TO PLAN OR NOT TO PLAN...

- WHAT is it?
- WHY do we do it?
- WHO does it?
- HOW do you do it?
- WHAT do you do with it when you’ve got it?
TO PLAN OR NOT TO PLAN...

- **Plan - Verb**
  - **Definition:**
    - to arrange the parts of
    - to devise or project the realization or achievement of
    - To think in advance about a method

- **Plan - Noun**
  - **Definition:**
    - a detailed formulation of a program of action;
    - a method devised for doing something or achieving an end, involving a series of actions
WHAT IS PLANNING?
WHAT IS PLANNING?

- That which guides a community’s growth and development
- A science because it relies on data and forecasts
- An art because it is about design and aesthetics and visioning
- A tried and true way to help your community move forward
- A dynamic blueprint for the future
- A to-do list
PLANNING HAS ALWAYS BEEN…

History is full of planned communities

- Greek/Roman
- Law of the Indies
- Colonial America
Georgia’s first planned community: Savannah 1733
WHY PLAN?

- Planning for YOUR Community:
  - Helps protect property rights
  - Certainty is good for economic development
  - Helps maintain and improve your quality of life
  - Protect public investments: It’s your money, after all
WHO PLANS?

- EVERYONE – the plan should involve the entire community
- Elected Officials
- Local Government Staff
- Consultants, Developers
- Appointed Officials
- Regional Commissions
- State of Georgia
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT COMMUNITY PLANS DO</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Predict future population, housing, and employment trends</td>
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<tr>
<td>Don’t you want to know how many houses you will need? New jobs?</td>
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<td>Protect and preserve future land needs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Don’t you want to make sure you have enough land available to grow?</td>
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<td>Assure adequate public facilities and services</td>
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<td>Don’t you want to have enough water for the community?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Protect existing and future public investment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Don’t you want to save money by continuing to use what you already have paid for?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Protect environment</td>
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<td>Don’t you want to make sure your natural and historic resources are protected?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflect community values</td>
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<tr>
<td>Don’t you want your community to be what YOU want it to be?</td>
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BENEFITS OF PLANNING

- Provides a forum for reaching consensus
- Protects property values
- Sets expectations
- Improves economic development
- Connects people to the community
- Saves money
- Improves quality of life
IT ISN’T JUST DCA

5 Steps to Assistance

1. Planning
   Visit your local NRCS field office to discuss your goals and work with staff on a conservation plan.

2. Application
   With the help of NRCS, complete an application for financial assistance programs.

3. Eligibility
   As part of applying, we’ll file paperwork to ensure you’re eligible for assistance.

4. Ranking
   NRCS ranks applications according to local resource concerns.

5. Implementing
   Put conservation to work by signing a contract and implementing conservation practices.
IF WE DON’T PLAN!

Social Costs
Economic Costs
Environmental Costs
Health Costs
IF WE DON’T PLAN!

[Image of a busy city street with traffic congestion and various store signs]
Georgia Planning Act is the foundation for community planning across the State. It was first passed in 1989. DCA administers the Local Planning Rules, which have been revised several times. This process provides eligibility for state funds, QLG.
GEORGIA PLANNING ACT, 1989

Qualified Local Government Status

Local Planning Requirements
Local Comprehensive Plans

- Help develop & support policies
- Direct capital improvements
- Help set the budget
- Evaluate future development
- See the future
- Set the future
- Guide economic growth
- Guide land development
- Celebrate the community
- Improve community health
- Address housing issues
- Upgrade local infrastructure
- Gives the public a voice
- Represents everybody
- See opportunities not just issues
- Provide solutions
LOCAL PLANNING TOOLS

- Future Development Map in comp plan
- Zoning Ordinance and Map
- Unified Development Code
- Special ordinances for trees, signs, etc.
- Design Guidelines (historic districts, etc.)
- May be others specific to your local government
FUTURE DEVELOPMENT MAP

Provides outline for how the jurisdiction wants to grow

Map should be realistic image of future
Zoning ordinance

- Zoning Map
- Records of Decisions
- District Requirements
- Site Design
What exactly is zoning?

- Zoning is the government’s ability to regulate private property through use of the police powers – the public health, safety, morals and general welfare – the local government’s ability to regulate what goes where.

- It’s really important to remember that your zoning ordinance must include an accurate map. If you don’t have a zoning map then you don’t have a valid ordinance. The map has to be a part of your zoning code.
Special ordinances

Sign Ordinance – first amendment issues, must not be content based

Tree Ordinance – environmental and aesthetic issues
WHO PLANS?

On the local level:

- Elected Officials: State, County, City
- Appointed Boards and Commissions
- Planning Staff
- Development Community
- Public
ELECTED OFFICIALS

- Legislative Actions
- Responsibilities
ACTIONS

- Legislative
  - By the elected officials, NOT the planning commission or staff
    - Such things as:
      - Adopting the zoning ordinance
      - Adoption of amendments to the ordinance that change the text
      - Rezoning of property
      - Special use permits

- Administrative
  - Anything else
RESPONSIBILITIES

Set plan in motion
Create a capable board
Establish policy
Change policies/ordinances
Give sense of direction
Make final decisions
APPOINTED BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Planning Commission

Zoning Board of Appeals

Design Review Boards (Historic Preservation, etc.)

Community Councils or Neighborhood Planning Units
PLANNING COMMISSION AUTHORIZATION

Contained in your ordinance- Administration (the commission as well as the elected body and staff)

- Planning Commission
  - Creation, Appointment, Terms
  - Organization, Rules, Staff
  - Functions and Duties
- Also, the role and responsibilities of the elected body
- All procedures and standards
PLANNING COMMISSION

QUALIFICATIONS

- Be a resident
- Willingness and dedication
- Interest in community planning
- Desire to assist in implementation
- Willingness to encourage and accept input
- Ability to maintain an objective approach
PLANNING COMMISSION

DUTIES

- General Plans
- Specific Plans
- Zoning and Subdivision Maps
- Individual Project Approvals
- Report on Capital Improvement Plans
- Coordinate Local Planning Efforts
- Consider Land Acquisitions
- Special Studies
PLANNING COMMISSION

ROLES

- Prepare comprehensive plan
- Implement plan with local government
- Advise on planning
- Work within established policies/codes
- Recommend changes to policies/codes
## FIVE FUNCTIONS OF PLANNING COMMISSION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Remember what the purpose of “zoning” really is</th>
<th>Carry out development review process within the legal framework and requirements of state and local law</th>
<th>Effectively deal with the local political will</th>
<th>Act as an arbiter between government staff, applicant, citizens, land owners, and other parties</th>
<th>Review projects in view of standards and technical criteria which are applicable</th>
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PLANNING COMMISSION

Learn meeting procedures (Robert’s Rules of Order)

Stay informed

Keep communication open

Be an effective leader

Follow the law

BEING EFFECTIVE
PLANNING COMMISSION

FOLLOWING THE LAW - ASK THESE QUESTIONS

- Is the proposal consistent with the Comp Plan?
- Does it meet all applicable zoning and subdivision requirements?
- Are environmental impacts reduced or eliminated by conditions or are there overriding considerations?
- Is decision supported by findings of fact based on substantial evidence in the record?
- Anything else?
MEETING BASICS

- Will of majority of commissioners must be carried out
- Every attendee of meeting has right equal to every other attendee
- Only one topic will be considered at a time
- Follow adopted procedures
- Follow your adopted agenda
- Comments always directed to the chair
- All deliberations done in the open
- All decisions given in the open
AGENDA

- Introduction of reports/documents
- Approval of minutes
- Old business
- New business
- Other business
- Adjournment
ACTIONS: What are your choices?

- Approve
- Approve with Conditions
- Deny
- Postpone
LOCAL STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

Administer code

Provide full and accurate information and background to applicant, developers, boards, commissions, and landowners

Reports/recommendations based on fact (plan/code)

Administrative permits
DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY

Acts as agents for property owners or neighborhood

Professional wisdom and experience
# WHO IS THE DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY?

- **Real estate agents/brokers**
- **Land developers/speculators**
- **Residential and commercial builders**
- **Apartment developers and landlords**
- **Lawyers**
- **Engineers, architects, surveyors**
- **Bankers**
- **Consultants**
- **Trade groups/special interest groups**
THE PUBLIC

Plans belong to the community

Publishing hearing agenda in various media outlets is good tool

Handouts and visuals can help individuals understand in process
FINAL WORDS

Plans are a guide. Codes and ordinances are law.

Staff, boards, and commissions must be: objective, consistent, rely on laws, codes, plans, and facts.

Plans (and codes and laws) are living documents and must evolve with change in conditions.

Implementation and enforcement are important.

Focus must be sustained by staff and elected officials.