

Special Events Task Force

Task Force Overview and Robert's Rules Training

October 20, 2021

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AUSTIN CENTER
FOR EVENTS

SETF Purpose

“The City Council creates a task force to assess the efficacy of this ordinance, the associated rules, and ACE processes.”

-Special Events Ordinance, Part 10

“The City Council reauthorizes the Special Events Task Force”

-September 2, 2021

- Interim report due no later than December 31, 2021
- Final Report and recommended changes no later than October 31, 2022
- SETF expires on November 1, 2022



SETF Composition

- 11 members appointed by Mayor and Council
 - City staff serve as non-voting, ex-officio members
 - 6 members are needed to be physically present to provide a quorum
 - The Task Force shall comply with Texas Government Code 551 (Open Meetings Act)
 - “A board member automatically vacates the member’s position if the member is absent for three consecutive regular meetings or one-third of all regular meetings in a rolling 12-month timeframe.”
- Code of Ordinances, Section 2-1-26



Open Meetings Act Requirements

- Agenda must be posted 72 hours in advance of the meeting
- Discussion should be limited to only items on the agenda
- The meeting minutes will be recorded by City staff
- Task Force members will approve the previous meeting's minutes by a vote
- All meeting documents and vote totals will be made public



What is Robert's Rules?



- A tool for representative bodies
- Promotes efficient and predictable meetings
- Provides a procedure for taking up one item at a time
- Ensures rule of the majority while protecting rights of the minority

The City of Austin recognizes Robert's Rules as the adopted method of parliamentary procedure for Boards and Commissions.

Decorum



The objective of members is to conduct the City's business

- In our case, to improve the Special Events Ordinance

Member Expectations

- Seek recognition from the chair to speak or make motions
- Keep discussion germane to agenda items within the set timeframe
- Silence is consent – Share your thoughts and seek clarification

Co-Chair Expectations

- Recognize members, in order, to speak
- Facilitate fair debate
- Call for votes

Ex Officio Member Expectations

- Do not have voting rights
- Serve as subject matter experts

Main Motions

A motion is a proposal on which membership can take an action or stance on an issue.

Members can:

- State Motions
- Debate Motions
- Amend Motions
- Vote on Motions

Six Steps to Handle a Motion

- State the Motion
- Second the Motion
- Chair Recognizes the Motion and Second
- Discussion on the Motion
- Chair calls for a vote (Calls the Question)
- Chair states the result of the vote

Subsidiary Motions



Motions that change or affect how a main motion is handled

- Move to postpone
 - Indefinitely or to a specific date
- Amend a motion
- Limit Debate
- Call for the question
- Lay on the table

Amendments

Must specify exactly what the amendment is

- Cannot change the entire meaning of the motion

The chair will call for a vote on the amendment

- Original motion is re-stated and voted on as amended

A substitute motion can be made to change the meaning of a motion

- The chair will ask for a vote on the substitute motion
- If the motion fails, we go back to the main motion
- If it passes, no vote is taken on the main motion



Voting

The Chair will ask:

- Those in favor say “aye”
- Those opposed say “nay”

The chair will state the vote total and outcome

Order or Precedence

- Main motions must be disposed before moving on
- Subsidiary motions must be resolved before returning to main motions



Tips

- Privileged motions – Urgent or special matters not about business
 - Motion to recess
 - “Raise a question of privilege” – “Please speak up”
- Votes are not necessary if there are no objections
 - Can be useful for moving through uncontroversial items
- Members are generally limited to speaking twice on the same motion



Let's Practice

Can we get a motion to end this training?