



Creating Great Communities For All
**Connecticut Chapter of the
American Planning Association**

**Testimony regarding
Proposed Bill No. 699– AN ACT CONCERNING ALTERNATE MEMBERS OF PLANNING
COMMISSIONS**

CCAPA supports this Proposed Bill, as narrowly defined. CGS §8-19a refers to municipal planning commissions, and currently prohibits alternate members to be drawn from the membership of the municipal zoning commissions or zoning board of appeals. Opening up alternate membership, as this Bill proposes, to members of the local zoning board of appeals should not create much opportunity for conflict or predisposition on applications, as the jurisdiction of a zoning board of appeals and a planning commission are quite distinct. In communities where the potential volunteer commissioner/board member pool is small, this may help facilitate having a full roster of commissions. In cases of potential conflict, the bill also provides a provision that these alternate members would recuse themselves when the planning commission had already considered the issue at question before one of the other boards.

Our one reservation and note of caution on this proposal, however, is recognizing that a significant number of Connecticut municipalities function with a joint planning and zoning commission. In the case of a joint commission, drawing alternate members from the zoning board of appeals would be inappropriate, as you could have members deciding on both the regulations and potential variances thereof. This Bill should apply only to the potential membership of stand-alone planning commissions and not joint planning and zoning commissions.

WHO WE ARE

The Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association (CCAPA) has over 420 members who are governmental and consulting planners, land use attorneys, citizen planners, and other professionals engaged in planning and managing land use, economic development, housing, transportation, and conservation for local, regional, and State governments, private businesses and other entities. CCAPA has long been committed to assisting the legislature and State agencies with developing and furthering responsible growth management principles. The APA is an independent, not-for-profit, national educational organization that provides leadership in the development of vital communities.

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