

CIVIC EDUCATION SERIES

Class #5: Zoning and Land-Use Regulations

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Understand the purpose of zoning and how it protects property rights and town character.
2. Learn how Rindge's zoning ordinances guide development and land use.
3. Gain insight into the roles of the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA), and Code Enforcement Officer.
4. Discover how residents can participate in zoning changes, land use discussions, and development planning.

INTRO TO ZONING AND LAND-USE

(10 MIN)

- What is zoning, and why does it matter?
 - The role of zoning in balancing growth, conservation, and property rights.
 - How zoning protects Rindge's rural character, natural resources, and quality of life.
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- Key Message: *"Zoning is more than just maps — it's a blueprint for Rindge's future."*

UNDERSTANDING RINDGE'S ZONING ORDINANCES (20 MIN)

- Overview of Rindge's Zoning Map and major districts (e.g., residential, commercial, industrial).
- Key ordinances that regulate:
 - Lot Sizes & Setbacks
 - Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)
 - Signage
 - Wetland Protection
 - Aquifer Protection
 - Phased Development
- How zoning laws impact homeowners, businesses, and developers.

THE ROLE OF THE PLANNING BOARD

(20 MIN)

- Responsibilities: Reviewing site plans, subdivisions, and development proposals.
- The process for approving new developments or changes to zoning ordinances.
- How the Master Plan guides zoning and land use decisions.
- Encouraging public input during hearings to ensure residents' concerns are considered.

THE ROLE OF THE ZBA

(15 MIN)

- **Responsibilities:** Reviewing applications for:
 - Variances (requests to waive zoning rules).
 - Special exceptions (allowing uses not typically permitted in certain zones)
 - Appeals of administrative decisions.
- How residents can request a variance or participate in ZBA hearings.

CODE ENFORCEMENT AND BUILDING PERMITS (15 MIN)

- The Code Enforcement Officer's role in ensuring compliance with zoning ordinances.
 - When building permits are required and how to apply for them.
 - Common zoning violations and how they are addressed.
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- Tip: Provide examples of common permit applications, like for fences, sheds, or home additions.

RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT IN LAND USE PLANNING (15 MIN)

- How residents can:
 - Submit public comments during zoning hearings.
 - Propose zoning changes or warrant articles.
 - Volunteer for the Planning Board or ZBA.
- Emphasizing the importance of staying informed about development proposals and ordinance changes.

CLOSING REMARKS AND Q&A

(10 MIN)

- Recap of key points.
- Open floor for participant questions.
- Distribute handouts with contact information for Planning Board, ZBA, and Code Enforcement.