



The Certified Alabama Planning & Zoning Official Program (CAPZO)

HOW TO BECOME CERTIFIED:

Certification involves completing a specific program. The following courses are required.

- The Legal Foundation for Planning and Zoning in Alabama
- Powers, Duties, and Responsibilities of Planning Commissions and Boards of Adjustment
- Comprehensive Planning: How to Prepare, Update, and Implement Your Plan
- Basic Zoning and Subdivision Regulations
- Meeting Management and Dispute Resolution Workshop
- Community Planning in Alabama: A Primer for PC and BZA Members-Home Study Course

Start the certification program today and take courses in any order that is convenient to you!

HOW TO MAINTAIN CERTIFICATION:

- ❑ Certification is effective for 24 months.
- ❑ Certification may be extended for one year by attending *recertification designated workshops*. Visit our website often for a list of new course offerings (www.una.edu/continuing-studies, then select Alabama Planning Institute)
- ❑ To ensure certification does not expire, be sure to complete the recertification requirements during the two years your certification is active.

CAPZO CERTIFICATION:

CAPZO Certification has certain prescribed training designed to provide you with the essential skills and knowledge necessary to be an effective planning and zoning official. It includes home-study materials to supplement the in-class instruction, enabling you to learn more with less time away from home and work. A simple open-book exam, *which you may retake if you choose*, will demonstrate your knowledge of the duties of a planning commissioner or BZA member in Alabama.

How does certification benefit my community and me?

Certification gives evidence to your community that you have gained the knowledge and skills needed to serve most effectively in your appointed position. Your community, in turn, benefits from having its staff, local officials, PC, and BZA members with a solid foundation in the operations of the commission and the board.

WHO SHOULD BECOME CERTIFIED? Local Planning Commission Members, Board of Adjustment Members, Mayors, City Council Members, Zoning & Building Staff, City Clerks, County Commissioners, County Administrators, County Engineers, City & County Attorneys, Anyone involved with local growth issues



COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

THE LEGAL FOUNDATION FOR PLANNING AND ZONING IN ALABAMA

This workshop will provide local officials and the citizens who serve on local planning commissions and boards of adjustment with a basic understanding of the constitutional and statutory framework for comprehensive and regulatory planning in Alabama. Although a number of constitutional issues and landmark cases will be included in the material presented, they will be discussed from a layman's point of view and not from a legalistic view point.

TOPICS INCLUDE: (1) The evolution of legal principles relating to the public regulation of private property; (2) The origins of the current Alabama planning enabling legislation and recent efforts to amend it; the landmark decisions of the US Supreme Court relating to the regulatory and planning powers of local governments; (3) The major constitutional issues being raised in current land use litigation; (4) The procedural and strategic aspects of land use litigation; (5) Alternative approaches to the resolution of regulatory issues and developmental conflicts.

POWERS, DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES OF PLANNING COMMISSIONS AND BOARDS OF ADJUSTMENT

This workshop is designed for local officials, staff, and others who want a more thorough understanding of the powers, duties, and responsibilities of planning commissions and boards of adjustment. What you will learn: (1) the legal authority and responsibility under Alabama law for planning commission and board of adjustment members – what each can do and cannot do; (2) Where the planning commission's authority ends and the board of adjustment's authority begins; the relationship between the city council and the planning commission; (3) how the law says an aggrieved party can appeal a determination by boards of adjustment, building inspector, etc.

TOPICS INCLUDE: (1) How Chapter 52 of the Code of Alabama assign responsibility for local planning among four governmental entities; (2) How the comprehensive or master plan is implemented in part through various regulatory devices. (The role of zoning in land use planning); (3) How the board of adjustment serves as a "safety valve" to minimize hardships; (4) Proper and improper uses of variances; (5) Administrative and legal issues in local planning: The test of "hardship," "takings," and other topics.



A number of case studies and examples are used throughout the workshop to maintain the program's focus on practical day-to-day issues faced by the typical Alabama municipality.

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING: HOW TO PREPARE, UPDATE AND IMPLEMENT YOUR PLAN

When your city decides to create a planning commission, enabling legislation in Alabama states that your commission must prepare a master or comprehensive plan. Therefore, preparing and adopting a master plan is a mandatory requirement, not an option. When the comprehensive plan is adopted, it must serve as the foundation for the city's planning program and, as such, must be continually reviewed and periodically updated. The purpose of this workshop is to discuss ways your city can fulfill these responsibilities.

TOPIC I NCLUDE: (1) The basic surveys and studies which form the foundation of the plan; (2) Successful approaches to involving the community in formulating goals and evaluating alternatives; (3) The statutory requirements to adopting and updating the plan; (4) The implementation of the plan through regulatory and functional planning; (5) The political and institutional implications of the plan as a public statement of the city's development policies.

This workshop provides a practical orientation and guide to those citizens who serve as appointed members of local planning commissions or as elected members of city councils. Other local officials, staff, engineers, consultants, and others also benefit from a better understanding of the key role comprehensive planning plays in the development of their community.

BASIC ZONING & SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS

Your zoning ordinance is arguably the most important device you have to implement your comprehensive plan. It provides you with the means to define the type and intensity of uses permitted on any piece of property. Your city's subdivision regulations govern the manner in which vacant land is platted into streets, blocks, and lots in preparation for development. They are, therefore, very important in that they establish the street pattern and the type of improvements that must be made as land is brought into urban use.



In this work-shop you'll learn the legal basis in Alabama law for regulating the use of land and its subdivision. This workshop also brings you up-to-date on how Alabama courts have been viewing land use issues.

MEETING MANAGEMENT

What you will learn in this workshop: (1) You will get samples of effective commission and board by-laws, and also learn what they should minimally contain. Participants will learn appropriate rules of procedures, how to keep a meeting flowing and well-organized in a way that gives your meeting that "stamp of professionalism;" (2) You will learn some practical and proven means to manage meetings, how to defuse unruly or disruptive attendees, and how to best manage large crowds. You will also learn how to deal with the media on politically charges issues; (3) You will learn more about, and practice some of the latest techniques to resolve conflict amicably; (4) You will learn some simple and proven mediation techniques for dealing with contentious disputes – with developers and others.

HOME STUDY COURSE: COMMUNITY PLANNING IN ALABAMA

This is a home study course, required to earn certification, but open to anyone with an interest in community planning, zoning, and growth management. (The 8 am - 5 pm times do not apply.) You may begin this class at any time.

It involves five (5) reading assignments from the book, "The Citizen's Guide to Planning." Each reading assignment takes anywhere from an hour to two hours. For those seeking certification, a series of questions on the reading assignments are answered from an open-book quiz, and the answers faxed to the Alabama Planning Institute at UNA. You may retake the quizzes if you need to.

All materials are covered in the registration fee.