

*Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Council Rules of Debate*

*Submitted by President Lindsay Imber, Moved by Executive Committee, Approved by the Board on January 9, 2023  
(18 Yea, 0 Nay, 0 Present)*

The following debate format shall apply to all items under Board consideration:

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Time Limit</b>
The Mover, if a motion from Floor, (or Committee Chair, if a motion from Committee) presents (moves) an item.	<b>5 Minutes</b> , Unless Otherwise Indicated on the Agenda
Public Comment is Heard <i>All public commenters wishing to speak may speak once.</i>	<b>1 Minute</b> per Speaker [default] <i>May be adjusted by President</i>
Board Discussion: Opening Round <i>All Board Members wishing to speak may do so.</i>	<b>3 Minutes</b> per Board Member (who wishes to speak)
Board Discussion: Closing Round <i>This occurs after all wanting to speak have spoken once.</i>	<b>1 Minute</b> per Board Member (who wishes to speak)
Voting: The <b>ONLY</b> acceptable responses during Roll Call will be Yes/Yea/Aye, No/Nay, Abstain/Present, Recuse. <i>No debate or explanations shall be allowed during voting, only the vote itself.</i>	<b>If Roll Call:</b> Members shall respond after called upon solely with their vote. (e.g., “Smith: Yes”)

*The Presiding Officer shall have the authority to adjust time limits if time becomes a factor.*

*No member shall speak more than twice to each motion.*

**ROBERT’S RULES ENFORCEMENT**

*Regardless of Board action re: the aforementioned time limits and rules, the following Robert’s Rules of Order provisions will be applied at all future SONC Board meetings.*

**All Members have equal rights, privileges, and obligations.**

**Only one person may speak at a time, and no person can speak until recognized by the Presiding Officer or Presiding Chair.**

A Member is considered to have spoken Out of Order if said Member speaks, other than in briefly requesting the Presiding Officer’s attention, without first having been recognized by the Presiding Officer.

**Decorum: All remarks must be addressed to the Presiding Officer or Chair.**

**All discussion must be relevant to the immediately pending question.**

**Debate must address issues not personalities (no personal attacks).**

If, in the Presiding Officer’s judgment, or upon a motion of Point of Order and subsequent agreement of the Presiding Officer, a Member is deemed to have failed to adhere to this guideline, the Presiding Officer shall inform the Member they are in violation of this rule and instruct the Member to adhere to these rules.

**Members may not disrupt nor interrupt, which includes Public Comment period.**

No Member's speech may be interrupted by another Member other than provided by these rules. For instance, Point of Order is an incidental motion that allows one to interrupt the speaker, the Presiding Officer may interrupt a speech in order to enforce the aforementioned rules, etc... EVEN SO, no person can speak until recognized by the Presiding Officer and a person shall cease speaking when ordered by the Presiding Officer. The proper way to raise a Point of Order is to address the Presiding Officer and state, simply, "Point of Order." A member must wait to be recognized before giving an explanation. However, simply objecting to the content of another's speech is not permissible ground for interruption nor for raising a Point of Order.

**Board Members and Members of the Public shall adhere to the time limits.**

The Presiding Officer or other authorized Member shall inform a recognized and speaking Public Commenter or Board Member that their time has expired upon its expiration. If a virtual meeting, the speaker shall be muted five seconds after being informed their time has expired. Those who have not been recognized or authorized to speak should remain quiet or, if virtual, muted, while another person is speaking and until recognized by the Chair.

*Robert's Rules Principle: "No member shall speak more than twice to each motion."*

**If a Point of Information is raised during Discussion, time is retained.**

If, during the course of Board Discussion, in either the Opening or Closing Round, a Member wishes to ask a question, informational in nature, of the Mover or Guest, the time consumed by the Mover/Guest's speech (or Executive Officer's speech in response to a Point of Parliamentary Inquiry) shall not be charged against the requesting Member.

**Amendments and Subsidiary Motions**

If an amendment or applicable subsidiary motion is presented during the course of Board Discussion in accordance with *Robert's Rules of Order*, the sequence of events shall revert to the Public Comment stage. Such a motion may be made during either round of discussion; it shall be considered out of order to make a motion *after* having spoken twice and yielded time, or had it expire during the Closing Round.

**Presiding Officer must relinquish the Chair to participate in debate**

The Chair should always remain impartial. If the Presiding Officer wishes to participate in debate (other than in presenting an item as a Committee Chair, answering informational questions, and making concluding remarks prior to calling for a vote), they shall relinquish the chair to another Executive Officer prior to debate and cannot reassume the Chair until the pending main motion is disposed of.

**Rules of debate can be changed by a two-thirds vote.**