

2023-03-12 Special Arbor District Board Meeting

Members present: Kyle Miller, Judy Ashby, Brian Swoboda, Pheral Lamb, Jane Adams
Absent: Sarah Buila, Francine Wein, Kevin Koron, Chuck Litecky

A special meeting was called following the first Living Room Conversation with City Council candidates, in which a Council candidate attacked the persons of two Arbor District members. The concern was maintaining civil conversation in future gatherings.

Kyle Miller proposed a set of “Conversation Rules” to guide future gatherings.

Jane Adams pointed out that our By-laws state that we operate according to Roberts Rules of Order, which prohibits personal attacks.

After considerable discussion, the consensus of the group was that the list of “Conversation Rules” were good guidelines, with modifications as needed to include different conversation styles. It was noted that most Arbor District meetings of all sorts do not rigidly follow Roberts Rules of Order, but that, following Roberts Rules of Order, personal attacks are not allowed, for the reasons stated by the author.

Guidelines adopted for meeting discussions in general, and remaining Living Room Conversations with City Council and Mayoral Candidates:

1. *Listen actively — respect others when they are talking and do not interrupt.*
2. *Speak from your own experience instead of generalizing*
3. *Try to say it in 25 words or less.*
4. *Speak only to the topic at hand.*
5. *When an idea has been stated previously and you agree, only speak when you have something new to add.*
6. *Ask questions to respectfully challenge one another, but refrain from personal attacks — focus on ideas.*
7. *Participate to the fullest of your ability and help make sure every individual voice is included.*
8. *Our goal is not necessarily to agree — it is to gain a deeper understanding.*
9. *Be conscious of body language and nonverbal responses — they can be as disrespectful as words.*
10. *Invited guests should acknowledge and respond to all questions, except in situations when aforementioned rules have been violated.*