



POLICY NAME: **PLANNING BOARD CODE OF ETHICS**

POLICY #: POL-2023-005

ORIGINAL ADOPTION DATE: 5-9-23 REVISION DATE(S): N/A

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PURPOSE AND INTENT: This Code of Ethics aims to establish fair and equitable standards for the review of matters before the Planning Board pursuant to North Carolina State law and the Summerfield Unified Development Ordinance. The board desires to keep ethics at the forefront of its recommendations and decision-making.

PREAMBLE: The stability and proper operation of democratic representative government depends upon the continuing consent of the governed, upon the public confidence in the integrity of the government and upon responsible exercise of the trust conferred by the people. Government decisions and policies must be made and implemented through proper channels and processes of the governmental structure. Each Planning Board member must find within his or her own conscience the touchstone on which to determine appropriate conduct. To enable and assure the adherence to the above stated principles and purposes, the following Articles establish guidelines for ethical standards of conduct for Planning Board members. This Code should not be considered a substitute for the law or a Planning Board member's best judgment.

ARTICLE ONE: A Planning Board Member Shall Obey the Law

Planning Board members shall support the Constitution of the United States, the Constitution of North Carolina, and the laws enacted by the Congress of the United States and the General Assembly pursuant thereto. Members specifically acknowledge and agree to comply with the requirements of N.C.G.S §14-234 entitled "Public officers or employees benefiting from public contracts; exceptions."

ARTICLE TWO: A Planning Board Member Should Uphold the Integrity and Independence of His or Her Office

Planning Board members should demonstrate the highest standards of personal integrity, truthfulness, honesty, and fortitude in all their public activities in order to inspire public confidence and trust in Town government. Planning Board members should participate in establishing, maintaining, and enforcing, and should themselves observe, high standards of conduct so that the integrity and independence of their office may be preserved. The provisions of this Code should be construed and applied to further these objectives.

ARTICLE THREE: A Planning Board Member Should Avoid Impropriety and the Appearance of Impropriety in All His or Her Activities



- A. It is essential that Town government attract those citizens best qualified and willing to serve. Planning Board members have legitimate interests; economic, professional, and vocational, of a private nature. Planning Board members should not be denied and should not deny to other Planning Board members or citizens, the opportunity to acquire, retain and pursue private interests, economic or otherwise, except when conflicts with their responsibility to the public cannot be avoided. Planning Board members must exercise their best judgment to determine when this is the case.
- B. Planning Board members should respect and comply with the law and should conduct themselves at all times in a manner that promotes public confidence in the integrity of the Planning Board members and of Town government.
- C. Planning Board members should not allow family, social, or other relationships to unduly influence their conduct or judgment and should not lend the prestige of the office of Planning Board members to advance the private interests of others; nor should they convey, or permit others to convey, the impression that they are in a special position to influence them. Planning Board members shall not grant any special consideration, treatment, or advantage to any citizen beyond that which is available to every other citizen.

Any other member of the Planning Board who has an interest in any official act or action before the Board shall publicly disclose on the record of the Board, the nature and extent of such interest and if required by law, shall withdraw from any consideration of the matter if excused by the Board pursuant to N.C.G.S §160A-75.

ARTICLE FOUR: A Planning Board Member Should Perform the Duties of the Office Diligently

Planning Board members should, while performing the duties of the role as prescribed by law, give precedence to these duties over other activities. In the performance of these duties, the following standards should apply:

A. Legislative Responsibilities:

- 1) Planning Board members should actively pursue policy goals they believe to be in the best interests of the Town within the parameters of orderly decision-making, rules of the Planning Board, and open government.
- 2) Planning Board members should respect the legitimacy of the goals and interests of other Planning Board members and should respect the rights of others to pursue goals and policies different from their own.

B. Adjudicative Responsibilities:

- 1) Planning Board members should be faithful to the general and local laws pertaining to the office and strive for professional competence in them. They should be un-swayed by partisan interests, public clamor, or fear of criticism.
- 2) Planning Board members should demand and contribute to the maintenance of order and decorum in proceedings before the Planning Board.
- 3) Planning Board members should be honest, patient, dignified, and courteous to those with whom they deal in their official capacity, and should require similar conduct of their staff and others subject to their direction and control.



- 4) Planning Board members should give accord to every person who is legally interested in a proceeding before the Board full right to be heard according to law.
- 5) Planning Board members should dispose promptly of the business of Town for which they are responsible.

C. Administrative Responsibilities:

- 1) Planning Board members should clearly distinguish legislative, adjudicatory, and administrative responsibilities, and should refrain from inappropriate interference in the impartial administration of Town affairs by Town employees. Planning Board members should diligently discharge those administrative responsibilities that are appropriate, should maintain professional competence in the administration of these duties, and should facilitate the diligent discharge of the administrative responsibilities of fellow Board Members and other Town officials.
- 2) Planning Board members should conserve the resources of the Town in their charge. They should employ Town equipment, property, funds, and personnel only in legally permissible pursuits and in a manner that exemplifies excellent stewardship.
- 3) Planning Board members should require Town employees subject to their direction and control to observe the standards of fidelity and diligence that apply to Planning Board members as well as those appropriate for employees.
- 4) Planning Board members should take or initiate appropriate disciplinary measures against a Town employee for improper conduct of which the Planning Board members may become aware.

ARTICLE FIVE: A Planning Board Member Should Conduct the Business of the Board in an Open and Public Manner

Planning Board members should be aware of the letter and intent of the State's Open Meetings Law, should conduct the business of the Planning Board consistent with the letter and spirit of that law, and consistent with the need to inspire and maintain public confidence in the integrity and fairness of Town government and the office of Planning Board members. Consistent with this goal of preserving public trust, Planning Board members should be aware of the need for discretion in deliberations when the lack of discretion would pose a threat to the resources of the Town, to the reputation of current or potential Town employees, to orderly and responsible decision making, to the integrity of other governmental processes, or to other legitimate interests of the Town.

This Code of Ethics and conduct for the Town of Summerfield was adopted on the 9th day of May, 2023, by action of the Town Council of the Town of Summerfield, North Carolina.

Tim Sessoms, Mayor

Sarah Tibbetts, Town Clerk