

# PLANNING ESSENTIALS

# TO PLAN OR NOT TO PLAN...

- WHAT is it?
- WHY do we do it?
- WHO does it?
- HOW do you do it?
- WHAT do you do with it when you've got it?



# TO PLAN OR NOT TO PLAN...

## □ Plan - *Verb*

### □ Definition:

- to arrange the parts of
- to devise or project the realization or achievement of
- To think in advance about a method

## □ Plan - *Noun*

### □ Definition:

- a detailed formulation of a program of action;
- a method devised for doing something or achieving an end, involving a series of actions

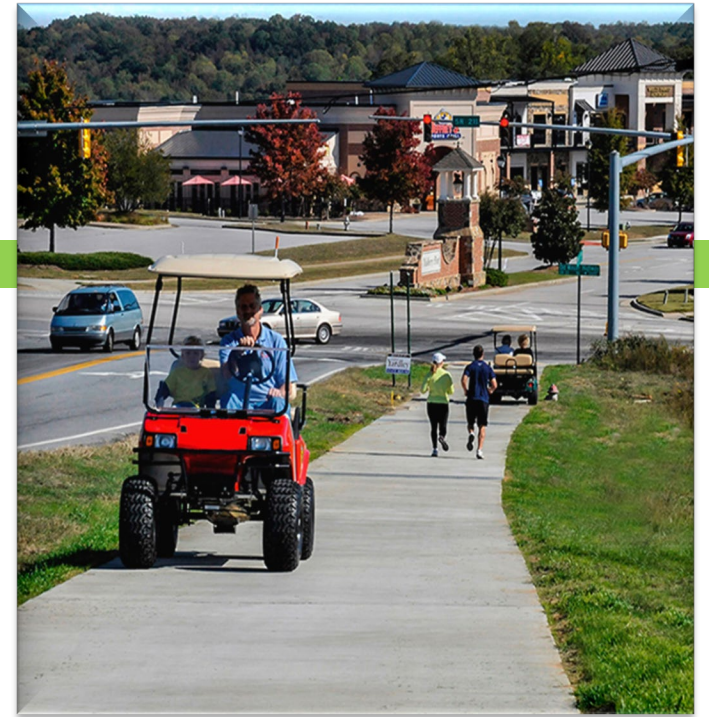
# WHAT IS PLANNING?





# WHY PLAN?

- Planning for YOUR Community:
  - Helps protect property rights/values
  - Certainty is good for economic development
  - Helps maintain and improve your quality of life
  - Protect public investments: It's your money, after all
  - Provides a forum to reach consensus



# WHY PLAN? Social Benefits



# WHY PLAN? Economic Benefits





# WHY PLAN? Environmental Benefits





# WHO PLANS?

- EVERYONE – the plan should involve the entire community
- Elected Officials
- Local Government Staff
- Consultants, Developers
- Appointed Officials
- Regional Commissions
- State of Georgia





# WHAT COMMUNITY PLANS DO

Predict future population, housing, and employment trends

Don't you want to know how many houses you will need? New jobs?

Protect and preserve future land needs

Don't you want to make sure you have enough land available to grow?

Assure adequate public facilities and services

Don't you want to have enough water for the community?

Protect existing and future public investment

Don't you want to save money by continuing to use what you already have paid for?

Protect environment

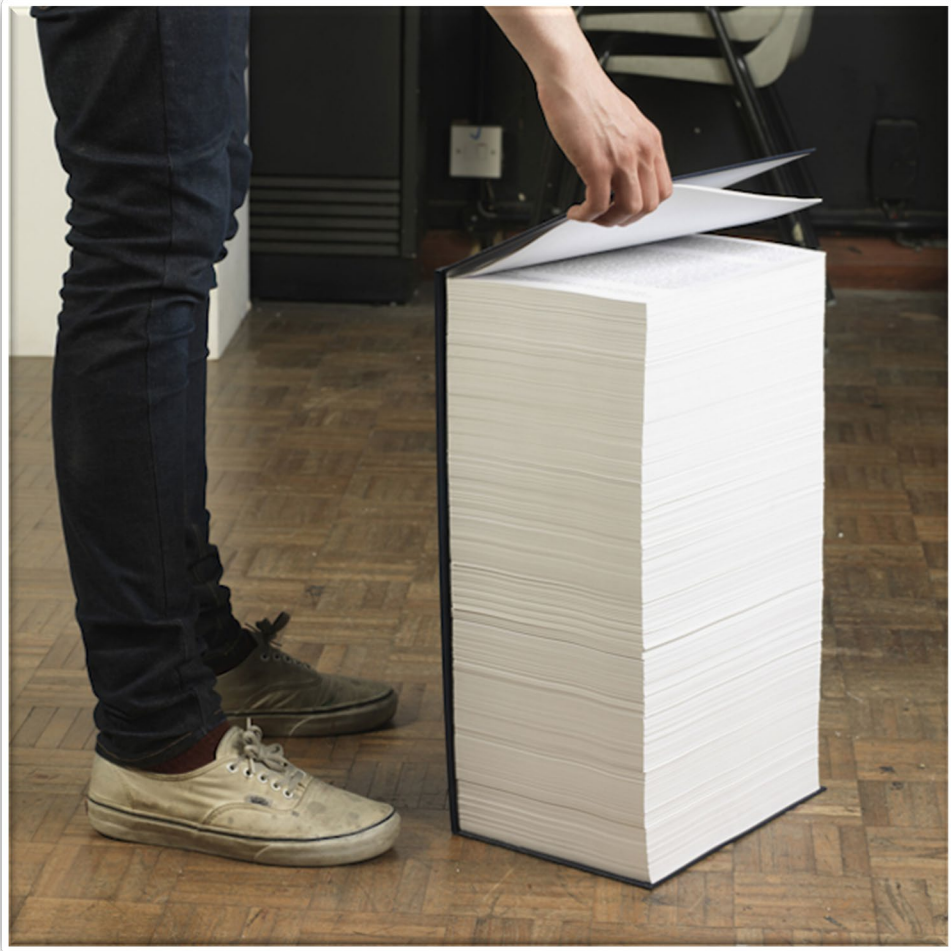
Don't you want to make sure your natural and historic resources are protected?

Reflect community values

Don't you want your community to be what YOU want it to be?

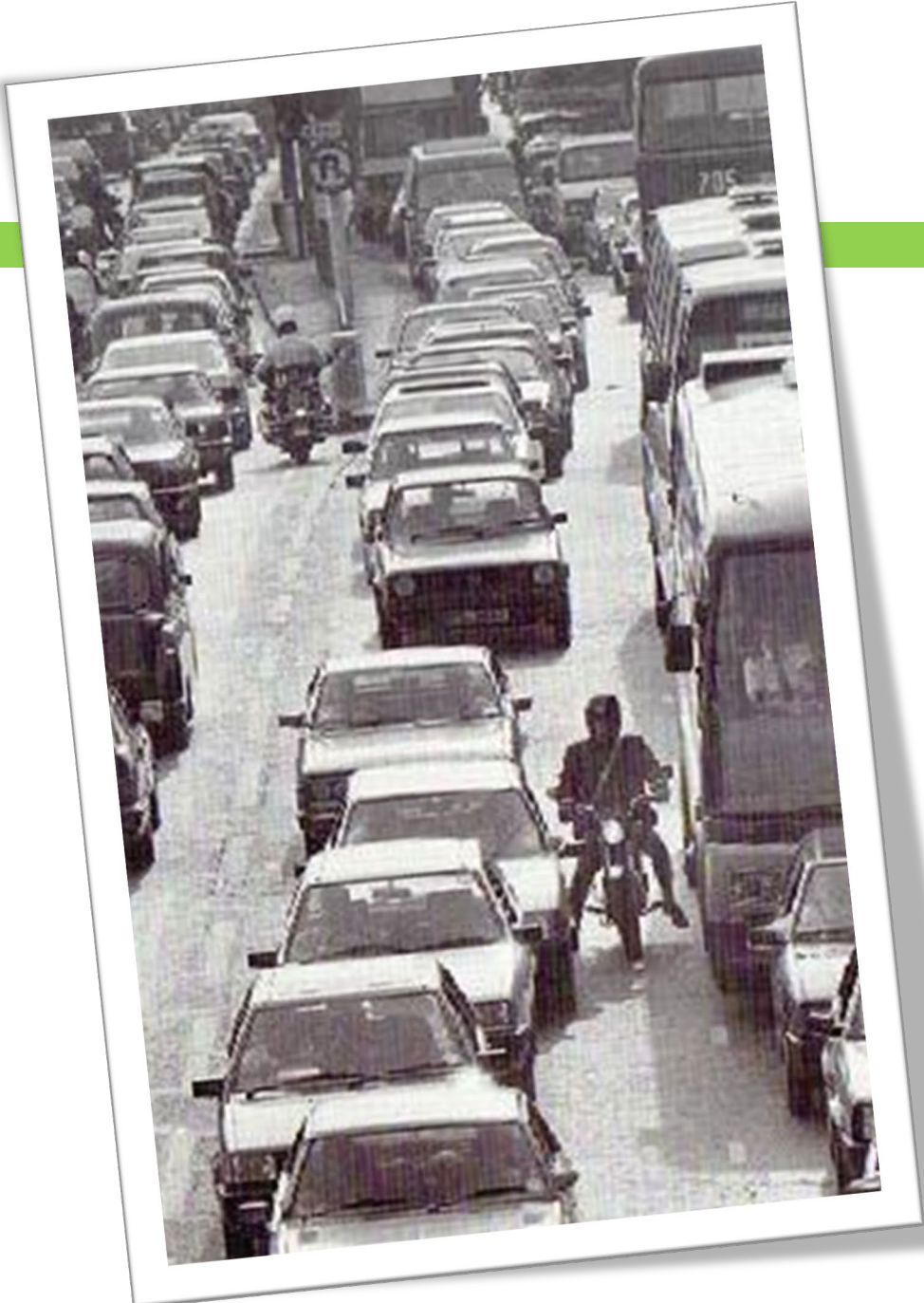


# DO PLANS MATTER?





# IF WE DON'T PLAN!



# IT ISN'T JUST DCA

**USDA**  
Natural Resources Conservation Service  
United States Department of Agriculture

[Topics](#) [Programs](#) [Newsroom](#) [Blog](#) [Contact Us](#)



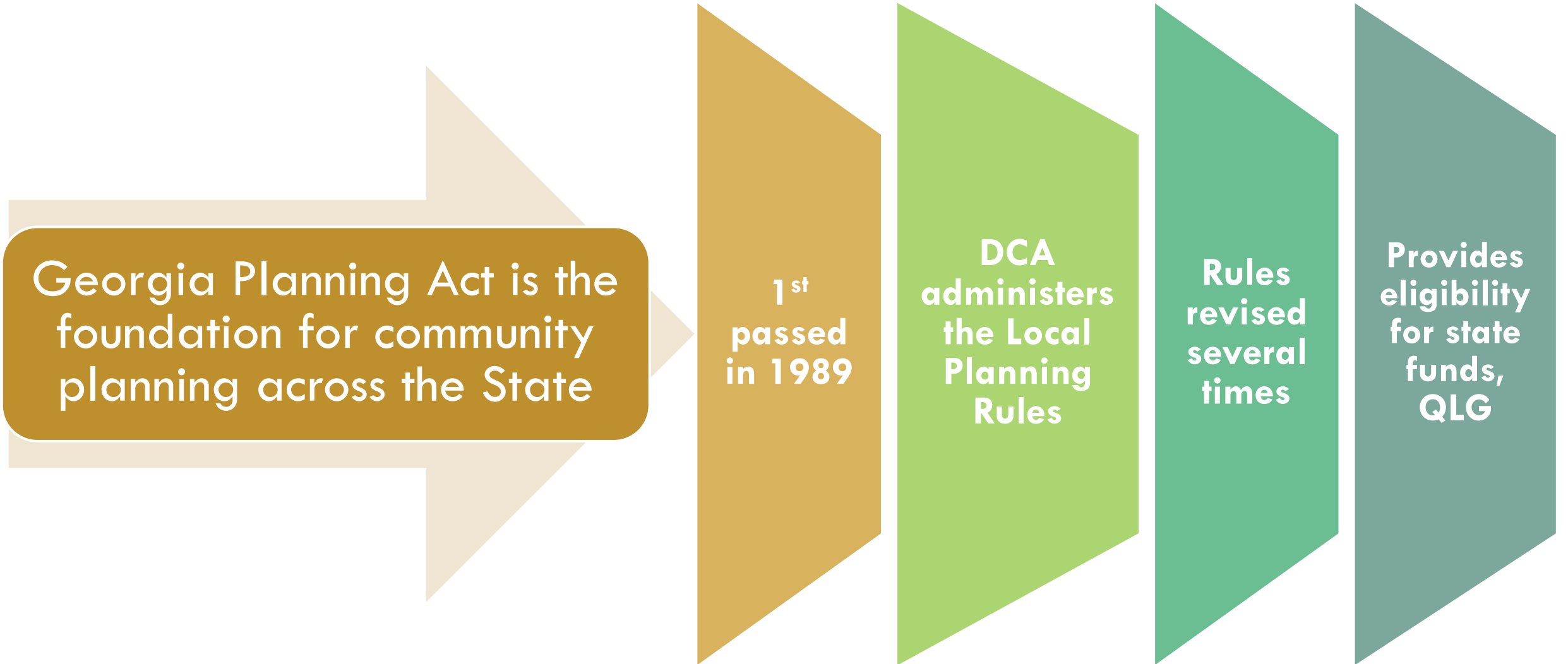
## 5 Steps to Assistance

How to Get Assistance from NRCS for Farms, Ranches and Forests

- 1 PLANNING**  
Visit your local NRCS field office to discuss your goals and work with staff on a conservation plan.
- 2 APPLICATION**  
With the help of NRCS, complete an application for financial assistance programs.
- 3 ELIGIBILITY**  
As part of applying, we'll file paperwork to ensure you're eligible for assistance.
- 4 RANKING**  
NRCS ranks applications according to local resource concerns.
- 5 IMPLEMENTING**  
Put conservation to work by signing a contract and implementing conservation practices.



# HOW WE DO IT IN GEORGIA



Georgia Planning Act is the foundation for community planning across the State

1<sup>st</sup> passed in 1989

DCA administers the Local Planning Rules

Rules revised several times

Provides eligibility for state funds, QLQ

# LOCAL COMPREHENSIVE PLANS

- Help develop & support policies
- Direct capital improvements
- Help set the budget
- Evaluate future development
- See the future
- Set the future
- Guide economic growth
- Guide land development
- Celebrate the community
- Improve community health
- Address housing issues
- Upgrade local infrastructure
- Gives the public a voice
- Represents everybody
- See opportunities not just issues
- Provide solutions

# LOCAL PLANNING TOOLS

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- Future Development Map in the comp plan
  - Zoning Ordinance and Map
  - Unified Development Code
  - Special ordinances for trees, signs, etc.
  - Design Guidelines (historic districts, etc.)
  - Others specific to your local government



# ZONING DEFINED

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- Zoning is the government's ability to regulate private property through use of the police powers – the public health, safety, morals and general welfare- the local government's ability to regulate what goes where.
- It's really important to remember that your zoning ordinance must include an accurate map. If you don't have a zoning map then you don't have a valid ordinance. The map has to be a part of your zoning code.

# ZONING ORDINANCE

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Zoning Map

Administrative  
Procedure

District  
Requirements

Site Design

# WHO'S INVOLVED?

□ On the local level:

Elected Officials:  
State, County,  
City

Appointed  
Boards and  
Commissions

Planning Staff

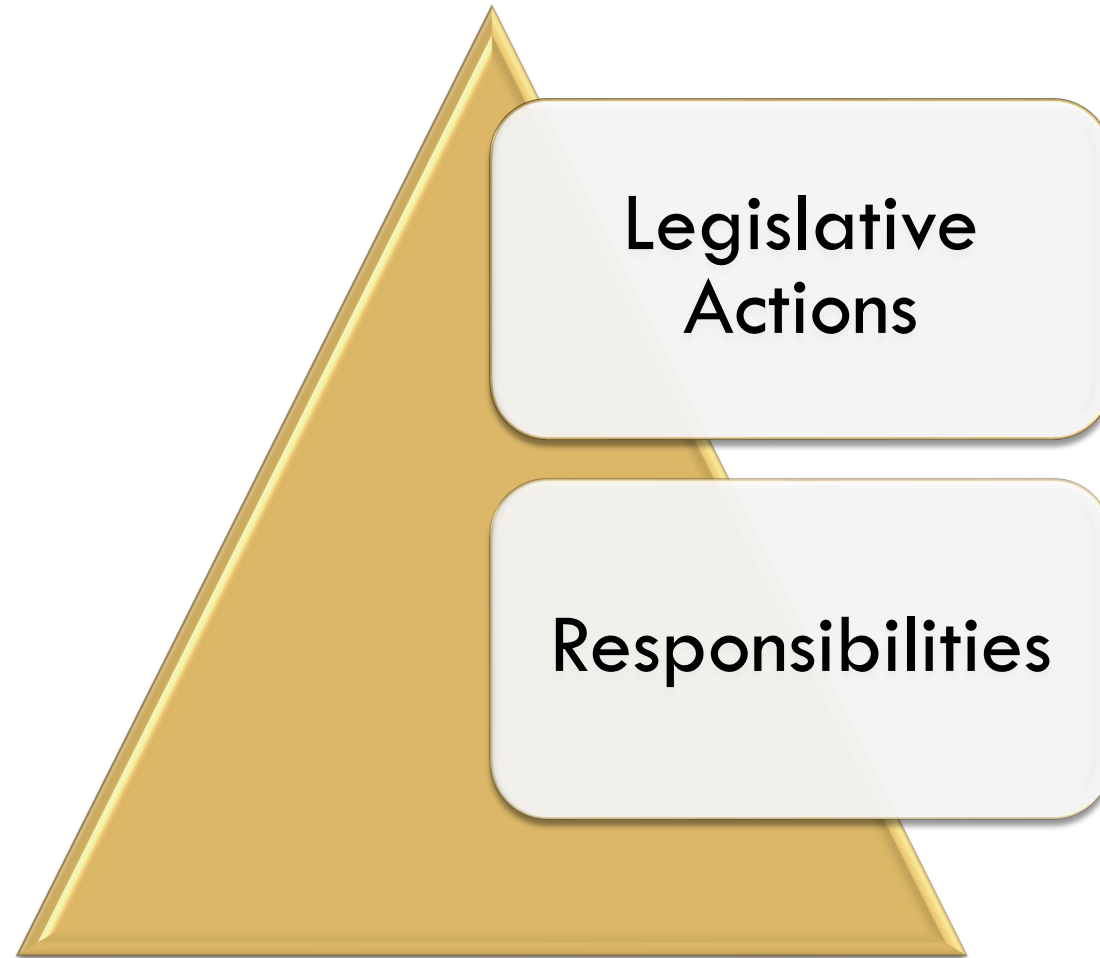
Development  
Community

Public



# ELECTED OFFICIALS

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# ACTIONS

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## □ Legislative (elected officials)

### ■ Such things as:

- Adopting the zoning ordinance
- Adoption of amendments to the ordinance that change the text
- Rezoning of property
- Special use permits

## □ Administrative

- Anything else

# LEGISLATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

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**Set plan in motion**

**Create a capable  
board**

**Establish policy**

**Change  
policies/ordinances**

**Give sense of  
direction**

**Make final  
decisions**

# PLANNING COMMISSION AUTHORIZATION



Contained in your ordinance - Administration (the commission as well as the elected body and staff)

- Planning Commission
  - Creation, Appointment, Terms
  - Organization, Rules, Staff
  - Functions and Duties
- Role and responsibilities of the elected body
- All procedures and standards



# PLANNING COMMISSION

## FIVE GOALS OF PLANNING COMMISSION

Remember what the purpose of “zoning” really is

Carry out development review process within the legal framework and requirements of state and local law

Effectively deal with the local political will

Act as an arbiter between government staff, applicant, citizens, land owners, and other parties

Review projects in view of standards and technical criteria which are applicable

# PLANNING COMMISSION

## QUALIFICATIONS

Be a resident

Willingness and dedication

Interest in community planning

Desire to assist in implementation

Willingness to encourage and accept input

Ability to maintain an objective approach

# PLANNING COMMISSION

## ROLES

- Prepare comprehensive plan
- Implement plan with local government
- Advise on planning
- Work within established policies/codes
- Recommend changes to policies/codes

# PLANNING COMMISSION: TIPS

## FOLLOWING THE LAW - ASK THESE QUESTIONS

- Is the proposal consistent with the Comp Plan?
- Does it meet all applicable zoning and subdivision requirements?
- Are environmental impacts reduced or eliminated by conditions or are there overriding considerations?
- Is decision supported by findings of fact based on substantial evidence in the record?
- Anything else?



# PLANNING COMMISSION: MEMBERS

Learn  
meeting  
procedures  
(Robert's  
Rules of  
Order)

Stay  
informed

Keep  
communication  
open

Be an  
effective  
leader

Follow the  
law

**BEING EFFECTIVE**

# PLANNING COMMISSION: MEETING BASICS



- Will of majority of commissioners must be carried out
- No voice counts more than another
- Only one topic will be considered at a time
- Follow adopted procedures
- Follow your adopted agenda
- Comments always directed to the chair
- All deliberations done in the open
- All decisions given in the open

# AGENDA



Introduction of reports/documents

Approval of minutes

Old business

New business

Other business

Adjournment

# ACTIONS: What are your choices?

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Approve



Approve with  
Conditions



Deny



Postpone





# LOCAL STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES



## Administer code

Provide full and accurate information and background to applicant, developers, boards, commissions, and landowners

Reports/recommendations based on fact (plan/code)

Administrative permits

# DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY



Acts as agents for property owners or neighborhood

Professional wisdom and experience

# WHO IS THE DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY?

Real estate  
agents/brokers

Land  
developers/speculators

Residential and  
commercial builders

Apartment developers  
and landlords

Lawyers

Engineers, architects,  
surveyors

Bankers

Consultants

Trade groups/special  
interest groups

# THE PUBLIC



Plans belong to the community



Publishing hearing agenda in various media outlets is good tool



Handouts and visuals can help individuals understand in process





# FINAL WORDS



Plans are a guide. Codes and ordinances are law.

Staff, boards, and commissions must be: objective, consistent, rely on laws, codes, plans, and facts.

Plans (and codes and laws) are living documents and must evolve with change in conditions.

Implementation and enforcement are important.

Focus must be sustained by staff and elected officials.



Georgia<sup>®</sup> Department of



# Community Affairs