

## TOWN OF CARRBORO

### Guidelines for Discussing Issues and Solving Problems

- **Share all relevant information - be open, honest and factual**  
*Share all relevant information (BD-1 and PH-1)*
- **Don't take cheap shots – be respectful of others, avoid the temptation to see disputes as one “side” against the other; respect the ideals of good governance and civil discourse**  
*Don't take cheap shots (BD-4 and PH-6)*  
*Treat other members and their positions with respect (BD-11)*  
*Avoiding binary thinking which define one against “the other side” – limiting open engagement (CD-3)*
- **Actively solicit opinions and engagement – encourage a balanced and inclusive dialogue that incorporates all relevant positions**  
*Ensure a balanced dialogue among all members (BD-6)*  
*Use questions to solicit information, not to cross examine (BD-7)*  
*Avoiding binary thinking which define one against “the other side” – limiting open engagement. (CD-3)*  
*Avoiding fence-building and dismissive words and phrases. Use language that engages and draws the other into discussion (CD-4)*
- **Listen, learn, and respect the opinions and feelings of others; be humble and realize that it's OK for your opinion to change**  
*Treat other members and their positions with respect (BD-11)*  
*Listen attentively and thoughtfully to the perceptions and feelings of others (PH-8)*  
*Humility – reserve the right to change your mind. (CD-1)*  
*Solidarity with our conversational partner through active listening, presuming that one has something to learn. (CD-2)*
- **Discuss disagreements openly – be active, not passive; don't pretend to agree with something if you don't; your ideas matter**  
*Discuss disagreements openly and not act like one agrees if one does not (BD-5)*  
*Discuss disagreements openly, but not disagreeably (PH-7)*
- **Keep focused – avoid tangents, respect the time that others are committing**  
*Keep comments focused on agenda items (BD-3)*

- **Be prepared - be ready for (and open to) questions; be ready to clearly explain the reasons behind statements, actions and concerns**

*Explain reasons behind statements and actions (PH-4)*

- **Try to find common interests, don't get stuck in inflexible positions or personal conflicts**

*Focus on interests, not positions (BD-2)*

*Focus on interests – not positions, problems – not people (PH-5)*

*Leading with what you are for. You may find that you want the same things ultimately – just through different means. (CD-5)*

- **Employ a logical and constructive problem-solving process**

- 1. Use facts and specific examples to clearly identify the issue**

*Identify the issues that need to be resolved (PH-2)*

*Be concrete and factual, using examples and avoiding generalizing (PH-3)*

- 2. Allow assumptions and potential solutions to be openly tested and respectfully questioned, solicit input and ask relevant questions**

*Use questions to solicit information, not to cross examine (BD-7)*

*Jointly design ways of testing solutions (BD-8)*

*Identify the issues that need to be resolved (PH-2)*

*Be concrete and factual, using examples and avoiding generalizing (PH-3)*

*Test assumptions and inferences publicly (PH-9)*

- 3. Work toward a consensus**

*Work toward consensus positions, after a careful joint problem-solving process, even when a vote must finally be taken (BD-9)*

- 4. Ensure the solution is clearly stated and the proper corrective action is set in motion**

*\*This item is new*

- 5. Be honest and constructive when assessing the success or failure of solutions and the problem-solving process that led to them, strive for continual improvement**

*Conduct self-critiques and solicit and offer constructive feedback with one another on our skills of collaborative problem-solving (BD-10)*