FUNCTIONS OF THE VARIOUS BOARDS AND MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS IN LOCAL PLANNING AND ZONING ADMINISTRATION

The legislative board (Town Board, Village Board of Trustees, City Council)

- Adopts and amends the zoning law (or ordinance), and other local laws and ordinances.
- Approves subdivision regulations, master plan, highway standards, landscape design guidelines, and other regulations and guidelines prepared by the planning board.
- Approves planning board or ZBA bylaws governing procedures to be used in administering laws, ordinances and regulations.
- Adopts construction standards for the acceptance of roads as public highways, drainageways, sewer and water facilities, etc.
- Appoints members of the planning board and Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA).
- Appoints the chairpersons of the planning board and ZBA.
- May delegate the approval of special permits (under zoning) to the planning board or the ZBA, or may choose to retain this responsibility itself.
- May delegate the approval of site plans to the planning board or the ZBA, or may choose to retain this responsibility itself.
- May delegate the approval of subdivision plats to the planning board, or may choose to retain this responsibility itself.
- May institute an action for an injunction or criminal proceedings against violators, or may authorize the Enforcement Officer to do so.
- Creates water, sewer and other special districts.
- Approves annexations.
- Appropriates funds for community improvements.
- Accepts roads as public highways, recreation and other lands, sewer and water lines, as public property.
- Provides budget and staffing, if any, for planning and zoning activities.
- May employ planning consultants.

Planning Board

A. General Functions

- Submits an advisory opinion on zoning amendments, special permits, annexations and similar actions, if so authorized or requested by the legislative board.
- Serves as the "watchdog" for the long-term orderly development of the community.
- May make any investigations, maps, reports and recommendations concerning local planning and development as it thinks necessary or desirable.
- Prepares or updates a comprehensive master plan for the community.

B. Regulatory Functions

If authorized to do so by the legislative board, the planning board exercises the following regulatory authority.

- Reviews and approves land subdivision plats.
- Reviews and approves site plans.
- Reviews and approves special or conditional use permits under Zoning.
- May act as the review and approval board for other laws, ordinances or regulations, such as an historic district law.

Zoning Board of Appeals

A. Duties under zoning as required by state law

- Hears appeals from a decision of the zoning enforcement officer or any official charged with the enforcement of the zoning law. The ZBA may reverse a decision of the official.
- Interprets the zoning law, and makes judgments on its meaning in specific cases.
- Issues variances (use variances and area variances).
- Hears direct appeals for an area variance from applicants seeking subdivision approval, site plan review or issuance of a special use permit.

B. The ZBA may be authorized to do the following.

- Review and approve special use permits.
- Review and approve site plans.

Zoning Enforcement Officer (ZEO)

- Issues zoning permits.
- Reviews applications for zoning permits for compliance with regulations.
- Makes site inspections to insure compliance with regulations.
- Issues a Notice of Violation and/or Stop Work Order to violators.
- If so authorized by the legislative board, may institute an action for an injunction or criminal proceedings against violators.
- Maintains all zoning records for the municipality.
- Forwards applications to appropriate board(s) for site plan approval, a special use permit, or a variance.
- Answers questions citizens may have concerning the zoning law, and assists applicants in preparing applications.
- Attends meetings of the Zoning Board of Appeals, planning board, and legislative board at their request.