicity for meeting: weight of each pkg leads to unit rate; rate x No. of pkgs
   b. background information for meeting: weight of each pkg leads to unit rate: rate x No. of pkgs
   c. reports to the public: weight of each pkg leads to unit rate: rate x No. of pkgs
3. Graphic Design and Production
   a. film: daily rental rate x No. of days
   b. slides: *design*—contract or piece rate for No. of slides
      production—No. of transparencies x No. of copies x unit rate
   c. charts: *design*—contract or piece rate for No. of charts
      production—No. of charts x No. of copies x unit rate
4. Supplies
   a. envelopes: (see item 2 above) number of mailing x unit cost per envelope
   b. for participants: (pencils, paper) number of participants x unit costs
   c. for moderators: (chalk, felt tip pens) number of moderators x unit costs
5. Facility Rental: agreed-upon rate
6. Equipment Rental
   a. blackboards, easels: No. of stations x rental rate
   b. tape recorders: No. of stations x rental rate
   c. projectors: (film, slide, overhead) No. desired x rental rate
7. Advertising
   a. newspaper advertising: for each paper, rate x No. of times
   b. radio and TV spots: for each station, unit rate x No. of times
8. Travel
   a. for agency staff: No. of miles x No. of people x mileage rate
   b. for meeting speakers/leaders: No. of miles x No. of people x mileage rate
9. Third-Party Payments
   a. Independent meeting evaluator: contract rate
   b. Meeting stenographer: contract rate
   c. Meeting note takers: No. x No. of hours x hourly rate
   d. Projectionist: hourly rate x No. of hours
   e. Meeting set-up: No. of people x No. of hours x hourly rate
   f. Meeting clean-up: No. of people x No of hours x hourly rate

TOTAL, DIRECT EXPENSES

Indirect Expenses

1. Agency Personnel
   a. meeting design: for each person, No. of hours x hourly rate
   b. meeting preparation: for each person, No. of hours x hourly rate
   c. meeting conduct: for each person, No. of hours x hourly rate
   d. information feedback: for each person, No. of hours x hourly rate
   e. meeting evaluation: for each person, No. of hours x hourly rate
2. In-house reproduction: No of pages x unit cost
3. Agency overhead to above: % of all other unallocated costs necessary to support item 1 above

TOTAL, INDIRECT EXPENSES

APPENDIX A: Public Meeting Checklist

The seven chapters of this guide suggest many alternatives in designing, preparing for, and conducting public meetings. While the material is generally presented in sequence, it is too lengthy for use as a practical step-by-step, "quick-reference" guide to setting up public meetings. For this reason, a CHECKLIST was developed of step-by-step procedures in public meeting development. You can reproduce the CHECKLIST in sufficient quantity to use in designing and preparing for each public meeting.

Each step is referenced to the appropriate pages in the manual's seven chapters.

- If the text material deals only with informal public meetings, the page reference is prefaced by IM (i.e., IM 40-41).
- If the text material deals only with formal public meetings, the page reference is prefaced by FM (i.e., FM 62-62).
- If the text material deals with both types of public meetings, there is no preface symbol (i.e., 73-75).

IM—Informal Meeting
FM—Formal Meeting

PUBLIC MEETING CHECKLIST

	Page Reference
1. Meeting Purpose: _____	3, IM4 FM4
2. Meeting Type: ☐ Formal ☐ Informal	4
3. Meeting Format: _____	IM6-7 FM13-14
4. Meeting Budget: ☐ Prepared ☐ Approved	36-37
5. Advisory Committee Approval? ☐	4
6. Identifying Potential Participants	IM8,FM15
Interests identified and categorized? ☐	IM8
Organizations and individuals identified? ☐	FM15
7. Meeting Time: _____ Date _____ Hours _____	IM9,FM16
8. Meeting Place(s): _____	IM9,FM16
Central location? ☐	
Public transportation access? ☐	
Suitable parking? ☐	
Safe area? ☐	
Adequate facilities? ☐	
Rental fee? ☐ no ☐ yes $_____	
Does the rental fee include	
Lecterns? ☐	
Speaker sound system? ☐	
Blackboards or easels? ☐	
Projectors? ☐	
Tape recorders? ☐	
Chairs? ☐	
Tables? ☐	
Meeting room set-up? ☐	
Meeting room clean-up? ☐	

Page Reference	PUBLIC MEETING CHECKLIST
IM9, FM16 26-28 26	9. Meeting Space Total number of people expected: _____ General session Seating arrangement type: _____ Adequate space? ☐
	Discussion session
IM 26-28	Number of small groups: _____ Seating arrangement type: _____ Number of people in each group: _____ Adequate space? _____
IM8, FM15	10. Meeting Sponsorship Agency? ☐ Other Organization? ☐ Who? _____ Accepted? ☐
IM9, FM15	11. Leader Selection Who? _____ Accepted? ☐
IM9-FM15-16	12. Speaker Selection Identified? ☐ Speakers invited? ☐ Speakers have accepted? ☐
IM9	13. Moderator Selection How many needed? _____ Identified? ☐ Moderators invited? ☐ Moderators have accepted? ☐
IM10, FM 16	14. Agenda Development Questions developed? ☐ Schedule developed? ☐
IM10, FM16	15. Background Information Development Information to be provided: _____
19-23	Graphics identified? ☐ Graphics ordered? ☐ Graphics received? ☐ Written information completed? ☐ Distribution Methods: _____ Number of copies: _____ Copies reproduced? ☐ Copies distributed? ☐

Page Reference	PUBLIC MEETING CHECKLIST
19-23	Graphics to be used in oral presentations? ☐ yes ☐ no Graphics identified? ☐ Graphics ordered? ☐ Display equipment ordered? ☐ Graphics received? ☐
19-23	Graphics to be used in discussion groups? ☐ yes ☐ no Graphics identified? ☐ How many copies? _____ Graphics ordered? ☐ Graphics received? ☐
IM11,FM16	16. Publicity Methods selected: _____ Preparation ordered? ☐ Material prepared? ☐ Number of copies needed: _____ Material placed and/or distributed? ☐ Personal follow-up completed? ☐
IM11,FM16	17. Meeting Arrangements For the general session Lecterns, chairs, tables obtained? ☐ Speaker system obtained? ☐ Projectors/screens obtained? ☐ Space for wall displays? ☐ Registration table/space? ☐ Personnel for registration? ☐ Refreshments (and personnel)? ☐ Name tags obtained? ☐
IM11,FM17	Room arrangements made? ☐ Audio/visual equipment set up? ☐ Audio/visual equipment tested? ☐ Ventilation/heating adequate? ☐ For discussion sessions Number of easels/blackboards: _____ Easels/blackboards obtained? ☐ Easels/blackboards delivered? ☐ Newsprint for easels obtained? ☐ Supplies (pencils/paper/chalk/erasers/felt tip pens/masking tape/thumb tacks) obtained? ☐ Room arrangements made? ☐ Ventilation/heating adequate? ☐ Luncheon arrangements for conference? ☐ yes ☐ no Meeting Clean-up Facilities restored & cleaned? ☐ Equipment returned? ☐

PUBLIC MEETING CHECKLIST

IM11-12
FM16

18. Recording the Proceedings
Methods to be used: _____
_____
Personnel/equipment obtained? ☐

IM12

19. Orienting Discussion Moderators
Orientation meeting scheduled? ☐
Orientation meeting held? ☐
Moderators have prepared materials? ☐
Final moderator meeting? ☐

31

20. Reporting to the Decisionmaking Body
The body(s): _____
_____
Reporting format: _____
Report made? ☐

33

21. Reporting to the Public
Formats used: _____
_____
_____
Report prepared? ☐
Number of copies required: _____
Copies reproduced? ☐
Reporting completed? ☐

34, IM34
35, FM35-
36

22. Meeting Evaluation
Methods chosen: _____
_____
_____
Evaluation completed? ☐
Recommendations made? ☐
Recommendations accepted? ☐

APPENDIX B: For Further Reading: An Annotated Bibliography

Communication

Albert J. Beveridge, *The Art of Public Speaking*. Los Angeles: 1974. 68 pgs.

Probably the classic book in public speaking, written in 1924 by a former U.S. Senator and Pulitzer Prize-winning biographer. Views public speaking as an art—like music, painting, sculpture. Still, an art is a craft, and Beveridge writes briefly and eloquently on how to employ the elements of the craft: faith (in your subject) knowledge, clarity, humor, fairness, composure, enunciation, mastery, appearance, applause, and brevity. Can be read quickly—and you will refer to it again.

Available in paperback, Nash Quality Paperback 280785 $1.95

Robert S. Casey, *Oral Communication of Technical Information*, New York, 1958. 199 pgs.

Useful to professionals uneasy about speaking to or talking with people who do not have the speaker's technical background. Five chapters particularly useful. Composition for Oral Delivery: Personal Techniques—Formally Prepared Talks; Delivery: Personal Techniques—Informal and Impromptu Speaking; Delivery: Mechanical Techniques—Audio and Visual Aids; Talking Science to Laymen.

Available at University Libraries

Maurice Forley, *A Practical Guide to Public Speaking*, North Hollywood, California, 1970 edition. 175 pgs.

More systematic than Bevendge. Author—Executive Director of Toastmasters International. Fourteen chapters, all in "How to" style. Keys—developing subject, methods of delivery, speech organization, using your voice, handling questions.

Available in paperback, Wilshire Book Company $2.00

Carl Goeller, *Writing to Communicate*. New York, 1974. 142 pgs.

Practical guide to dealing with problems in communication and how better writing can resolve them. Primarily for people in the business world. Deals with writing reports, letters. Of particular interest here are chapters on writing for publication (i.e., the public) and writing speeches.

Available in paperback,
Mentor Executive Library
451-MW1416, $1.50

Edwin Newman, *Strictly Speaking, Will America be the Death of English?* New York, 1975. 239 pgs.

Best seller by news commentator decrying the misuse of the English language. Immensely readable and hilarious. Not prescriptive, but perhaps a good reminder to take care with the English language if we want to be understood.

Available in paperback,
Warner Books 79-898, $1.95

Mario Pei, *Double-Speak in America*, New York, 1973. 216 pgs.

A second book by the author on "weasel words," a phrase coined to describe words "... used and misused not through habit, inadvertence, or accident, but coined or distorted, and then put into circulation by deliberate design, for purposes of deception." (The first book—*Words in Sheep's Clothing*). Offers call them "buzz" words. Identifies and ridicules the use of such words in all phases of American life, including government and science. Highly readable, and while offering no solutions, similar to Newman's book in making us more careful if we want to be understood.

Available in paperback,
Hawthorne Books 0-8015-2184-X
$3.95

William Strunk, Jr., and E. B. White, *The Elements of Style*, Second Edition, New York, 1972. 78 pgs.

The classic guide to writing, dealing with word and grammatical usage, principles of composition, and style itself—what is distinguished and distinguishing. Good chapter on frequently misused words.

Available in paperback,
Macmillan 41826, $1.65

U.S. Army Institute for Water Resources, *Public Participation in Water Resources Planning: A Multi-Media Course*, Principal Author: Charles W. Dahlgren, Professional Development Paper 72-1, April 1972.

Guide, to be accompanied by audio tape, consisting of a 10-hour reading-listening course for Corps of Engineers planners. Two parts of the guide useful:
1. A sample of the "Seattle Brochure"
2. Suggested Guidelines for Informing the Public (excerpted from Terry Schlaht's *Public Relations in Water Resources Planning*)

Current availability unknown.
Write Institute for Water Resources,
Fort Belvoir, Virginia 22060

U.S. Bureau of Land Management, *Gobbledygook Has Got to Go*, by John O'Hayre, Washington, D.C., 1975. 112 pgs.

Directed to the government employee, this book offers suggestions (with examples) for improving written communication. While primarily directed to in-house communication, the concluding two chapters deal with press releases and news release writing.

Available from the U.S. Government Printing Office
Catalog No. I53.2:G53, $1.20

Group Discussion

Paul Bergevin and Dwight Morris, *A Manual for Group Discussion Participants*, New York, 1965. 63 pgs.

Brief, outline-type guide to conducting and participating in discussions. Subjects include leader qualities and duties, participant responsibilities and expectations, physical arrangements, problem participants, topic selection and use, audio-visual material use, sample agenda, evaluation formats.

Available at University Libraries

"Description of the 'Samoan Circle' Group Discussion Process," 4 pages, mimeographed.

Summary of the Samoan Circle described on page 20 of the manual.

Inquire of Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission,
10 South Riverside Plaza, Chicago, Illinois 60606

Russell H. Wagner and Carroll C. Arnold, *Handbook of Group Discussion*, Boston, 1950. 322 pgs.

Textbook, with exercises at the end of chapters. Presents principles for good discussion. Also presents various discussion formats and presents illustrative discussion dialogues for a case conference, committee hearing, panel discussion, symposium, and forum lecture. Cases may seem too far afield.

Available at University Libraries

Identification of Publics

Gene E. Willeke, "*Identification of Publics in Water Resources Planning*," Department of City Planning in cooperation with Environmental Resources Center, Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, Georgia, September 1974. 30 pgs.

Help in different ways to identify publics for participation. Some theory, but concentration on the practice.

Available from National Technical Information Service

Public Meetings

"*A Description of a Public Participation Program Regarding the Facility Plan for the Joint Outfall System*," County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County, John D. Parkhurst, Chief Engineer and General Manager, Whittier, California, August 1975.

Description of a public participation program encompassing seven "Clean Water Workshops" on planning alternatives for the county's sewerage system. 200 people attended. Describes and evaluates program. Of most interest: detailed exhibits included: e.g., Opening workshop presentation, sample of visual aids (cartoon), discussion leader outline, program brochure, sample information packets, location (for meeting) maps, advertising schedule, sample ads, spot announcements, news releases, discussion leader report forms, opinion sheets.

Inquire of Sanitation District
1955 Workman Mill Road
Whittier, California 90601

Donald and Alice Stone, "The Administration of Chairs," *Public Administration Review*, January/February 1974. pgs. 71-77.

Essay on the importance of chair arrangements in facilitating group discussion. Illustrations provided.

Available at University Libraries

Thomas Fansler, *Creative Power Through Discussion*, New York, 1950. 211 pgs.

Practical, easy to read book directed principally to discussion participants about how they can be more effective and get something out of the discussion.

Available at University Libraries

Elizabeth W. Flynn and John F. LaFaso, *Group Discussion As Learning Process: A Sourcebook*, New York, 1972. 252 pgs.

Intended for group leaders and participants; half to theory, half to practice. Latter portion helpful as an overview and to provide suggestions for more effective group discussion. Particularly valuable for leaders. Has annotated biblingraphy for more reading—including the behavioral sciences, communications, the small group and group dynamics, intergroup relations, discussion education. Contains examples, but not related to planning.

Available at University Libraries

Alvin A. Goldberg and Carl E. Larson, *Group Communication, Discussion Processes and Applications*. Englewood Cliffs 1975 184 pgs

Unlike other texts, focuses on observation and description of group communication processes rather than suggesting ways to lead or participate Primarily for the student, the researcher, the teacher

Available at University Libraries

Halbert E. Gulley, *Discussion, Conference, and Group Process*. Second Edition. New York 1968. 374 pgs.

Textbook, with questions and exercises at the end of each chapter. Appendix presents illustrative cases (i e , situation setting) for discussion practice Intersperses theory with suggestions in presenting all elements of the discussion process One chapter addresses discussion in large groups.

Available at University Libraries

John S. Morgan, *Practical Guide to Conference Leadership* New York 1966 291 pgs

While oriented to conferences *within* organizations (primarily business), author writes easily and informatively about leader preparation for, conduct of and getting results out of conferences Four chapters address dealing with "problem" people, although some suggestions not applicable because writer assumes that leader knows personality or professional [illegible] participants Chapters on leading different purpose conferences problem-solving informational planning training

Useful despite its organization and business focus

Available at University Libraries

David Potter and Martin P. Andersen, *Discussion: A [illegible] Effective Practice* Second Edition Belmont California 1970 364 pgs

Primarily a guide for group process students to practice effective techniques, but also good for meeting planners Good chapters offering practical advice on [illegible] participation leadership and problem solving Presents several different discussion formats [illegible] methods/forms

Available at [illegible]

William M. Sattler and N. Edd Miller, *Discussion and Conference* Second Edition Englewood Cliffs 1968 514 pgs

Textbook with [illegible] exercises at the end of each chapter, describing how people react in groups and how to make them more effective Particularly useful chapters on leadership functions, methods of individual participation and large group meetings Discusses options and reasons for meeting evaluation Includes rating forms

Available at University Libraries

William S. Smith, *Group Problem-Solving Through Discussion, A Process Essential to Democracy*. Indianapolis 1965 (revised). 205 pgs.

Concentrates only on problem-solving discussion Premise that problem-solving discussion has its foundation in democracy and that participants are thereby learning democratic process fundamentals. Book is largely philosophical and theoretical, but has one useful chapter on evaluating discussion, including rating forms.

Available at University Libraries

Guide to Successful Meetings, The United States Jaycees.

Pamphlet of instructions to Jaycee members in organizing and conducting meetings. Sample agendas for board meeting, program meeting, banquet While oriented to Jaycee purposes, the pamphlet gives specific direction and includes a detailed checklist for setting up the meeting. Can be easily adapted to water quality planning public meetings

Available for purchase from The United States Jaycees, Post Office Box 7, Tulsa, Oklahoma 74102. No RSVP 5023-0. $0 75

Antony Jay, *How to Run a Meeting*. Harvard Business Review, March-April 1976. pgs 43-57

From the introduction. " guidelines on how to right things that go wrong in meetings The discussion covers the functions of a meeting, ways to define the objectives, making preparations, the chairman's role, and ways to conduct a meeting that will achieve its objectives "

Author of *Management and Machiavelli*

Available at University Libraries

Public Meetings on the National RD&D Plan. Delegations Responsibilities and Detailed Guidelines Regarding Planning and Conducting the Public Meeting Series Office of Public Affairs, Energy Research and Development Administration, June 1976

Instructions to ERDA personnel in conducting public meetings across the country Assigns organizational responsibilities, provides model public meeting budget, indicates facility and equipment requirements, manpower requirements, outlines registration and meeting requirements/information needs. Provides step by step requirements according to dates relative to meetings

Requirements may be overly ambitious and unnecessary for water quality planning agency, but indicative of what is required for effective meeting development

Available from ERDA

Ann Widditsch, *Public Workshops on the Puget Sound and Adjacent Waters Study: An Evaluation*. A Report Submitted to the U S Army Engineer Institute for Water Resources IWR Report 72-2. June 1972

Case study of an early local public participation approach in water resources Describes events leading to workshop development, a description of their organization and functioning, and an evaluation (with recommendations)

Useful in suggesting an approach, identifying problems

Available from the National Technical Information Service

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