

PLANNING & ZONING BASICS: HOW TO AVOID BIG ISSUES IN SMALL TOWNS

MASC CONFERENCE
JULY 27TH, 2023
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WHAT IS PLANNING?



- Planning is setting a course of action for how a community will grow and develop.
 - Community's Vision of the Future
 - Accounting for the Past and Present
 - Tools to Realize the Vision: Goals, Objectives, Policies, Actions

PLANNING BASICS

- Planning Commission
- Board of Zoning Appeals
- Board of Architectural Review
- Zoning Ordinance
- Comprehensive Plan
- Land Development Regulations
- Design Guidelines



AFFORDABILITY



- Financial/Affordability Issues for Small Municipalities:
 - Updating Comprehensive Plans and Zoning Ordinances
 - Staff to enforce the Zoning Ordinance /Code Enforcement
 - Staff to handle the issues and staff the boards
 - Required trainings of board members and staff
 - Relationships with County, surrounding municipalities, and the Council of Governments to help with the costs of plans, staff, and training
 - Uniform lot size across the entire town to create a simply zoning ordinance with less zones and regulations to have to enforce
 - Multijurisdictional plans including the comprehensive plan, marketing plan, and zoning ordinances

BOARDS

- Board Vacancies are hard to fill in small towns
- Plan to meet with or without agenda items
- Look everywhere for great people
 - Other boards in the town
 - Business owners are great sources
 - Former council members/mayors
 - Retirees including staff members
 - Citizens that show up to meetings



INFLUENCING BOARD MEMBERS

- Board members must be careful in small towns by those that are trying to influence them
- Avoiding conflict of interest is difficult in small towns
- Just because you want to help one person because of friendship or feelings, means a precedence can be set for future applicants
- All regulations must apply to everyone- cannot be treated differently because of who you are, what board you are on, and who you know

"I KNOW THE MAYOR"



Yes, we all know the mayor/council members especially in smaller towns.

The issues falls on both sides of this relationship:

- 1) The applicant thinks knowing the mayor/council member will make the decision of staff or board members have a different outcome
- 2) The mayor/council of small town wants to help everyone and wants to break the rules "just this once"

ISSUE DISCUSSION

- What issues are others facing in their small towns concerning planning and zoning?
