



***Use Your Voice:
Public Speaking and Civility in
Local Government***

Dottie Fulginiti, Member, Easton Select Board

Patrick Guerriero, co-founder, Civitas Public Affairs Group

MMA Annual Meeting

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Dottie Fulginiti

Chair, Easton Select Board

dfulginiti@easton.ma.us

Preparing for success

- Be sure the meeting space can comfortably accommodate the anticipated crowd
- Thank everyone for coming and set the ground rules
- Have a start and end time
- Consider having a “side room” for issues that need personal attention
- Consider ways to engage the public for their help on the issue - give them a role
- If all else fails, call a brief recess

Setting the tone

- Have a plan
- Speak with your town administrator, other staff and fellow board members to set the expectations
- Brainstorm all scenarios “what do we do if....”
- Smile, relax and remain calm and in control
- Breathe and be aware of the energy in the room
- Practice ways to redirect discussion in a positive way
- Remember to thank people for their respectful dialogue
- https://youtu.be/Ng_HgRfGBY

“Citizens of Pawnee,” You Tube, November 28, 2012

Top 5 Lessons from Melrose's Civility Initiative

1. Civility starts with yourself...not others
2. Think outside-the-box of City/Town Hall
3. Civility can and should be measured
4. Community-wide civility comes with a cost
5. Sustainable civility has a personality



Fox News, January 1999

Policy Development

Visitor Code of Conduct

- Adopted by the Town of Acton, posted in public buildings
- Lists what the town will not tolerate
- Also includes focus on common sense behavior
- Not a “Workplace Violence” policy but emphasizes anti-harassment principles for all persons entering town facilities

Policy Development, II

Employee and/or Appointed/Elected Official Policy

- Distribute/train city/town employees
- Nothing here replaces State law [Ch 268A] or CBA's
- “must act with fundamental honesty/integrity”
- Do: act with respect, dignity, fairness
- Don't: disparage/misrepresent the City/Town through actions, written correspondence, gestures
- Always: treat others in manner that enhances public respect & confidence in entire City/Town

“So let us begin anew—
remembering on both
sides that civility is not a
sign of weakness, and
sincerity is subject to
proof.”

-John F. Kennedy