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**Introduction:** On April 17, at night, and again on April 18, from 9 am to 4 pm, I attended a Planning Seminar held by the Town of Herndon and led by Mike Chandler, a retired professor from Virginia Tech, who taught community planning. The information and presentation were excellent. The day concluded with a mock planning session for the 4-square-mile Town of Herndon.

The purpose of this report is to present a summary of the seminar.

**Summary:** Approximately 20 employees from the Town of Herndon and its Planning Commission attended, along with approximately 5 townspeople. Mike started both sessions with a motivational talk of 45 minutes. He ended each session with a second motivational talk. For the meat of the meetings, Mike distributed two booklets:

1. Making the Future Happen in Herndon: The Role of Comprehensive Planning. This booklet covered:
  - a. The definition and characteristics of a comprehensive plan
  - b. Ten steps in developing the plan
  - c. The use of mapping
  - d. Dillon's Rule and brief statements of the governing laws
  - e. Planning's players and their roles
  - f. Citations from the Virginia Code concerning the plan and the requirement for the plan
  - g. Zoning as the implementation of the plan, including citations from the Virginia Code and the law requiring zoning for regions within the Chesapeake Bay watershed (which includes all of Fairfax County). Zoning must be done for subdivisions.
  - h. The need for a time-sequence for implementation of the plan
  - i. The need for accountability in the plan and its implementation
2. Inventing Herndon's Future: The Role of Comprehensive Planning
  - a. Hierarchy of laws (from Federal to State to Local)
  - b. Focus: the physical development
  - c. Facts, Potential, Perceptions, concepts, Implementation, Feedback plan
  - d. Basic steps in the planning process
  - e. Virginia Code on the intent of the Comprehensive Plan
  - f. Capital Investment Plan, which includes both public and private investment, although it is not required by law.
  - g. Organization of the General Plan

Among Mike's comments were:

1. To support a shopping center, the population within a 10-mile radius must be 100,000 people. There are national guidelines for population requirements for stores and shopping centers.
2. Tax revenues must cover the cost of the infrastructure and the services provided by the government. Timing is important in the cost analysis.
3. The applicant for a construction permit must include in the application the impact on traffic, school capacity, fire and rescue, water and sewer, and other infrastructure.
4. The government "must leave something for the private developer". (Indeed!)

5. About 20 years ago, industrial parks were considered essential. Many towns zoned and built industrial buildings that are still empty (Emporia, VA, is an example) because the plan was not comprehensive. The planners did not include the available labor force, the attractiveness of the school system, etc.
6. The town must seek developers and their financing needs. The developers will look for firm plans that have a record of being followed and a fast development-review process.
7. The plan must be easy to read, reasonable, contain a step-by-step implementation plan. The town must show a willingness to implement the plan.
8. Planning is the process of managing change.
9. The planners must not attach themselves to history, although historical areas might be preserved. History dies with you. It is important to you but will not be to succeeding generations. Don't let yesterday overly influence today's decisions for the future.
10. Peter Drucker offers the best basis for planning. The author Cubby(?) popularizes some of Drucker's ideas. The book *Thinking in the Future Tense*, by Jennifer James, is also worthwhile.
11. Mike founded the Citizens Planning Education Association, which holds ten-week courses on planning. Hanover County (VA) developed its "Owner's Manual" on the basis of the course.
12. People are active in planning because they have an abiding faith and hope. We have choices and freedom, which planning demands.
13. The American Planning Association is a useful organization.
14. A 20-year planning horizon is typical.
15. Beware of paralysis by analysis.
16. Plan to accomplish the mission.
17. Ask yourself, "What would I want to see if I came back 20 years from now?" (or 5 years).
18. Only humans can plan for the future, especially many years hence.
19. Some planners envision high-rise buildings with retail on the ground floor, offices above the retail, and condominiums above the offices. Mike was not enthusiastic about this idea.

My reactions to the sessions were as follows:

1. We plan because order is more in conformance with human life than is chaos. Mike made a similar comment, saying that we try to fulfill our wants, needs, hopes with things that are affordable.
2. Although I dislike proffers, because they resemble bribes, Mike likes them. They are also encouraged by the law, which cites proffers specifically as being good. Some areas call them "conditional zoning."
3. Planning should be directed toward "Developing people, not property." Developing people does not mean simply giving them pleasure. Beauty, however, is uplifting.