



STAFF'S ROLE

The Department of Planning has worked to create an environment that is customer friendly and assists residents with their questions, concerns or problems. In developing this concept, it has become apparent that there are some misconceptions that exist regarding who the staff is working for and what their roles and responsibilities are. This FAI is intended to provide some background information as to how the Department functions and the limitations of staff's participation.

As a Regulatory Agency the staff can not:

- Provide you with advice as to how to avoid regulations;
- Provide you with a legal opinion;
- Provide a formal *verbal* opinion on a project, as there are too many factors involved. Staff analysis only occurs when a permit application is submitted.
- Be held accountable for the information you are required to provide on your permit application;
- Be an advocate for your permit application.

MISCONCEPTION #1 ***I am a taxpayer and you work for me.***

This is often raised during the permit process. Staff works for taxpayers in a collective sense, working for the whole town, versus any individual. We will work to educate you about the process, but we can not help you find solutions that are contrary to the regulations that we are responsible for enforcing.

MISCONCEPTION #2 ***I didn't vote in favor of that proposal***

Many of the permits that are processed by the Department do not involve a democratic process as is traditionally understood. In many instances appointed representatives are responsible for making decisions for the community as a whole. In Connecticut, most land use agencies function in this manner.

MISCONCEPTION #3 ***The Town said it was okay.***

There is no "Town" per se. Who have you spoken with? If you ask the Animal Control Officer a question about zoning, it is not an official response about zoning. To get an answer to a question that you can rely on in the future, submit the question in writing to the agency responsible for the issue you are concerned about.

MISCONCEPTION #4 ***My cousin told me I didn't need a permit.***

Try a variation of this line next time you are pulled over for speeding and see how far you get. Laws change, and as a citizen, you are responsible for staying current with modifications to the laws.

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