

HANCOCK COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

A BRIEF GUIDE FOR FULL COMMISSION MEMBERS



FISCAL YEAR 2010-2011

**Hancock County Planning Commission
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AN OVERVIEW

The Hancock County Planning Commission is a regional planning commission as defined by Maine law (30-A MRSA 2341). Briefly, the HCPC provides planning services to member municipalities and also conducts region-wide projects. Our mission statement is:

The Hancock County Planning Commission is a partner with local and county government to:

- *Protect our heritage and resources,*
- *Plan for the future, and*
- *Promote a sound economy;
for the people of Hancock County.*

The focus of our services is to assist municipal officials and volunteer boards such as, but not limited to, select boards, planning boards, comprehensive planning committees, conservation commissions and boards of appeal. We also work closely with transportation groups and solid waste and recycling committees.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE COMMISSIONERS?

The Commission is the governing body of the Hancock County Planning Commission. Each member municipality may appoint two residents and an alternate to serve as Commissioners. It sets the overall direction of the agency. It approves the budget and annual work program at the HCPC Annual Meeting in May. Most of our projects and programs change from year-to-year depending on the needs of our member communities and available funding. As Commissioners, you can help us adjust our programs to reflect local needs. The staff serves to carry out the policies agreed to by you and your fellow members.

Commissioners also influence policy by electing members of the Executive Board, which directs the agency's administrative policies, at the HCPC Annual Meeting in May. Project and agency management are the responsibilities of the executive director and staff.

WHAT SPECIFICALLY CAN THE COMMISSIONERS DO TO ASSIST THE AGENCY?

Attend the Full Commission Meetings

It is at the Full Commission's annual meeting in May that the general business of the Commission is discussed and staff reports are presented. These meetings offer an opportunity for members to exchange ideas with commissioners from other towns. Such exchanges are crucial in identifying common concerns and shared approaches to regional issues.

Promote our services

The HCPC has a team of highly qualified professionals to assist local officials in addressing virtually any planning-related problem. Commissioners promote the services we offer. (Our current Services Policy can be found at: <http://www.hcpcme.org/services.html> or by contacting the HCPC) As a non-profit organization, our billing rates are reasonable and we have a demonstrated commitment to all towns in our region.

Support Our Dues

It is important that Commissioners remind townspeople of the services provided by the HCPC and the importance of supporting our request for membership dues. You could also check to see if our current appropriation is correct. Some towns have raised the wrong amount for their dues. Our goal is to have all 39 towns in the Region as members.

Be Our Listening Posts

With 39 communities, the staff and Executive Board cannot keep in touch with all the latest activities in each town. If you know of a problem in town that you think the HCPC can address, please let us know. Similarly, if you hear of a concern regarding our services, be sure to inform us.

Think Regionally

When presented with a local issue, Commissioners may want to look for a regional solution. Many solutions to local issues are most effectively addressed on a regional level. Recent examples of regional approaches include regional transportation studies and needs analyses, household hazardous waste and universal waste collections and brownfields assessments. During this time of limited fiscal resources, regional solutions are becoming more important than ever.

Accept a nomination for the Executive Board

The Executive Board has a diversity of views, which are represented in development of agency policy and services. Normally, several positions are vacant on the Board each year since terms runs for a three-year period. The Executive Board offers interested parties an opportunity to become more actively involved in the agency.

IN SUMMARY

Remember, *you are the Hancock County Planning Commission*, the more you demand services and offer direction, the better our agency will be. The strongest regional councils are those with the most local support and involvement. The executive director will be happy to meet with any Commissioner to discuss his/her involvement in the agency at greater length. The Executive Board members are also happy to discuss the HCPC with all interested parties.