



Georgia Planning Officials Newsletter

May/June 2006

GPA Announcement: Planning Official Track at Annual Fall Conference

This year for the first time, GPA will include a special track for planning and elected officials at the annual fall conference, October 11-13 at Sea Palms on St. Simons Island. The one day track will feature sessions tailored specifically to the job of planning officials. Planning and elected officials will be offered the opportunity to attend the one day track at a discounted rate.

Please contact kbrownlow@atlantaregional.com or call 404-463-3212 for more information or to pre-register for the conference at a discounted rate.

GPA Planning Officials Training

The Coosa Valley and North Georgia Regional Development Centers and District 1 of the Georgia Planning Association are jointly sponsoring a training workshop for local planning officials at the Forum Civic Center in Rome, Georgia on May 16, 2006 from 8:30 am to 4 pm.

The workshop will focus on basic subjects such as planning and zoning terms, what is planning, zoning, legislative and administrative actions, conflicts of interest, alternatives to zoning, open meeting requirements, and similar topics. Those that are interested in training of this type should contact either David Howerin of the Coosa Valley Regional Development Center 706-295-6485 or Larry Vanden Bosch of the North Georgia Regional Development Center 706-272-2300.

Resource Spotlight: Citizen Planners Resource Kit

Often the planning educational resources that are available are formatted for professional planners. These resources can often be confusing for those not in the profession. In addressing this need, the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy has developed the Citizen Planners Resource Kit. Designed for citizen planners, the CPR kit provides educational resources that aren't readily available to those who sit on planning boards and commissions.

The kit provides information through a series of publications, books, a DVD, and access to online courses. It provides a foundation for exploring quality growth issues that planning boards and commissions face every meeting. This resource offers a wealth of planning-related information for all board members and commissioners, despite their depth and breadth of knowledge.

Equally as impressive as the amount of information provided by the CPR kit, is that the **Lincoln Institute provides a complementary copy to any and all planning boards and commissions** who request it. To receive a copy, simple access their site at:

<http://www.lincolninst.edu> and click on CPR kit. We hope you enjoy this resource as much as we have!!

Wearing Many Hats

Excerpted from American Planning Association's: *Commissioner*, Fall 2005 Issue

Commissioner's Voice: By Jacqueline R. Wilson, Plant City, Florida, Planning Board; Hillsborough County Planning Commission

I have been involved in planning as a citizen volunteer for 20 years, serving as a member of the Plant City, Florida, Planning Board. For the past eight years, I have been an appointee to the 10-member countywide Hillsborough County Planning Commission, serving almost 1.2 million people with Tampa as its county seat. If there is anything that I would like to communicate to my fellow planning commissioners about our role, it is that we must always be ready to wear many hats and it is absolutely critical to keep up with new trends in planning theory.

Our planning commission has an original piece of art that captures the many issues that a planning commissioner has to address. The piece is a pencil sketch of a person climbing up a ladder while balancing two tall piles of assorted geometric shapes, one in each hand. It is called "The Juggler" and it sums up the complexity of serving as a planning commissioner. I have had to learn about an assortment of issues including smart growth, environmental protection, wildlife corridors, historic structures, growth management legislation, and many other subjects too numerous to mention. If that were not enough to keep up with, there is always constant change in the way these issues are addressed and dealt with. That is why continuous education in planning concepts is so important and why it is essential to be involved in professional organizations such the American Planning Association and its local chapters to further our knowledge of what is occurring in other communities so we can plan better in our own.

The job of being a planning commissioner is particularly difficult, but also exciting when you are in a community that is growing by approximately 30,000 people a year, as is Hillsborough County. The challenges become even more complex when the results of your decisions show up very quickly in the physical environment. There is little lag time in a growing community such as ours, which makes it all the more important to take your responsibilities seriously and continue to further educate yourself on planning issues.

We want to hear from you! Please send us your thoughts, experiences and advice on being a Planning Official. E-mail or fax your submissions to Robbie Hayes at rhayes@atlantaregional.com or 404.463.3105