

Discussion v Debate as described in *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*, 11th ed.:

Page: 29

... debate—the parliamentary name given to any form of discussion of the merits of a motion—...;

Page: 35:

Under parliamentary procedure, strictly speaking, discussion of any subject is permitted only with reference to a pending motion.

Page 385:

Debate, rightly understood, is an essential element in the making of rational decisions of consequence by intelligent people. In a deliberative assembly, this term applies to discussion on the merits of a pending question—that is, whether the proposal under consideration should, or should not, be agreed to.

Pages 395-396:

Occasions Justifying Brief Discussion Outside Debate

INFORMAL CONSULTATION TO ASSIST THE FRAMING OF A MOTION.

As already stated, debate is permitted only while a debatable question is immediately pending. Occasionally, however—in small assemblies when a subject is not strongly contested—brief informal consultation or discussion of a subject may assist a member in framing a proper motion. If the chair permits such discussion, he generally should not allow it to continue more than a few moments or longer than is reasonably necessary to arrive at a motion embodying the member's ideas.

In general, for a member to speak when no question is pending, without promptly leading to a motion, implies an unusual circumstance and requires permission of the assembly. But occasionally, in very small bodies, a member who has obtained the floor at such a time may state that, if there is no objection, he would like to give some explanations dealing with a specified subject and to conclude by offering a motion on that subject. If no one objects, the member can then proceed; and the chair, knowing the subject, can hold him to it as he would in debate on a motion (see also pp. 34–35).

ALLOWABLE EXPLANATION OF A PENDING UNDEBATABLE MOTION. Sometimes business may be expedited by allowing a few words of factual explanation while an undebatable motion is pending. The distinction between debate and asking questions or making brief suggestions should be kept in mind in this connection. The chair should be careful not to allow this type of consultation to develop into an extended colloquy between members or to take on the semblance of debate; and he should generally remain standing while the consultation takes place, to show that the floor has not been assigned.

page 488:

PROCEDURE IN SMALL BOARDS. In a board meeting where there are not more than about a dozen members present, some of the formality that is necessary in a large assembly would hinder business. The rules governing such meetings are different from the rules that hold in other assemblies, in the following respects:

- Informal discussion of a subject is permitted while no motion is pending.

Informal discussion may be initiated by the chairman himself, which, in effect, enables the chairman to submit his own proposals without formally making a motion as described on pages 33–35 (although he has the right to make a motion if he wishes).

Note: This and all the other exception listed on page 488 are also allowed in committees,
As provided on page

In point of fact, there is little distinction between the terms.

Particularly see the definition of debate on p 385: "In a deliberative assembly, this term (debate) applies to discussion on the merits of a pending question"

Committees, which are not considered deliberative assemblies, allow for discussion which is more like brainstorming.

Such informal speech not focused on a pending question is and should not be allowed in anything but committees and small boards.

note the distinction and usage of the term "discussion" on pp 395-396

"... in small assemblies when a subject is not strongly contested—brief informal consultation or discussion of a subject may assist a member in framing a proper motion"

Here discussion is distinguished from debate by these conditions: 1 small assemblies; 2. subject is not strongly contested; 3 it must be brief and informal, synonymous with "consultation." and 4 comes with this caveat"

"The chair should be careful not to allow this type of consultation to develop into an extended colloquy between members or to take on the semblance of debate"