

# Report and Recommendations

Tesuque Planning Subcommittee on Consensus Decision Making

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# Tesuque Planning Subcommittee on Consensus Decision Making

## Subcommittee Members:

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# Subcommittee Overview and Charter

- Subcommittee researched consensus decision making and applied its research to the current planning process.
- Synopsis of agreed subcommittee Charter:  
*Make recommendations to the Planning Committee for a process to maximize fairness, to maximize full and equal participation, and to minimize the potential for deadlock.*

# Consensus defined

- Consensus does not equal unanimous decision making.
- Unanimous decision making is ideal and the process should enable and encourage it.
- However, using a fair process, if unanimous agreement can't be reached, research shows that **“overwhelming agreement”** among the participants is acceptable.
- We defined **“agreement”** as terms that the participant “can live with.”
- Our subcommittee defined **“overwhelming agreement”** as **agreement by at least 75%** of the participants.

# Recommended Process for Consensus Decision Making

1. Advance agenda, including:
  - Reasonable, narrow scope for each meeting
  - Clear ground rules
  - Agreed facilitation approach
2. Share expectations and goals at beginning of each meeting
3. Open dialogue and brainstorming
4. Measure progress through “straw polls”
5. Reach clear agreement and confirm it
6. Provide time, if requested, for additional reflection
7. Finalize the agreement with clear documentation

# Deadlock

*“Deadlock” exists when, after good faith efforts to reach unanimous or overwhelming agreement (as defined) through the planning committee’s consensus decision making process, the planning committee members fail to agree on Community Plan language and subsequent Code language.*

# Avoiding and Breaking Deadlock

- Place all participants on equal footing with “equal skin in the game” and ensure that there are not power imbalances among the participants.
- Agree in advance what the implications of deadlock will mean
  - Whose vote counts?
  - Will current plan language then remain?
  - Will current plan language be discarded?
  - Will some variant apply?

# Moving Forward

- Each meeting to be recorded on video platform.
- Meetings structured to be efficient and to encourage full participation.
- Ground rules will require all parties to speak up. Unless extra time is requested, silence equals consent.
- Use a facilitative model to move the meeting forward.
- Actively use straw polling to measure progress and consciously determine if “overwhelming agreement” has been reached.

# Next Steps: Continued Full Committee Meetings

In this initial meeting:

- Review & understand the sub-committee recommendations.
- Accept or modify subcommittee recommendations and definitions:
  - Consensus
  - Overwhelming agreement
  - Deadlock
  - Implications of deadlock

# Resolving Fences and Walls Issue

## (Subsequent Meetings)

1. Review ground rules and protocols
2. Agree in advance on implications of deadlock
3. Open with dialogue regarding shared concerns and goals regarding fences and walls
4. Brainstorm ways to address concerns and goals
5. Develop options and approaches
6. Test progress with straw polls
7. When consensus is reached
8. Agree on specific language
9. Document agreement
10. Agree on focus for next meeting and set date