East Hartford Planning & Zoning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, and Inland Wetlands-Environment Commission

Workshop Minutes
July 14, 2022
Microsoft Teams Meeting

Present:

Kim Knapp, Inland Wetlands Commission
Tony Le, Inland Wetlands Commission
Harrison Amadasun, Zoning Board of Appeals
Sidney Soderholm, Planning & Zoning Commission
Melissa-Sue John, Planning & Zoning Commission, Alternate

No board had a quorum present.

LAND USE BOARDS 101 WORKSHOP

Corporation Counsel Jim Tallberg presented a PowerPoint outlining the roles and responsibilities of the three land use boards: the Planning & Zoning Commission, the Zoning Board of Appeals, and the Inland Wetlands-Environment Commission. He began by detailing the sources of authority from the town’s Charter and the Connecticut General Statutes. A recently enacted state statute requires mandatory training for all municipal land-use officials beginning in 2023. All three boards are subject to ethical codes at the state and local levels and must make decisions based on the public record while avoiding biases, undue influences, and conflicts of interest. The boards are also subject to Freedom of Information requirements including open meetings and public records.

Atty. Tallberg and Development Director Eileen Buckheit responded to a question to explain that board members should stay within the purview of their board and not ask questions or raise issues that are outside of the scope of their responsibilities. Discussion outside of a board’s purview could later be used in a court proceeding to undermine the decision. Future trainings may involve more specific information for each board, as this session was introductory and voluntary. Many applications will go before multiple commissions in their approval process, such as Inland Wetlands followed by Planning & Zoning.