



NOTE-TAKING GUIDELINES

Transparent Dedham's Community Notes help increase civic engagement and community awareness by showing support for the work of our elected and appointed officials and keeping the public informed of important issues and events.

NOTE-TAKING GUIDELINES:

Community Notes Volunteers must use these guidelines when taking notes to ensure consistency in style and content of notes:

- Notes should be written to report on the facts of what happened at the meeting as objectively as possible.
 - Avoid making commentary or characterizing people's comments and/or testimony. Avoid making assumptions about people's unstated intentions, emotions or tone.
 - Verbs such as "said," "asked," "responded," "replied," and "commented" are preferred. Please avoid verbs such as "demanded," "exclaimed," "cried out," or "yelled."
 - In order to avoid any real or perceived conflict of interest, please identify any issues in which you are an abutter or otherwise interested party. For example, if the Zoning Board of Appeals is hearing an application in your neighborhood, please include a note such as: *Note-taker Disclosure: this issue impacts me directly as a neighbor to the project.*
- Comments should be summarized. Please do not directly quote anyone.
- Please do try to capture names and addresses of people who make public comments. [Most committees will ask speakers to identify themselves by name and address.]
- If you miss a portion of the discussion or have to leave early, please state this in your notes, such as "Note-taker missed this agenda item."
- Open Meeting Law allows observers to record audio of meetings. If you plan to record the meeting to assist with note-taking, please inform the Chair prior to the meeting,

Questions about these guidelines? Please email editorialteam@transparentdedham.org

All community notes will be reviewed by the TD editorial team before being posted on the website. The name of the note-taker will be included in the final version of the notes, as will the editor's name.

Transparent Dedham is a program of Women in Democracy - Dedham, an organization committed to engaging more women in local politics and educating the public about local government.



COMMUNITY NOTES TEMPLATE

[COMMITTEE NAME]

Community Notes

[Meeting Date & Time]

[Meeting Location (e.g. Town Hall, Endicott Estate, Avery School)]

Board/Committee members in attendance

Include full names and also note who is not at meeting. [The names of committee members should be on the town website.]

Agenda [if not posted online it can be found on the 1st floor Town Hall bulletin board]

- Paste Agenda at top of Notes. Note what time meeting the meeting is called to order and who called it to order.
- Repeat agenda headings in body of notes to identify each topic discussed by the committee. Provide summaries of each topic - main points made, by whom, public comment, additional materials provided, any actions taken or next steps discussed.
- When votes are taken, if outcome is not unanimous try to capture the results including names of those in favor, opposed, and abstaining.

Open Discussion/Public Comment

Open Discussion is either at the beginning or end of meetings, depending on the committee. Please note whether it was offered even if no one spoke.

Old/New Business

Note each additional item with a separate heading.

Note the time the meeting was adjourned.

Notes taken by _____ [Your name].

Notes reviewed by _____ [Editor will complete this portion]

Community Notes are not official minutes or transcriptions of a meeting. They are intended to provide summaries of discussion and actions taken at meetings. For official meeting minutes, visit the Town of Dedham's [website](#) or contact the Town Clerk.

THANK YOU for helping with Transparent Dedham Community Notes Project! Please submit your notes to editorialteam@transparentdedham.org

