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The Planning Board in New Hampshire

A Handbook for Local Officials

NH Office of Strategic Initiatives

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PREFACE

The New Hampshire Office of Strategic Initiatives (OSI) – formerly the Office of Energy and Planning – consists of the Energy and the Planning Divisions. The Energy Division provides information, data and guidance to assist decision-makers on energy issues pertaining to energy efficiency, renewable energy, energy use and resiliency. In part, the Planning Division addresses planning issues related to development, land protection, floodplain management, and community planning. We guide the State’s future growth through programs, public policy development, education and outreach, research, and partnership building.

INTRODUCTION TO THE PLANNING BOARD IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

What is a Planning Board? The planning board is an organized group of selected members of a community in charge of carrying out the future needs, wants, and vision of a community. This is accomplished through the planning board’s regulatory and non-regulatory functions, which include the creation of regulations (Regulatory Function) and the review of development applications (Non-Regulatory Function). This handbook is a guide to the organization, powers, duties, and procedures of the planning board. It includes statutory changes enacted through the current legislative session and electronic copies are available for no charge from OSI’s website.

CAUTION

This handbook is designed to serve as an introduction to the organization, powers, duties, and procedures of planning boards in New Hampshire. However, given the unique nature of individual parcels of land across the state and the wide variety of development proposals, this material should be taken only as a guide. Obviously, all principles outlined herein may not be entirely applicable to every parcel or proposal in the state. Accordingly, this guide should be used as a starting point for discussions regarding a particular parcel or proposal. Cases, treatises, statutes, court rulings and the like referred to in this guide should be checked to determine whether they have been reversed, distinguished, amended, or whether they are even applicable to the unique parcel under consideration. This material is being offered as a service to users and is considered “as is” without any expressed or implied guarantee or warranty by the State of New Hampshire or any subdivision thereof pertaining to the operation and administration of the board or for the accuracy of the information provided.