

Rules for Preservationists to Build and Maintain Influence

**Greg Paxton, Executive Director
Maine Preservation**

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1. Courteously acknowledge the participation of all parties interested in an issue, even your opponents, particularly in public.
2. Take a positive approach and assume good faith in others, even if strong evidence, or even past history, indicate otherwise.
3. Calmly and logically present your ideas, be polite and above reproach.
4. Clearly acknowledge the limits of your influence; do not overplay your hand. But also do not indicate that you have no influence (even if you feel that way) or communicate that others hold the power. Present your position as a participant in a democratic process, where your ideas will be judged on their merits.
5. Give the best reasons from a broad community-wide standpoint to support your position, even if these reasons are not the most important from your point of view. Stress economic development whenever possible.
6. Be meticulously accurate in the presentation of facts and, if anything, understate your case; avoid extremes and even slight exaggeration so that your argument is not undercut on details.
7. Accept the legitimacy of the opposing point of view - this will win respect for the future; attempt to bear their point of view in mind to avoid unnecessarily or clumsily offending them.
8. Avoid public surprises and embarrassing revelations; do not publicly back people into a corner - leave them a way out.
9. Never be publicly sarcastic.
10. When you are most right, be most careful; you will tend to be emotional and may inadvertently tread on the toes of others or undermine your credibility.
11. Whenever possible, communicate your disagreements to other parties directly, prior to meetings; you will win their grudging respect (if not their support).

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12. Lobby and provide information prior to public meetings.
13. Avoid the use of media to embarrass, annoy or "tattletale," instead seek to communicate directly to persons involved.
14. Be flexible and willing to compromise, if possible.
15. Use allies to bolster your case - board members and other highly regarded persons; "outside experts" from regional, state, national groups; private consultants; and cultivate associates or staffs of elected officials you wish to influence.
16. Be a gracious loser.
17. Do not worry about getting or taking credit. Give the credit to authorities.
18. Carefully handle information given to you in confidence. Inappropriate use of such information will preclude future confidences.
19. Carefully choose issues in which you wish to become involved; strongly pursue only those few which you judge to be critical. If you comment on others, be ready to show a willingness to compromise or back off.
20. You may break these rules on occasion if circumstances dictate, but never because your emotions dictate. These rules are designed for building long-term respect.

For more information, contact:

Greg Paxton, Executive Director
Maine Preservation
207.775.3652
greg@mainepreservation.org
www.mainepreservation.org