

DECISION MAKING TIPS – part 1

By Chris Nelson

Ever sit around the table in discussion with your commission members, working counterparts or other decision makers attempting to make an honest effort to consensus or just a resolution period?

Starting with this Spring Issue of Facility to Facility we will offer some simple tips that will hopefully assist you with the process. Here goes:

- Do not make decisions that are not yours to make.
- When making a decision you are simply choosing from among alternatives. You are not making a choice between right and wrong.
- Avoid snap decisions. Move fast on the reversible ones and slowly on the non-reversible.
- Choosing the right alternative at the wrong time is not any better than the wrong alternative at the right time, so make the decision while you still have time.
- Do your decision making on paper. Make notes and keep your ideas visible so you can consider all the relevant information in making this decision.
- Be sure to choose based on what is right, not who is right.
- Write down the pros and cons of a line of action. It clarifies your thinking and makes for a better decision.
- Make decisions as you go along. Do not let them accumulate. A backlog of many little decisions could be harder to deal with than one big and complex decision.
- Consider those affected by your decision. Whenever feasible, get them involved to increase their commitment.
- Recognize that you cannot know with 100% certainty that your decision is correct because the actions to implement it are to take place in the future. So make it and don't worry about it.
- Use the O. A. R. approach in decision making. Look at O, Objectives you are seeking to attain, A, the

Alternatives you sense are available to you and R, the risk of the alternative you are considering.

- It has been said that a decision should always be made at the lowest possible level and as close to the scene of action as possible. However, a decision should always be made at a level insuring that all activities and objectives affected are fully considered. The first rule tells us how far down a decision should be made. The second how far down it can be made.
- Remember that not making a decision is a decision not to take action.
- To be effective, your manager must have the luxury of having the right to be wrong.
- Trust yourself to make a decision and then to be able to field the consequences appropriately.