



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

Testimony regarding
**Proposed Bill No. 1026– AN ACT CONCERNING TRAINING FOR CERTAIN PLANNING
AND ZONING OFFICIALS**

CCAPA supports this Proposed Bill. Currently, there are no mandated requirements for training or continuing education for those Planning, Zoning, or Zoning Board of Appeals members who are responsible for making some of the most consequential decisions for the future of our communities. While we recognize that many of these officials are popularly elected by their municipality's voters and thus answerable to their electorate, the influence they have is far too vast to be endowed without a baseline of knowledge of land use review rudimentary skills such as reading site and architectural plans and the basic legal constructs that regulate these commissions and their decisions.

We recognize that many communities, especially smaller towns, struggle to recruit quality volunteers for local commissions and are thus reluctant to add to the time-commitment burden. However, the proposed training is minimal: a total of four hours per year. A disciplined commission could accomplish this with a single half-day session or spread out across several regularly-schedule meetings. The benefits, on the other hand, are substantial. Ensuring the public that their local land use decision-makers have a solid baseline of the understanding of their role will also go a long way to bolstering support and trust in local processes. The added value of educating commissioners regarding their statutory and legal requirements and avoiding unnecessary lawsuits due to commissioner misconduct or lack of this knowledge is also significant. The integrity of our planning and zoning regulations and procedures are far too important to continue without a solid baseline of trust and that trust starts with education. We applaud our local planning and zoning commissioners for their public service and we firmly believe that the continuing education requirement would simply allow them to be better prepared for this important work. We urge the passage of this proposal.

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.

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