

Statement of Ethical Principles

- A. Serve the public interest.
 1. Recognize the rights of citizens to participate in planning decisions.
 2. Give citizens full, clear, and accurate information.
 3. Expand choice and opportunity for all persons.
 4. Assist in the clarification of community goals.
 5. Ensure that information available to decision makers is also available to the public.
 6. Pay special attention to the interrelatedness of decisions and the long-range consequences of present actions.

- B. Strive to achieve high standards of integrity and proficiency.
 1. Exercise fair, independent, and honest judgment.
 2. Publicly disclose any personal interests.
 3. Define personal interest broadly.
 4. Abstain from participation in a matter in which you have a personal interest and leave the chamber when the matter is being deliberated.
 5. Seek no gifts or favors.
 6. Abstain from participating as an advisor or decision maker on any plan or project in which you have previously participated as an advocate.
 7. Serve as advocates only when the objectives are legal and serve the public interest.
 8. Not participate as an advocate on any plan or program in which you have previously served as an advisory or decision maker except after full disclosure and in no circumstance earlier than one year following termination of the role as advisory or decision maker.
 9. Not use confidential information to further a personal interest.
 10. Not disclose confidential information.
 11. Not misrepresent facts or distort information.
 12. Not participate in any matter unless prepared.
 13. Respect the rights of all persons.

These principles are aspirational in nature and they seek to inspire voluntary commitment through appeals to conscience. They are a positive obligation.

Conduct of the Members of the Planning Commission

- Members of the planning commission shall take such time as to prepare themselves for hearings and meetings.
- Any member of the planning commission absent from three consecutive regular meetings or any six regular meetings within a calendar year, without being excused by the Chairperson, may be removed for cause.
- A planning commission member with a conflict of interest in an item before the commission must state that a conflict of interest exists and withdraw from participation

in the public hearing, working session, emergency meeting, or regular meeting on that item.

- The interests of that planning commission member may be represented before the planning commission by a specifically designated representative or legal agent at the public hearing or working session, and testimony entered into the public record.
- Participation of a planning commission member with a conflict of interest is cause for removal.

Censuring a Member

The censure of a member of a governing body is public statement condemning the member's inappropriate behavior with the hopes of reforming him or her so that he or she will not behave in the same way again. Members can be censured for:

- misconduct at meetings,
- failing to follow proper procedures,
- violating confidentiality,
- moral misconduct,
- absenteeism,
- lying,
- disloyalty,
- working against the organization, including the undermining of a decision of the organization,
- conspiracy, and
- violating other values that the governing body holds dear.

Censure is one way for the other members of the governing body to avoid the appearance of agreement with the objectionable behavior of a fellow member. The presiding officer cannot censure a member of the governing body for misbehavior; only the body can do so. The presiding officer can also be censured for not following parliamentary rules in meetings, and for denying members their basic rights to make motions, participate in debate, and vote.

Support for Decisions of the Planning Commission

Local governments and public bodies are different from private organizations. Under the First Amendment to the Constitution, elected officials and citizen volunteers have the right to speak out when they hold a different view from the body. At the same time, they may not try to undermine the body's decision.