

CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION IN PLANNING AND ZONING

CONCEPT - The Certificate of Education in Planning and Zoning program is a self-study course designed to help beginners and experienced plan commissioners, elected and appointed officials, staff and interested citizens alike increase their knowledge about planning and zoning as practiced in Wisconsin. Those completing this course will be better able to direct and influence the growth, development and redevelopment of their communities.

This program is designed to fit into the schedule of each participant (student). Students are required to assess their own performance, allowing them to complete each section at their own pace. On average, the course should take between 40 and 60 hours, depending on a student's base level of knowledge about Wisconsin's planning practices and law.

GENESIS - The certificate program stems from a strategic planning session of University of Wisconsin Extension (UWEX) colleagues in the Department of Community Resource Development. Southeastern Wisconsin Growth management/land use issues were identified as emerging topics in each of their counties (Kenosha, Milwaukee, Racine, Ozaukee, Sheboygan, Walworth, Washington and Waukesha). In the following weeks, plan commissioners were surveyed to determine the demand for a planning and zoning educational program for local officials. Of the 95 respondents, more than 65 percent said they were "in favor" of a program and "would seek certification." This led to a pilot course.

PILOT PROGRAM - With the support of County Executive Dan Finley and UWEX Office Director Marcia Jante, the pilot program was developed by Professor Wayne H. Faust in Waukesha County. The content was made up of planning and zoning literature authored by UWEX faculty, national planning organizations and private sector authors. Because the program was promoted at regional workshops and by word of mouth, about half of the 50 who enrolled were from other counties. Response to the pilot course was extremely positive. This local effort was recognized for its quality and potential state-wide impact by the UWEX Community, Natural Resource and Community Development Program leader who funded the revision and update.

REVISED COURSE - The revised course is based on a new publication, Guide to Land Use Planning in Wisconsin by Brian Ohm, Department of Urban and Regional Planning, UW-Madison/Extension. While Ohm's text serves as the backbone of the course, other publications and examples of best practice remain integral parts of the program. Changes were recently made to the revision to include the new "Smart Growth" legislation that requires all communities and counties to have comprehensive plans by 2010.

The revised course consists of 14 chapters covering the breadth of planning and zoning. Because each student brings his or her own knowledge, experience, interests and responsibilities to the course, the student is responsible for identifying and studying what is new, reviewing what is familiar and skipping what doesn't apply.

Students may enroll at any time and should expect to complete the course within 12 months. Additional time may be provided on request. Students read and study each chapter, complete the self-assessment and chapter evaluation forms and return the forms to the course coordinator/facilitator in their area. Chapter One is mailed upon enrollment. When the evaluation form is returned, the subsequent chapter is sent out.

COST - The cost of the self-study course is \$250.00

MORE INFORMATION - Contact Karen Cooper

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