

MEMO

To: City of Newport Beach Arts Commission

From: Tim Hetherington, Library Services Director

Date: 5/1/2014

Re: Recap of Dr. Trudy Sopp's "Effective Meetings Training for Boards, Commissions, and Committees".

On Monday, April 28th, in the Friends Room at Central Library, Dr. Trudy Sopp of the Center for Organizational Effectiveness presented "Effective Meetings Training for Boards, Commissions, and Committees". Dr. Sopp's training offered tools and techniques for making Commission meetings more efficient and provided clarity to the Commission in regard to expectations and requirements.

Dr. Sopp reiterated the purpose of the Arts Commission, the role of the Chair and the members, and the role of the Staff.

The Chair directs discussion at meetings, and members of the Commission should look to the chair for opportunities to address issues. Discourse should be respectful, and Commissioners should allow each other to speak without interruption. Commissioners should refrain from sidebar conversations while another Commissioner is speaking.

Dr. Sopp stressed the importance of preparing ahead for Arts Commission meetings, and actively participating in the proceedings. This involves setting enough time aside to thoroughly review and consider the entire agenda packet. Commissioners should understand their authority to recommend a course of action or policy to City Council. Dr. Sopp emphasized the need for the Arts Commission to develop collegial relations amongst members, to regularly attend Arts Commission meetings, to communicate with community members about Arts Commission matters, and to participate in committees and subcommittees.

Dr. Sopp advised the Arts Commission to be aware of conflicts of interest or potential conflicts of interest on agenda items. Commissioners and staff liaisons to the Commission need to be aware of inadvertent violations of the Brown Act and/or Due Process. The Commission was advised not to direct staff, but rather, to work through the Arts Commission Chair who works with the staff liaison. Commissioners were reminded that they cannot speak on behalf the Arts Commission, and communication with the media should go through the Chair.

Dr. Sopp reminded the Commissioners about the importance of effective public engagement, and emphasized that all engagement be fair and consistent. This entails that the rules for public comment be applied equally. Arts Commissioners were instructed to avoid responding to the public except to ask questions for clarification.

Dr. Sopp also delineated the role of Staff in Arts Commission business. Staff support and assistance is provided, but staff members remain responsible to their immediate supervisors and ultimately to the City Manager. Staff support includes preparation of a summary agenda subject to approval by the Chairperson, and preparation of agenda reports providing a brief background of the issue, a list of alternatives, recommendations and appropriate backup material, as necessary. Staff will assist the Commission in the conduct of public meetings and will ensure that the business listed on the agenda is addressed. BCC members should have sufficient information to reach decisions based upon a clear explanation of the issues involved.