Over the years I have heard the following comments while leaving a Lions Club meeting “Well, I had a root canal last week and that was less painful” and “Great, another 1 ½ hour meeting that should have been a short email.” OUCH! But sadly too common.

For meetings to be meaningful and productive they need to be managed. Without any structure meetings will inevitably go awry in pretty short order. Too much of this and Lions won’t want to come, will begin to lose interest and may quit. Volunteers don’t have to put up with it. Respect their time and they will respect you.

1. Have an agenda and stick to it
2. Start on time out of respect for those who saw fit to be on time
3. End on time out of respect for all participants
4. Use Social Media ahead of the physical meeting to handle some items that do not require or are best handled in a face-to-face setting
5. If there are reports to be discussed send them out via email ahead of time so people can read them and then concentrate on questions/action items at the meeting. Handing out a report at the meeting and then reading it to the others verbatim is demeaning and a pure waste of valuable time
6. Handle “disruptors” and “dominators” – those who continuously talk out of turn and/or don’t give anyone else the opportunity to speak. Some handy tips here are: “We need the input of others to make a solid decision.” Or: “You and I can discuss this one-on-one after the meeting. Right now we need to keep moving and hear from the others.”

Everyone who took the time to come to the meeting has an equal right to be heard. Besides, unless everyone is heard you may never get to hear the best idea in the room. If someone is being quiet during the discussion(s), ask for their opinion.