

PLANNING COMMISSION

Roles and Responsibilities

A planning commission may have not less than three nor more than nine voting members. At least a majority of the members must be residents of the municipality. The selectpersons of a “rural town” or two elected or appointed officials of an “urban municipality” shall be non-voting *ex officio* members. An energy coordinator may also be a non-voting *ex officio* member. 24 V.S.A. § 4322. Planning commissioners are appointed by the selectboard for four-year terms unless the municipality votes to elect them to terms of between one and four years. 24 V.S.A. § 4323.

Please see also Chapter 38, Zoning Board of Adjustment/Development Review Board.

Following are the powers and duties of planning commissions as specified in 24 V.S.A. § 4325. Any planning commission created under 24 V.S.A. Chapter 117 may:

- Prepare a municipal plan and amendments thereof for consideration by the legislative body, and review amendments thereof initiated by others as set forth in 24 V.S.A. Chapter 117, subchapter 5.
- Prepare and present to the legislative body proposed bylaws and make recommendations to the legislative body on proposed amendments to such bylaws as set forth in 24 V.S.A. Chapter 117, subchapter 6.
- Administer bylaws adopted under 24 V.S.A. Chapter 117, subchapter 6, unless a development review board or separate zoning board of adjustment is in place.
- Undertake studies and make recommendations on matters of land development, urban renewal, transportation, economic and social development, urban beautification and design improvements, historic and scenic preservation, the conservation of energy, the development of renewable energy resources and wetland protection.
- Prepare and present to the legislative body recommended building, plumbing, fire, electrical, housing, and related codes and enforcement procedures, and construction specifications for streets and related public improvements.
- Prepare and present a recommended capital budget and program for a period of five years for action by the legislative body.
- Hold public meetings.
- Require from other departments and agencies of the municipality such available information as relates to the work of the planning commission.
- Enter upon land to make examinations and surveys in the performance of its functions.
- Participate in a regional planning program.
- Retain staff and consultant assistance in carrying out its duties and powers.
- Undertake comprehensive planning, including related preliminary planning and engineering studies.
- Perform such other acts or functions necessary or appropriate to fulfill the intent and purposes of 24 V.S.A. Chapter 117.

Every municipality may appropriate to and expend funds for its planning commission. The planning commission shall keep a record of its business and shall make an annual report to the municipality. A planning commission may accept and utilize any funds, or any personal or other assistance made available by the state or federal government or any of their agencies or from private sources. 24 V.S.A. § 4326.

When a charter of a municipality sets forth requirements for the appointment and authority of municipal planning and zoning officials that are inconsistent with law, the charter shall prevail. 24 V.S.A. § 4328.