

PLANNING BOARD ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

NEW HAMPSHIRE MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION LAW CONFERENCE
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RIGGINS RULES. WWW.NHMUNICIPAL.ORG. THEN SEARCH "RIGGINS RULES".

1

Serving on a Planning Board is the Best Job Around

**It is endlessly engaging and
rarely boring**



2

	THE BOARD HAS FOUR MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES: • Develop and adopt the master plan; • Make recommendations on zoning amendments; • Adopt and amend the site plan and subdivision regulations; and • Review development applications	

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	STYLE OF PLANNING BOARDS. SOME RHETORICAL QUESTIONS: • Do individual boards have a style, a personality, a culture? • What constitutes a good Planning Board? • What constitutes a bad Planning Board? • If you developed a mission statement for your board what would it be?
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	The Planning Board Mission: <u>Broadly:</u> Work to make your town a great community in every way. <u>On applications:</u> a) end up with a great project, b) follow the laws, and c) build good will in the community. <i>Be strong but flexible ***</i>

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	What qualities would an individual have ideally to be an effective Planning Board member? No particular skills or experience are required. You will learn! But ideally: • Communication skills; • Some emotional and social intelligence; • A probing, analytical mind; • Caring about the public interest; • Having some knowledge about the built or natural environment; • Ability to ask hard questions and to make hard decisions; • Good judgment; and • Integrity.	

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Working with Applicants:

- Keep your eye on what is most important – creating a high quality project;
- The developer is not the enemy;
- Try to foster a collaborative spirit and maintain open communication;
- Flexibility is essential.

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But what if the developer is a nogoodnik?



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	Acceptance of the Application • You can get started if the application is substantially complete. • “They have high standards but they do try to work with you.” • 65 days from acceptance to take action.

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	Submitting new and revised information Expect it for bigger projects. <i>When you need it depends on what it is and whether any action is expected.</i>
	“Change is inevitable. Change is constant.” Benjamin Disraeli

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Getting a Better Result

- Encourage preliminary applications.
- Ask probing questions.
- Push the developer. See if they can do more or do better.
- Keep the broad public interest in mind.

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Negotiate!

Don't be afraid to negotiate. Just be thoughtful about it.



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The Regulations

- Respect the regulations...imperfect as they are.
- You can get a little creative.
- Embrace waivers when appropriate.
- Use “common sense” in interpreting the regulations, if there is room to do so!



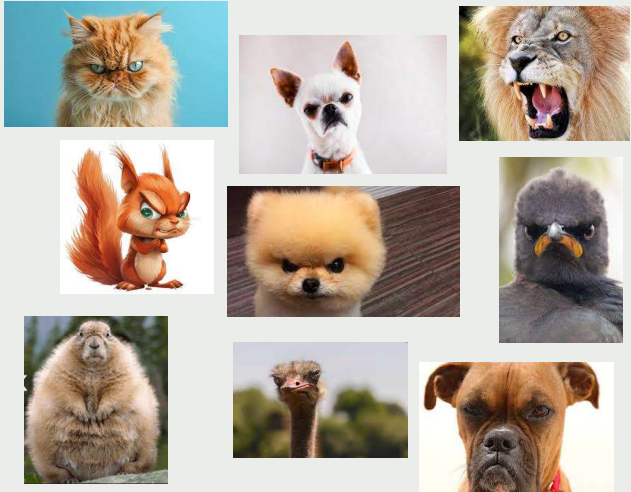
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PUBLIC HEARINGS

Allow as much input as possible
but maintain firm control!



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	Abutters!

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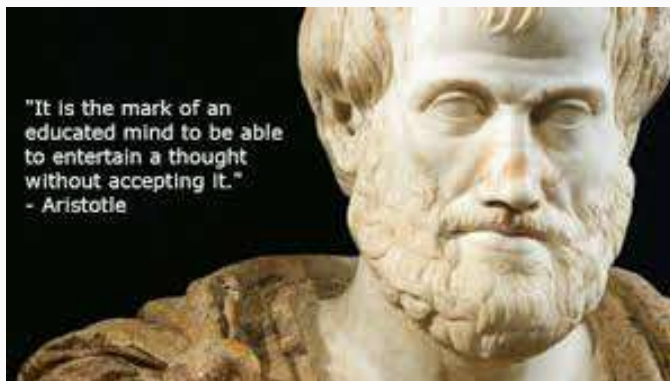
	Promote transparency and participation in general. • For matters that do not involve a hearing still let the public speak. • Let everyone speak even those who live out of town. • Include a Public Comments time at the beginning of each meeting (except perhaps for special workshops).
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SITE WALKS

- They are public meetings.
- Everyone is welcome.
- Try to keep people together though some will wander off

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Keep an Open Mind

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Conflict of Interest



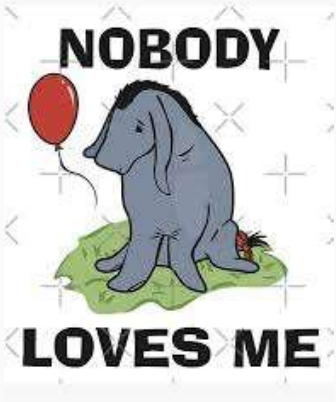
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Deliberations

Final action by the Planning Board



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	Denying the Project

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Architectural Review	
• Architecture is much more important that people recognize. • People care how buildings look. • Have something in the regulations. • It is not just about "personal taste". • Educate yourself.	 

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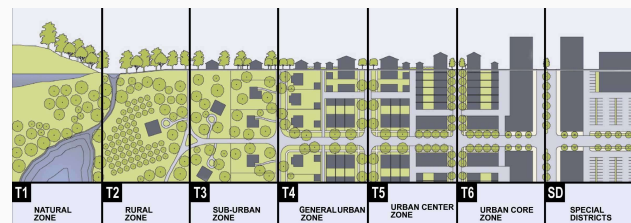
Embrace New Urbanism!



It is the best paradigm for planning. Check it out!

Congress for the New Urbanism:

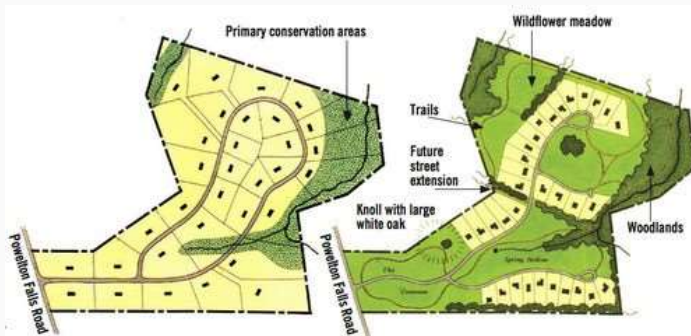
www.cnu.org



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Conservation Subdivisions

Make them mandatory in rural and outlying areas



**Protect the land and
accommodate
development**

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WORKING WITH STAFF

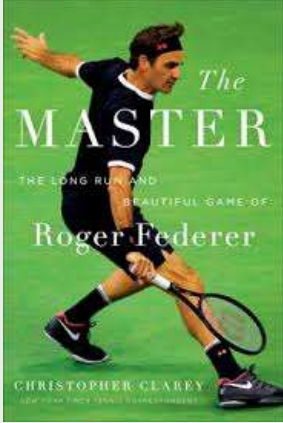


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Group Dynamics



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	Professionalism 
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	TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF That is the most important thing of all. 	

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	THANK YOU AND GOOD LUCK!	
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