

Principles of Community Planning

In the book, “*The Small Town Planning Handbook*,” authors Daniels, Keller, and Lapping stress a variety of important principles for community planning:

“...care for your town, its people, and those generations yet to be born.”

Community plans and planning affect peoples' lives. Tough choices must be made about the natural, manmade, and financial resources in the community. Learning to care means that you have to adopt an attitude of fairness, that you listen to the opinions of others, and that you are willing to make compromises to ensure equal treatment.

“...look before you leap...”

Planning enables us to look before we leap and avoid costly and embarrassing mistakes. Through planning we come to understand where we are now and what must be done in the future to achieve our goals. We can then put together a plan of action to accomplish tasks on time.

“...serve the best interests of the community...”

Community planning is intended to serve the best interests of the community, which requires striking a balance between being recklessly innovative and stubbornly conservative. It should channel and guide market forces to foster growth and redevelopment in an efficient manner that follows the desires and guidelines of the community.

“...maintain a positive quality of life and revitalize the community.”

The planning process is an opportunity to look at the current positive and negative aspects of the community. What is good about the community should be carefully nurtured and protected; what is bad should be addressed and changed; and, what is possible should be sought after and attained.

“...educate us about ourselves...”

The community planning process also helps us to educate us about ourselves, our attitude towards others, and our willingness to share a sense of community. It stimulates us to think and reminds us of the need to understand, tolerate, and even support, the opinions of others.

“...depends on local people...”

Successful community planning depends on local people and the key ingredient is local leadership. Community leaders need to be pro-active in knowing when to plan and have the will to follow through.

Excerpted from: Dortches Land Development Plan, Chapter I, Section A. “Introduction and Purpose.” 2009. <http://dortchesnc.govoffice2.com>. Citing: Daniels, Thomas L., J. Keller, M. Lapping. *The Small Town Planning Handbook*, 2nd Ed., APA Planners Press, 1995.