

SOUTHERN WINDSOR COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT POLICY

The Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission (SWCRPC) is established under 24 V.S.A. Chapter 117 Subchapter 3. As such, it is the responsibility of the SWCRPC to provide quality public service and to use tax dollars efficiently. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all activities of the SWCRPC will be conducted in a way that no employee or member of the Board of Commissioners will gain a personal or financial advantage from his or her work for the SWCRPC, in order to preserve the public trust in the SWCRPC. It is also the intent of this policy to ensure that all decisions made by staff and members of the Board of Commissioners are based on the best interest of the community at large.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

A conflict of interest means any situation where an employee or member of the Board of Commissioners has a personal or financial interest in the outcome of a cause, proceeding, application or any other matter pending before the SWCRPC (e.g. plans and policies, contracts, applications before Act 250 or other regulatory board where the SWCRPC is a party). This may involve any direct or indirect interests of an employee or commissioner with any partnerships, firms or corporations, or individuals (e.g. his or her spouse, household member, child, stepchild, parent, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, aunt or uncle, brother- or sister-in-law, business associate, or employer or employee).

In order to avoid conflicts of interest, employees and members of the Board of Commissioners shall not:

- a) Participate in any official action if he or she has a conflict of interest or appearance of a conflict of interest in the matter under consideration.
- b) Represent, appear for or negotiate in a private capacity on behalf of any person or organization in a cause, proceeding, application or other matter pending before the SWCRPC.
- c) Solicit nor accept gifts, gratuities, favors or other offerings of personal gain from contractors, potential contractors, parties to sub-contracts, or others that have a vested interest in the outcomes of decisions made by the SWCRPC.
- d) Use resources unavailable to the general public – including but not limited to staff time, equipment, supplies or facilities – for private gain or personal purposes.

Additionally, employees of the SWCRPC shall not engage in or purport to represent the SWCRPC in any partisan political activity. If an employee holds an elected or appointed position on a local board or commission, or is otherwise involved in policy-making or quasi-judicial responsibilities that relate to town or regional planning or relate to work performed by the SWCRPC, he or she must exercise discretion to minimize the risk of appearance of a conflict. Prior to holding public office, an employee shall consult with the Executive Director or Officers of the Board to identify potential difficulties and appropriate means of addressing them.

An employee shall disclose any potential conflicts of interest to the Executive Director, or his or her designee. The Executive Director (or his or her designee) shall decide if a conflict of interest condition exists, whether to reassign the responsibilities to another staff person, or if other action is appropriate, and shall disclose such conflicts of interest to the Executive Committee. If found to have a conflict of interest, said employee(s) must refrain from using their personal influence by avoiding further

discussion on the matter with other employees or with commissioners, and by physically excusing themselves from any related actions or proceedings before the Board of Commissioners.

The Executive Director or a member of the Board of Commissioners shall disclose on the record any direct or indirect personal or financial interests with an official action before the SWCRPC. In any cases where there is such a conflict of interest or appearance of a conflict of interest, said person(s) must refrain from using their personal influence by recusing themselves from further discussion on the matter. The applicable meeting minutes shall reflect the resulting disclosures and recusals.

In the event a Commissioner is uncertain whether he or she has a conflict of interest in any matter, he or she may request the Commission to determine whether a conflict of interest exists. Prior to action being taken by the Commission, any Commissioner may request that the Commission discuss whether a conflict of interest exists as to another Commissioner or him/herself. When any conflict is unresolved, a Commissioner or the full Commission can request that it be noted in the minutes that a potential conflict may exist.

CODE OF ETHICS

Members of the Board of Commissioners and employees shall conduct themselves in a manner that serves the public interest and is consistent with these policies, the mission of the Commission, and the [Ethical Principles in Planning](#) as maintained and periodically updated by the American Planning Association. All planning staff shall strive to achieve high standards of professionalism consistent with the [Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct](#) of the American Institute of Certified Planners, as most recently amended.

Approved by the RPC Commissioners on November 20, 2017.