

July 26, 2016

Planning Commission, Planning Board and Board of Appeals Education Course

Welcome!

I am pleased to welcome you to the online education course for members of planning commissions, planning boards and boards of appeals, which has been developed by the Maryland Department of Planning pursuant to Chapters 180 and 181 of the Laws of Maryland. This came about as a result of the passage of legislation in the 2009 Session of the Maryland General Assembly, which requires new members of a local jurisdiction's planning board or commission and board of appeals to complete an education course within six (6) months of their appointment.

This requirement applies to the non-charter counties and municipalities who exercise planning and zoning authority under the Land Use Article and charter counties including Montgomery and Prince George's counties. The law says that the course must include education on the role of the comprehensive plan, proper standards for special exceptions and variances, if applicable, and the jurisdiction's zoning ordinances and regulations, planned development ordinances and regulations, subdivision ordinances and regulations and other land use ordinances and regulations.

The course was developed with input from the 2007 Task Force on the Future of Growth and Development, and your partners in planning policy and implementation including the Maryland Association of Counties (MaCo), Maryland Municipal League (MML), Maryland Planning Commissioner's Association (MPCA) and others. This joint effort has resulted in the course you are about to take and we hope you find it informative, useful and beneficial in your important role as a planning official.

This will be an on-going educational requirement for all planning commissions, planning boards and board of appeals throughout the state, as membership on these bodies changes from time to time. Our goal is to provide good information to help you make even better informed planning decisions for your city, town or county. I welcome and encourage your feedback on this course and if you have any suggestions after completing it, please feel free to pass them along.

Enjoy the course!

Sincerely,

Wendi W. Peters

Secretary, Maryland Department of Planning