

Planning Commissioner Training



MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY



Training for
Urban Planners

The Planning Commissioner Training series from Planetizen Courses offers ten courses on the essentials of citizen planning—everything from planning ethics, comprehensive plans, site plans, approval processes, planning law, zoning, and the essential role of the public in planning.

About the Instructors



Mary Reilly

Mary Reilly is a land use educator with Michigan State University Extension. She serves northwest lower Michigan but also travels statewide to provide specialized training programs on request. Mary has over 20 years of experience in planning and zoning.



Wayne Beyea

Wayne Beyea is a faculty at the MSU School of Planning, Design and Construction's Urban & Regional Planning Program. Wayne directs the American Citizen Planner Collaborative, an online training program for planning officials nationwide.



Brad Neumann

Brad Neumann is a MSU Senior Extension Educator who serves as an educational resource for local and tribal governments across Michigan's Upper Peninsula in the areas of land use planning and zoning, community and economic development and general governance topics including effective meetings and civic engagement.



Watch Expert Training

10 hours of high quality video lessons developed by experts.



Earn A Certificate

Complete course work to receive a certificate from Planetizen Courses and MSU.



Test Your Knowledge

Take quizzes throughout training to make sure you're learning stuff.



National Curriculum

Essential training relevant to commissioners in every U.S. jurisdiction.

Course 1: Introduction to Planning

- Introduction
- Planning Official Wanted
- What is the Planning Commission?
- Private Citizen to Public Official
- Fundamental Duties
- Responsibilities of the Planning Official
- The Planning Team
- Why Be a Planning Official?
- Review Activity

Course 2: Planning Official Ethics 101

- Introduction
- What Does Ethics Mean?
- What is a Conflict of Interest?
- Potential Conflicts or "Appearance of Impropriety"
- Ethics and Conflict of Interest
- Ethical Actions
- Legislating Planning Official Conduct
- Ethics and Fairness
- APA Ethical Principles in Planning
- Other Planning-Related Codes of Ethics
- Review Activity

Course 3: What is a Comprehensive Plan?

- Introduction
- What is a Comprehensive Plan?
- Purpose and Content of a Comprehensive plan
- Contents of a Comprehensive Plan
- Functional Elements
- Historical and Background Information
- Analyses and Projections
- Vision and Issues
- Goals and Objectives
- Policies
- Implementation Strategies
- Sub-Area and Multi-Jurisdictional Plans
- Organizing the Plan
- Review Activity

Course 4: Overview of the Planning Process

- Introduction
- The Big Picture
- Planning to Plan
- Working With the Public
- Collecting and Analyzing Data
- Setting Goals and Objectives
- Drafting the Plan
- Adopting the Plan
- Review Activity

Course 5: Working with the Public

- Working with the Public
- Communication Challenges
- One-Way Communication
- Two-Way Communication
- Opinion Surveys
- Media
- Presentations
- Personal Interviews
- Town Meetings
- Focus Groups
- Design Charrettes
- Public Hearings
- Review Activity

Course 6: Basic Legal Framework for Planning Officials

- Introduction
- How are Planning Officials Empowered?
- Constitutional Law
- State and Federal Statutes and Land Use
- Statutes and Local Government Functions
- Case Law
- Common Law
- Attorney General Opinions
- Why Know All This?
- Review Activity

Course 7: Constitutional Limitations on Planning and Zoning

- Introduction
- What Are Constitutional Limitations?
- Substantive Due Process
- Equal Protection
- Eminent Domain and Just Compensation
- Takings
- Freedom of Speech
- Freedom of Religion
- Review Activity

Course 8: How Does Zoning Work?

- Introduction
- What is Zoning?
- Limitations on Zoning
- The Zoning Ordinance and the Plan
- Who Creates the Ordinance?
- The Zoning Ordinance
- The Zoning Map
- Keeping the Ordinance Current
- Nonconformities
- Zoning Administration
- Conditions on Approval
- Standards of Review
- Review Activity

Course 9: The Site Plan

- Introduction
- What is a Site Plan?
- What is Included in a Site Plan?
- Site Plan Review
- When is Site Plan Review Required?
- Overview of the Site Plan Review Process
- Application
- Investigation and Site Plan Visit
- Site Plan Review Decisions
- Documenting Decisions
- Review Activity

Course 10: Overview of the Zoning Process

- Introduction
- Words To The Wise
- The Big Picture
- Creating An Ordinance
- Adopting An Ordinance
- Amending An Ordinance
- Special Land Uses
- Planned Unit Development
- Appeals, Variances, and Interpretation
- Zoning Ordinance Enforcement
- Managing The Zoning Process
- Review Activity

Available on <https://courses.planetizen.com/planning-commissioner-training>

For group rates, contact courses@planetizen.com