

# **MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FIVE**

## **INTERNAL OPERATION OF THE COMMUNITY BOARD** **ADDENDUM TO BYLAWS**

### **CONDUCT OF BUSINESS/EXPECTATIONS/RESPONSIBILITIES**

In recognition that Community Board Five can best conduct its business in a fair and orderly manner only if certain guidelines for conduct are explicit, the board herein adopts such rules to insure that members and the public will know the process for the conduct of business. Nothing in these rules is intended or should be seen as a means of unduly limiting debate or suppressing dissent from any quarter. Members have considerable opportunities to express their views at every level of the process; many of these opportunities are described in these rules. It is understood that the ultimate responsibility for maintaining an orderly climate for debate and the conduct of business depends on the prudence and restraint of individual members and we hope that such restraint, aided by the following rules, will yield meetings that proceed expeditiously but fairly.

#### **A. PUBLIC SESSION**

As provided for in the City Charter, the board shall set aside time to hear from the public (Public Session). The Public Session, of at least one-half hour, shall be at the start of each board meeting and at the discretion of the board chair, may be extended to accommodate an unusually large number of people desiring to speak. Since the Business Session of the board will limit the floor to only board members, members of the public who wish to speak should do so in the public session. Non-board members may speak during the Business Session only with the permission of the board chair~~man~~.

#### **B. COMMITTEE REPORTS (RESOLUTIONS)**

The chair~~man~~ of each committee shall present or introduce the committee member who will present a report/resolution to the full board. Committee members are expected to offer a description of the committee discussion, including in controversial cases, at least a summary of arguments both in support of and opposed to the committee's resolution.

### **C. DEBATE AND VOTING**

Following such presentations, board members will be entitled to a question and comment period. **Board members wishing more extensive presentations/questions/comment periods are encouraged to attend relevant committee meetings.**

Such discussion shall adhere to principles of order described in Roberts' Rules of Order.

Members wishing to amend motions extensively or offer complex substitutions are encouraged to address these issues at committee meetings. If, in exceptional circumstances, a member is unable to bring such matters before the appropriate committee, amendments should be prepared in writing in advance to permit informed discussion and voting at the full board. It is to be understood that these rules are not to prevent in any way full discussion of any matter, but rather to guarantee members the opportunity for meaningful deliberation.

### **D. TONE OF DISCUSSION**

Members are expected to discuss issues in a manner respectful of other members. It is inappropriate for members to speak against other members individually or against the board as a body. Comments should be addressed only to the substantive issue under consideration and in a tone compatible with reasonable discourse. It is unacceptable for one member to question another's motives or interests. As provided for in Parliamentary Procedure, **all remarks are to be addressed to the presiding officer and never directly to another member.**

### **E. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

A member shall be considered "Present but Not Entitled to Vote" on the grounds of conflict of interest and shall not be considered in determining the number of votes required for a majority. Each member shall be his/her own judge as to whether any conflict encountered is sufficient to warrant such action. It is out of order for one member to accuse another of a conflict of interest. (See further in G. 2 re taking part in discussion.)

Members serve on the board in their individual capacity only. Their actions shall not be instructed by, or responsible to, any other organization with which they may be affiliated.

## **F. EXPECTATIONS**

Members are expected to attend all board meetings as well as assigned committee meetings, unless prevented by an excused absence as defined in CB5's Bylaws: V.D.1,2. However, public members of committees are not required to attend full board meetings.

Members are expected to devote their best efforts toward understanding issues that come before the board or committees of the board, including issues raised at public session, in order to contribute to discussion and vote in an informed manner.

Members are expected to vote on issues in accordance with their best understanding and beliefs of what is in the community's best interest.

Members are expected to treat other board or committee members, members of the community, representatives of city/state/federal agencies and elected officials and all others with respect and courtesy while acting in their capacities as board members.

Members are expected to conduct all board affairs with fairness and decorum.

## **G. RESPONSIBILITIES**

The following responsibilities apply to board members, as well as public members of committees insofar as is applicable:

### **1. Abide By These Bylaws and City/State Laws**

Members are required to abide by these Bylaws as well as other applicable city or state laws relating to the conduct of community boards.

### **2. Conflicts of Interest**

Any member participating in the Board's consideration of a matter, including at committee meetings, involving a direct financial interest to the member or to an organization or institution, whether for-profit or not-for-profit, with which the member is involved, (that is, a "conflict of interest" as defined by Chapter 68 of the New York City Charter), shall state the nature of the conflict in speaking to the issue, shall not chair any discussion on the issue, and shall refrain from voting on the issue by declaring "present but not eligible to vote" when the issue is called to a vote.

### **3. Statements to Another Body or the Press**

Any member appearing before a governmental body, or who is being interviewed by the press, or is otherwise making a public statement, which conflicts in any respect with positions adopted by the board shall not identify himself/herself as a member of the board when making such statement, or, if there is risk of confusion, shall explicitly state that he or she is speaking personally or on behalf of another organization and not as a board member. No member shall represent the board to the press or before any City or other governmental agency or authority unless authorized to do so by the board chairperson.

### **4. Behavior on Other Deliberative Bodies**

A member representing the board on a deliberative body may ordinarily use discretion in discussion and voting, so long as consistency is maintained with general board policy. In cases, however, where an explicit board policy has been adopted on an issue, the board member must distinguish board policy from a personal position in case the member wishes to express such a position. In such cases the member must ensure that the board policy on the issue is clear, and on any vote the member must vote according to the board policy.

### **5. Identification**

With the exception of the chairperson and board members specifically authorized to represent the board by the chairperson, board or committee members are not authorized to carry business cards or use stationery or electronic signatures that identify them as Community Board Five members.

### **6. Special Privileges Prohibited**

All board members and public members of committees are prohibited from accepting any favors of more than token value from other parties or businesses or not-for-profit organizations who have, or may have, business or dealings that are likely to come before the board, or that may have the appearance of influencing a board member's position.

