

3. *Your neighbor wants to open a candy store in the neighborhood. What tool will you use to see if this is allowed?* **Answer:** Zoning Ordinance

Regroup participants into groups that will have representatives from “one”, “two”, “three” and “four” in each. Participants explain their planning tool to the other three so that all have an understanding. Distribute the two hypothetical situations to different groups. Groups must decide what tool they will need to solve the situation and travel to the location of the tools needed. They are to answer the problem. When groups have completed the task, they share their situations and the tools they used.

Activity 2:

A Comprehensive Plan for Keystone Township

Summary: Participants will participate in contributing information in the development of a comprehensive plan for a fictional community called Keystone Township. They will become characters in a community and present their recommendations on specific aspects of the comprehensive plan. They will assume the perceived role of their character as they make decisions and learn the value of leadership, compromise and information.

Questions: What are the elements considered in developing a comprehensive plan? How do different members of the community differ in their point of view? What skills and techniques help you to work with individuals and groups with different views?

Preparation

- Copy the Keystone Township Map for each team of participants (p 82).

- Cut and copy the Community Visioning Worksheet for each team of participants (p 83).
- Cut and copy the Toolbox Vocabulary and assign it to the appropriate characters (pp 84-86).
- Cut and copy the Invitation and Township Description for each team of participants (pp 87-88).
- Copy and cut out the citizen’s roles and provide a role to one or more participants (p 88).
- Provide groups of participants with flip charts and markers to develop their presentation.
- Comprehensive Plan Considerations Activity Sheet (p 89).

Procedure

We are going to divide into groups and become members of Keystone Township. We have been invited to participate in a community visioning process to help the planning commission develop a comprehensive plan for the township. Keystone Township did not have a comprehensive plan but would like to develop one. The planning commission has asked for input from the community. Each of you will be assigned a role and your group will be assigned one aspect of the comprehensive plan to address. Your task is to make recommendations based on your role and include a tool from the toolbox in your discussions.

A comprehensive plan is a statement of future goals for the community. It is an official document that will guide future decisions about how to develop the community. Each group will share their contribution to the whole group.

Review the description of Keystone Township. Hand out roles to each person. Each group will be assigned one aspect of the comprehensive plan to address. Groups

may review actual plans from other communities before developing their suggestions. Be sure to represent the role of your namesake when contributing to the discussions. Participants will prepare recommendations for a comprehensive plan based on the views of your group. The group will discuss elements as listed on the Community Visioning worksheet.

Each group receives a map, map key, township description, Toolbox vocabulary, visioning worksheet and their comprehensive plan considerations. They may use a flip chart and markers. Allow 20 minutes for the group to review the information and prepare their recommendations.

Display recommendations on flip charts.

Using different colored dots or markers, distribute three dots per person and have each person select three recommendations that they feel would be a top priority for Keystone Township. Discuss the top priorities.

Select three people from the class to be Planning Commissioners. Explain the importance of the Planning Commission.

Question: What is a planning commission?

Planning commissions are made up of three to nine people living in the community who advise and make recommendations to elected officials who will make final decisions on land use issues in the municipality. They are appointed volunteers who provide ideas on land use regulations, zoning and subdivision controls. They have two functions: to prepare a comprehensive plan and to review/comment on development proposals. They must keep records of their activities. They prepare plans for recreation, open space, greenways, environmental protection, natural resources, agriculture

and forestry. They have great influence on the protection, enhancement and conservation of open spaces. Sixty percent of the municipalities have planning agencies and 66 counties have planning agencies.

Select one person to record the key points to the recommendations. Each group presents their ideas. The Planning Commission is encouraged to question the recommendations and to encourage alternatives that might improve the community.

Closing

Planning deals with the “where,” “what,” and “how” of land use. The “where” of planning addresses the natural resources as well as the man made infrastructure. Starting with an inventory of the green and man made landscape, we are better equipped to make decisions about where future growth should occur. How did you demonstrate sensitivity to green space as you made your recommendations?

“What” we plan must respect the constitutional right of the landowners balanced with the needs of society to use and protect natural resources wisely. The decisions should rest with the values and goals of each community and its relationship to other communities. How did you incorporate other communities in your plan?

“How” we plan requires an understanding of many elements including economics, timing and procedures. Achieving land use goals requires creativity, foresight and commitment. How did you incorporate economic needs while maintaining the character of your community?

When we plan we are comparing what exists now to what should or could exist in the future. Communities have many tools available to them if they choose to formalize their planning process.

Assessment and Review

1. *What tools are available for planning in your community?*
2. *How is planning beneficial to a community?*
3. *What happened in the group dynamics as people exercised the role of their namesake?*
4. *How was it addressed?*
5. *Explain what could happen in a real life planning session?*
6. *What are some strategies for working with differing views?*

Concepts and Vocabulary Task

There are some additional planning tools and concepts that will help participants decide how to develop their plan. Prepare a set of vocabulary cards and place one with each name tag that might be appropriate for that name tag. The person that is assigned a tool must try to think of ways to apply that tool when discussing their

aspect of the comprehensive plan. They must share the definition of their tool in their discussions.

The Toolbox Vocabulary: One or two of the following will be assigned to each person to review and use in planning discussions.

- Multi-municipal planning
- Infill traditional development
- Agricultural preservation
- Conservation easements
- Brownfields
- Traditional neighborhood development
- Transfer/purchase of development rights
- Designated growth area
- Conservation subdivision design
- Greenway

What are the features *that make a township handsome? A river, with its waterfalls and meadows, a lake, a hill, a cliff or individual rocks, a forest, and ancient trees standing singly. Such things are beautiful; they have a high use which dollars and cents never represent. If the inhabitants of a town were wise, they would seek to preserve such things, though at a considerable expense; for such things educate far more than any hired teachers or preachers, or any at present recognized system of school education.*

Henry David Thoreau (Poet/Writer/Naturalist)