



Tomorrow's Neighborhoods Today
Facilitator Handbook
A Guide on Managing
TNT Meetings

- 1) Purpose of TNT Facilitator**
- 2) Role of Facilitator**
- 3) Facilitator Job Description**
- 4) Improving Facilitation Skills**
- 5) Process for Appointing and Removing Facilitators**
- 6) Sample Ground Rules**
- 7) Sample Responses to Challenging Situation**
- 8) Robert's Rules of Order: TNT Meeting Protocols**
- 9) Motion Summary Chart**

Purpose

TNT Facilitators are elected volunteers who care about the life, health, and sustainability of their neighborhoods and the city as a whole. Facilitators work in a team of 2 to 7 people who provide the leadership for their TNT Neighborhood Area. Facilitators are unbiased leaders who will promote the collective interest of the TNT Neighborhood Area. Facilitators will be supported by the TNT Operations Manager, who attends all TNT Sector meetings.

Facilitator Candidates Should:

- 1) Have demonstrated a commitment to TNT by attending 1/3 of prior sector meetings within the past year.
- 2) Participated in TNT events
- 3) Make a statement of interest in becoming a facilitator at the TNT sector meeting.

Role

A facilitator is someone who uses knowledge of group process to provide structure for a meeting to be effective. Groups are not always cohesive and learning to work together is neither easy nor comes naturally. A facilitator's role is to help the participants participate in the meeting.

A facilitator must constantly balance process with content. Processes focus on how decisions are made and make sure that everyone has an equal voice. Content includes topics or subjects under discussion at any meeting.

In the event a facilitator or community member has an issue or concern with TNT policy or procedures, they should discuss it with the facilitator team, communicate the concern in writing to their sector board representatives or the citywide board of directors for discussion and review.

Facilitator Agreement

TNT Facilitator Job Description

Collaborate

The Facilitator collaborates with the other Facilitators on the team and with the TNT Operations Manager to identify the key issues and discussion points, and create meeting agendas.

Attend Facilitator Meetings to Plan

Each Facilitation Team should determine how often to hold Facilitator meetings (monthly/ bi-monthly/quarterly) to discuss the Agenda structure, presenter schedule as well as any Committee/ Task Force updates and the allotted time for each.

Know the Agenda

Facilitators should read through the agenda prior to the meeting and discuss any last minute additions with the TNT Operations Manager. In the event that a major issue pertaining to a particular sector is brought to the TNT Board or TNT Operations Manager last minute, it may be added to the agenda for the TNT sector to discuss. In larger Facilitator groups, the facilitator team *should* select a Lead Facilitator to communicate with the Operations Manager.

Attend & Run Monthly TNT Meetings

Facilitators are expected to attend all TNT meetings and run the monthly public TNT meetings. The Facilitator should ensure a full and fair participation of all members to stimulate constructive interchange of ideas and opinions, and to develop long-range plans as well as short-term action plans.

Attend City-wide Facilitator Meetings

Every quarter, or more often as needed, TNT Facilitators City-wide will gather together to discuss issues that are relevant to city life and that affect the whole city, as well be informed as to the TNT City-wide Board Policies and Procedures. Facilitators are encouraged and expected to be at these meetings.

Represent the Views and Plans of the Area

Facilitators should constantly gather input from citizens, and represent the citizens' interests and plans at city-wide TNT meetings, through discussions with Common Councilors, City Officials, and to Neighborhood groups.

Identify Neighborhood Projects and Oversee Work

Facilitators identify projects and give input into the City's annual and capital budget requests, in consultation with the TNT members. Furthermore, TNT facilitators stay in touch with community organizations, associations, businesses & individuals who are working on behalf of TNT's plans, to make sure work gets accomplished & that projects are moving forward.

Recruit and Promote Participation in TNT

Facilitators should use every opportunity, through their business, community, and social contacts, to promote TNT and encourage residents, agencies, associations, and business stakeholders to participate in TNT.

1. Active Listening and Observing

A good facilitator is able to distinguish the main theme from a clutter of details. When a theme is not clear, the facilitator recognizes that and ask appropriate questions to clarify issue without imposing own beliefs and interests.

2. Maintain Focus

Facilitators keep track of many things simultaneously. For instance, a facilitator keeps track of the current question being debated, order of speakers, next item in a meeting, as well as the group's emotional level. No matter how complex and emotionally charged a discussion might be, it is the facilitator's job to be able to say where the group is in the discussion and the next item on agenda.

3. Trust and Fairness

A good facilitator puts people at ease and conveys warmth and friendliness to everyone in the group without being judgmental. Good facilitators make everyone feel comfortable and valued. Facilitators project self-confidence, display professional integrity, and understand that the group is placing trust in them.

4. Respect all people

Good facilitators believe in the value of collaboration and that everyone has something to contribute. They believe that two heads are better than one and good outcomes can be achieved when more inputs are made.

5. Product oriented

Meetings can lose focus and get sidetracked. Good facilitators never lose sight of the end goal and the purpose of the meeting. They are clear on the goal from the start and constantly work to produce outcome.

6. Maintain a Positive Attitude

A meeting can become very serious and intense. It is important for facilitators not to get fired-up or uptight, and have a sense of humor to maintain a relaxed and productive environment.

7. Knowledge of Robert's Rules of Order

Facilitators should be familiar with and implement Robert's Rules of Order during meetings. Facilitators should also respect the rules and guidelines established by TNT.

By signing this document, you are agreeing to adhere to the expectations set forth by the TNT Board.

Print Name

Sign

Date

Improving Facilitation Skills

Opening the Meeting

Before jumping into the main agenda, facilitators should greet people at each TNT meeting. If everyone feels comfortable and believes that their presence is valued, all will participate. Full participation is vital since each person brings a different perspective that can contribute to the success of any TNT meetings.

Suggested Opening:

- Formally announce the start the meeting.
- Welcome everyone officially and thank them for contributing their time to attend the meeting.
- Introduce yourself as a Facilitator and have other members introduce themselves.
- Establish Core ground rules for the meetings, post them for all to see and reference. This will help a facilitator when conflict arises. Having the rules posted will also let everyone know what is expected of them in each TNT meeting.
- Review the meeting agenda / objectives by either distributing handouts or posting them on a board, so everyone can see them throughout the meeting.
- Ask for suggestions or inputs on the agendas / objectives.
- Review the minutes from previous meeting.

Listening and Observing

- Facilitators must actively listen to all members and observe the group's energy and emotional level, body language, and tone. Let the speaker know that you are listening by making eye contact with them, nodding your head in agreement, seeking clarification if you do not understand, and restating the speaker's comments for clarification.
- Use the microphone
- Use open-ended questions to spark additional ideas from the participants and encourage silent members to speak.
- If the group is losing energy and the ability to concentrate, give them a break to regroup.

Guiding the Group - Facilitators must work toward accomplishing the group's goals and objectives for that meeting. However, issues and questions come up during a meeting that may not be relevant to the content at that particular moment. In order to acknowledge these questions without disrupting the focus of the meeting, write the question down and defer it for future discussion. If you are running out of time, poll the group to determine whether you can extend the meeting or decide which remaining agenda items to address in the time remaining.

Ensuring Quality Decisions

- Before any votes, restate the issue and make sure that everyone understands what the group is deciding on. If there are still countering views, acknowledge them.
- If the decisions are complex or controversial, ask members with special expertise or bring an outside expert to help members make a decision.
- Write down and maintain a detailed record so that members can keep track of what they have decided on.

Dealing with Challenging Situations

Meetings sometimes do not go as planned and unexpected situation can occur to even well-prepared facilitators in each meeting. Facilitators may face challenging situations that hinder the group's progress. Under such circumstances, it is important to address the behavior, not the person. Facilitators may encounter situations where participant(s) dominates conversation, rambles and repeats issues, whispers and holds side conversations, verbally attacks individuals, and refuses to reach consensus. The goal of facilitators is to promote positive behaviors and encourage full participation in the process, and not to escalate the situation. However, it is also important to prioritize the safety of other individuals within the meeting. If the facilitator is having to deal with a complex situation that cannot be re-directed into a positive and logical direction, this concern should be brought first to the other facilitators on the team. In the event that a difficult person is a facilitator, then it should be discussed with the sector's board representatives. If further action is needed, the sector city-wide TNT board representatives should bring the issue to the attention of the city-wide board. It is vital for facilitators to remain calm and maintain a positive attitude.

How to resolve challenging situations if....

1. A participant dominates and continues to interrupt other speakers:

- Establish ground rules on recognizing speakers: Remind the participants of this rule
- Establish ground rules for time limit: Set a reasonable time limit for each person's comments.
- Establish a speaking order: Remind the group that they must wait for his/her turn to speak.
- Invite others to comment: Ask others to make a brief comment/share their opinions.

2. A participant rambles on:

- Thank the speaker: Recognize the speaker and that he/she has contributed to the discussion.
- Demonstrate your understanding: Restate and summarize the speaker's comments to demonstrate your understanding of his/her opinions.
- Suggest the Speaker discuss their perspective one on one after the meeting

3. Participants loudly whisper to each other:

- Establish ground rules to be courteous to speakers: Remind the group to respect each other.
- Bring them into the discussion: Call on the whisperer and ask for his/her opinion.
- Make eye contact with the whisperers: Approach them during the break. ?

4. A participant verbally attacks other member(s):

- Enforce ground rules: Define in your ground rules what constitutes a personal attack and remind the speaker to refrain from such behaviors.

5. A participant refuses to reach consensus:

- Always look for the positive: Direct the energy of a conflict toward a positive result.
- Search for agreement: Draw attention to points that everyone wants to make their community a better place to live and to raise children.

Process for Appointing & Removing Facilitators

Sector Facilitators- Election & Responsibilities:

Each sector can elect, through majority vote of those in attendance, a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 7 sector facilitators. Facilitators shall serve a one-year term and can be nominated and re-elected annually. Voting shall be done through ballot votes for all facilitators. The sector facilitator's role is to plan regular meetings of the sector membership, assist in community engagement activities, and serve as a community leader within their sector; helping to advance the mission and purpose of TNT. The regular duties of the sector facilitator(s) are:

- Schedule Sector Meetings
- Develop Meeting Agendas
- Facilitate Meetings

All who meet the requirements of sector membership are eligible for election to the position of facilitator; however, an individual may only serve as a facilitator in one sector during a term. Elections shall be held during the October meeting of each sector with nominations made one month prior to the elections, at the September meeting, and only by members in attendance. A nomination can come from the floor or, alternatively, one may self-nominate. Candidates must be present to accept their nominations.

Please note **Nominations will not ordinarily be accepted by phone or email. However, if an incumbent facilitator is nominated, clearly fulfills the required criteria for candidacy, and is unable to be present within the meeting to accept his or her floor nomination, the Board may grant approval to accept this nomination at least one week in advance of the monthly meeting in which floor nominations occur.

Sector Facilitator Vacancy: A vacancy occurs when there are fewer than 7 facilitators serving within a sector. In the event of a facilitator vacancy prior to elections in October, the position will be filled for the remainder of the term after a special election is held. A special election will be held and nominations are to be made one month before the vote during a regular sector meeting and in accordance with election and responsibilities guidelines listed above. The candidate must be present at the sector meeting for his or her nomination and be present at the sector meeting for the vote on his or her nomination.

Removal of Sector Facilitator:

Sector facilitators can be removed from office by the members of the TNT sector for which they are serving by a majority vote at a regular TNT sector meeting. The TNT board of directors has the authority to remove, by two-thirds majority vote, any facilitator deemed to be in violation of his or her role and responsibilities as outlined in the Facilitator Handbook.

Causes could be:

1. Actions not benefiting the group;
2. Offensive or Demeaning language;
3. Failure to follow the group's wishes
4. Failure to facilitate while running TNT meetings, blocking agenda, movement.
5. Publicly slandering board members, Elected Officials or employees of TNT

6. Writing antagonistic emails to City Officials

7. Aggressively yelling at other community members or employees of TNT within a sector meeting

Sample Ground Rules

- Listen for understanding
- Appreciate differences
- Maintain confidentiality
- Keep your sense of humor
- Take responsibility for focusing on what you care about.
- It is OK to disagree with another person's ideas, but DO NOT criticize another person
- Don't take more than your fair share of air time
- Don't interrupt
- Turn your cell phone to silence
- Allow for silence between comments

Robert's Rule of Order

What is Robert's Rule of Order? Generally, *Robert's Rules of Order* is a guide for conducting meetings and making decisions as a group. It is a form of rules and procedures modeled after parliamentary procedures.

Parliamentary Procedures and Applicability to TNT Meetings

Facilitating meetings with clear guidelines and protocols is the key to ensure orderly and effective discussion, providing a respectful and harmonious public participation process. Furthermore, parliamentary procedures provides the group with a structured, logical, consistent format under which to make decisions, thus ensuring smooth functioning of business at meetings to achieve goals and objectives through a democratic process.

These rules help facilitators to carry out meetings while allowing everyone to be heard.

Parliamentary procedures are well suited for TNT meetings. TNT meetings seek to bring all stakeholders together to share information, discuss strategies, develop a unified plan, and execute decisions to improve their neighborhoods and the greater Syracuse community.

Role of the Facilitators and Roberts Rule

- Facilitator must remain impartial during debate and must relinquish the role in order to participate in a debate
- Introduce business in proper order according to the agenda
- Recognize speakers
- Determine if a motion is in order
- Keep discussion relevant to the pending motion
- Maintain order
- Put motions to a vote and announce results
- Employ unanimous consent (general consent) when appropriate
- Basic Rules of Parliamentary Procedures
- All members have equal rights, privileges, and obligation
- The majority has the right to decide
- The minority has rights which must be protected
- Full and free discussion of every motion considered is a basic right
- Only one question can be considered at any given time
- Members have the right to know at all times what the immediately pending question is, and to have it restated before a vote is taken
- No member can speak until recognized by the facilitator
- No one can speak a second time on the same question as long as another wants to speak a first time
- The facilitator should be strictly impartial

Four Types of Motions

- 1) **Main Motions:** To introduce items to the membership for their consideration. They cannot be made when any other motion is being debated on the floor, and yield to privileged, subsidiary, and incidental motions.
- 2) **Subsidiary Motions:** To change or affect how a main motion is handled, and is voted on before a main motion.
- 3) **Privileged Motions:** To bring up items that are urgent about special or important matters unrelated to pending business.
- 4) **Incidental Motions:** To provide a means of questioning procedure concerning other motions and must be considered before the other motion.

Making a Motion: Procedures

Three Steps by which a motion is brought before the group

- 1) A member makes a motion
- 2) Another member seconds the motion
- 3) The facilitator recognizes the speaker and states the question on the motion

3 Steps for the consideration of a motion

The facilitator opens the floor for debate on the motion, or may move directly to vote if no member claims the floor for debate.

- 1) The facilitator puts the question to a vote
- 2) The facilitator restates the question
- 3) The facilitator takes the vote

The facilitator announces the result of a vote. The announcement should include:

- 1) Voting Result
- 2) Declaration on whether the motion passed or failed

The facilitator announces the next item of business or next motion for a vote

Interpreting Voting Results

Majority Vote: More than half of the votes cast by those present and voting, excluding blanks and abstentions

Two-Thirds Vote: At least 2/3 of the votes cast by those present and voting, excluding blanks and abstentions

Type of Votes:

- 1) **Voice vote:** The regular method of voting on any question that does not require more than a majority vote for its adoption
- 2) **Rising vote:** Members indicate their vote by standing
- 3) **Show of hands vote:** Members raise their hand to indicate their vote
- 4) **Ballot vote:** Members write their vote and ensure secrecy of the vote
- 5) **Roll call vote:** This method is used when a record of each member's vote is required