

MODEL ZONING ADMINISTRATION FORMS FOR COMMUNITIES IN OTSEGO COUNTY

Introduction

Zoning is a mechanism used by towns and villages to help implement a community plan through the regulation of private land development. Fourteen of the county's thirty-five municipalities currently have a zoning law in place and another ten communities have one under consideration.

The strength and fairness of a zoning law depends upon proper administration. Since the law itself affects the way citizens are able to develop and use their property, local officials and the general public alike must have a clear understanding of how the zoning law is administered. The various municipal officials and boards must understand their roles in administering parts of the law and how they interact with each other. Local residents who seek zoning approval for their proposals must not be intimidated by the approval process but rather have any understanding of the steps involved in gaining the zoning permit they seek.

The forms shown in this report are intended to help simplify and clarify standard approval procedures used in the complicated matter of zoning administration.

The Forms

These forms are merely a model for communities to consider. For matters of consistency, all of these forms have been tailored to the text of the planning department's A Model Zoning Ordinance for Rural Towns in Otsego County, a model that has been used by many communities in Otsego County. Some of the forms are likely to require certain modifications to match the language of a specific community's own zoning law.

Generally speaking, four different agencies are involved in zoning administration - the zoning enforcement officer, the zoning board of appeals, the planning board and the legislative board. The forms in this report have been color-coded to match the appropriate forms to the agency that uses them. The number that identifies each form includes an abbreviation of the board that uses the form.

Each form begins with a short explanation of the purpose of each form to help local officials and the public know when a particular form should be used. When appropriate, notes are made at the end of the form to identify the type of follow-up action that will occur. As necessary, the form will also specify the date or time period within which the next step will occur.

The forms are written in a manner to maximize the consideration of all pertinent facts in an application and the documentation of the response from local officials. By the nature of the forms, applicants will provide an extensive description of their proposals consistent with the requirements of the zoning law. On the forms expressing their response, local officials will fully document their action based upon the findings appropriate to the application.

A flow chart appears at the beginning of the report to illustrate the various paths that a zoning review procedure may follow. As the chart shows, most actions requiring zoning review begin and end with the zoning enforcement officer with the other review boards also involved during the process as the application dictates.

Please give our office a call if your community would like to discuss these forms and tailor them to meet your own specific needs.