

March 6, 2006

Connie Mullins
City Recorder
Town of Unicoi
P.O. Box 39
Unicoi, Tennessee 37692-0039

Dear Connie,

You have asked about Robert's Rules of Order and the application of a procedural point related to the discussion and voting procedures of a Planning Commission. Specifically you mentioned that during the last Planning Commission meeting an extensive discussion occurred prior to the making of a motion and a second. You want to know if this was proper.

The answer is yes. In fact you can have discussion at any time, irrespective of the making of a motion. And in fact this is encouraged. Most meeting agendas provide time for "Old Business" or "New Business" or "Other Matters" or "Report of the CEO", etc. Each of these presents an opportunity for discussion, and a motion and second do not need to be made in order to have such discussion.

What Robert's Rule of Order states is that if a motion is made, and if the motion gains a second, then you must allow for discussion. It does not mean that you can't have discussion without a motion and second. It means that you can't proceed after a motion and second until you have allowed for discussion.

I hope this answers your question. If not or if I can be of any further assistance please feel free to call.

Sincerely,

Patrick Hardy
Municipal Management Consultant