

New York Planning Federation
Descriptions of Sessions at One Day Conferences
Hyde Park, Lake Placid, and Long Island

Hyde Park – September 25, 2025 - Wallace Center at the FDR Presidential Library and Museum

Open Government in Planning and Zoning Decision-Making *(Mark Schachner, Esq., Senior Principal Attorney at Miller, Mannix, Schachner & Hafner, LLC)*

Although we all generally support open government ideals, numerous open government issues are presented in the Planning and Zoning application review process. This presentation will focus on compliance with open government legal requirements and the best ways to promote transparency including discussions of the Open Meetings Law, meeting quorum, “out-of-school” discussions, recusal, site inspections and the Freedom of Information Law.

Planning Board Fundamentals: Roles, Responsibilities, and Procedures in New York State *(Sarah K. Yackel, AICP, Principal, BFJ Planning)*

This training session provides an essential overview of the powers, duties, and responsibilities of Planning Board members. The course will cover the statutory framework that governs Planning Boards, including their authority related to site plan review and subdivision regulations. Participants will gain a clear understanding of the Planning Board’s role in reviewing and issuing special use permits, the types of documents referred to them, and drafting and adopting legally sound resolutions, and maintaining an effective administrative record. The session will also include an introduction to the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR), focusing on its application in Planning Board decisions and procedures.

Zoning Considerations of Overnight Accommodations *(Max Stach, AICP, Partner at Nelson, Pope & Voorhis and Adriana Beltrani, AICP, Senior Environmental Planner, Nelson, Pope & Voorhis)*

This session will focus on the considerations Planning Boards and Zoning Boards of Appeals need to focus on regarding overnight accommodations.

Lake Placid – October 15, 2025 – Cambria Hotel

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Working with State Agencies on NYS-Funded Local Projects *(Daniel Barusch, AICP, Director of Planning and Zoning for the Town of Lake George)*

This session will focus on the various types of capital projects local municipalities can undertake with the cooperation, partnership and funding support from New York State agencies. Dan Barusch from the Town and Village of Lake George will be presenting on various projects both Lake George communities are working on with the NYS DOT and DEC, including several projects funded by the Downtown Revitalization Initiative. The projects to be discussed range in nature from complete streets transportation projects to infrastructure projects for stormwater and sewer, all at various stages in the implementation process.

Building Balanced Communities with Housing *(Allison Hargrave Gaddy, AICP, Principal Planner, Lake Champlain Lake George Regional Planning Board and Beth Giles, Lake Champlain Lake George Regional Planning Board)*

Housing is a critical need across the United States, consistently making headlines in both national and local media. Addressing the housing crisis requires action at every level through innovative and collaborative strategies. Although the scale of the problem can feel daunting, meaningful process is not only possible but already underway in many communities.

In 2023, the Lake Champlain-Lake George Regional Planning Board published *Building Balanced Communities for the North Country*, a comprehensive, data-driven report that underscores the region's acute housing shortage. This shortage is not only fueling a workforce crisis but also driving a range of economic, community, and quality of life challenges in the region. While these issues are complex, they are not insurmountable. With the right tools and strategies, local governments are well-positioned to create meaningful, lasting solutions.

This session will explore current housing trends and offer actionable strategies your community can implement to meet this urgent need head-on.

Long Island– October 21, 2025 – Hofstra University

Comprehensive Plans: Lessons Learned *(Noah Levine, AICP, Associate Principal, BFJ Planning Associate)*

Noah Levine, AICP from BFJ Planning, will share key insights from recent comprehensive planning efforts throughout the New York Metro region, with a particular emphasis on Long Island communities including Islip Town, Riverhead Town, Southampton Village, and East Hampton Village. Drawing from BFJ's extensive experience in community engagement, zoning analysis, and strategic planning, the session will highlight best practices in public outreach, plan implementation, and integrating sustainability and transportation strategies. The presentation will offer insights into the scope of a typical plan, innovative virtual engagement tools, and how to craft actionable, community-driven plans that avoid becoming "shelf documents."

Planning Board Fundamentals: Roles, Responsibilities, and Procedures in New York State
(Frank Fish, FAICP, Founding Principal, BFJ Planning)

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Navigating SEQR *(Sarah K. Yackel, AICP, Principal, BFJ Planning)*

The State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR) requires all state and local government agencies to equally examine environmental impacts along with social and economic considerations during discretionary decision-making, including the review of proposed development projects. The SEQR process provides an important opportunity for local decision-makers to identify and avoid, minimize, or mitigate potential impacts.

This introduction to SEQR includes an overview of the SEQR process, Type I, Type II, and Unlisted actions and the sequence of making a positive or negative declaration on a project's potential to have an adverse impact on the environment. The procedures for conducting environmental review in compliance with State law will be discussed and the Environmental Assessment Form and Environmental Impact Statement process will be reviewed.