Fall 2020 Course Summary

www.citizensplanninginstitute.org

Orientation: Welcome to CPI

Congratulations! You’ve been selected to join the Fall 2020 CPI Cohort, making you one of 600 Citizen Planners in Philadelphia! During this required orientation you’ll get to know fellow classmates, learn about the selection process and review logistics. You’ll receive course materials and get a jumpstart on your final project or presentation.

Core Class #1: Introduction to City Planning

Unit 1: What is Planning? Everyone is a planner- in the sense that we all prepare for the future. At a city planning level, you will learn about the Philadelphia City Planning Commission (PCPC), the role it plays, and how other city agencies work with it. A panel of Citizen Planners will share how they’re using the information they gained in CPI and their final project or action plan. Learn from your peers and get inspired!

Unit 2: Neighborhood Planning Learn about the history and evolution of planning in Philadelphia and how you can be involved in your neighborhood’s plan. A neighborhood plan emerges from a planning process that both engages all stakeholders in the community and reflects a collective vision for the future of that community. Your “Neighborhood Planning Workbook” outlines a DIY approach to doing a neighborhood plan. Another approach is to employ the services of a professional planning firm. Learn about methods of community engagement from a nationally recognized local firm and their experiences working on various Philadelphia neighborhood plans.

Mindy Watts, Principal, Interface Studio LLC

Citizen Planner Panel – more to be announced!

Ebony Powell, Graduate Student at the University of Pennsylvania and Graduate Assistant at the Center for Public Health Initiatives

Required reading: “Introduction to Planning in Philadelphia”- handout to be sent prior to the first class.

Core Session #2: Zoning

Unit 1: The Zoning Code. Understand the reasons why zoning has evolved as an important tool of planning. Zoning regulates land uses and the type, size, and height of buildings. Real projects will be used to demonstrate three methods of zoning “relief” from the zoning code: variances, special exceptions, and zoning remapping. Gain a better understanding of how to navigate the code and what the steps are to learn what can be built on a lot and what approvals a project needs. Learn the limitations of zoning, as well as the elements in the zoning code that help preserve neighborhood character.

Donna J. Carney, CPI Director, PCPC
Andy Meloney, Senior Planner for Implementation, PCPC
Unit 2: Citizen Involvement  As President of the Wynnefield Residents Association, Crystal is an advocate on behalf of residents on quality of life issues. Crystal will share her journey from issue identification through peaceful resolution as her community explores a major utility (PECO) acquisition of a parcel of land to build a substation. She will talk about the community reaction, how they used their elected officials, the zoning process and legal resources to come to a peaceful resolution.

Crystal Morris, President, Wynnefield Residents Association, Citizen Planner

Core Session #3: Real Estate Development:  October 21, 6-7:30pm
Understanding and Influencing the Project Cycle
How do real estate developers make decisions and complete projects? Learn about the phases in the real estate development cycle – pre-development, construction, operations, disposition/re-position. Understand how community input influences project progression and the best time to engage developers. Learn about the different approaches taken by market-rate and affordable housing developers.

John’s office is a first point of contact for large developers and will outline the steps to get projects built and the financial constraints all developers face. Angela brings the perspective of affordable housing development. The roles of various stakeholders impacting development will be discussed through a hypothetical housing development project.

There are different ways to create housing that is affordable or keep existing housing affordable. Learn about city programs to help reduce property taxes and to keep people who are behind on their property taxes from losing their homes.

Rebecca Lopez Kriss, Deputy Commissioner, Philadelphia Department of Revenue
John Mondlak, Deputy Director of Development Services,
Angela Steele, Senior Project Manager, Stone Sherick Consulting Group, Citizen Planner

Special Topic #1: Community Leadership in Climate Resilience  October 28, 6-7:30pm
Philadelphia will confront serious risk from climate change even if carbon emissions were to dramatically be reduced. Challenges include increased heat and flooding and low-income residents and residents of color will be disproportionately impacted. With exposure to the impacts of climate change already occurring and expected only to increase in severity in the coming decades, those on the frontlines of climate risk must drive the solutions that foster more resilient neighborhoods. In this workshop participants will learn how to engage community leaders in the development of place-based solutions that address issues of community importance and reshape the structural systems that contribute to vulnerability.

Through this session, you’ll gain an understanding of how to:
• Engage in an analysis of climate trends and the associated impact of heat and flooding on neighborhoods
• Increase awareness of systems of oppression contributing to disproportionate climate impacts
• Draw upon the history of place and community assets to ensure climate solutions meet the needs of impacted communities
• Use best practices in democratic engagement to meaningfully engage impacted community members in planning
Special Topic #2: Supporting Businesses & Living Wage Jobs in Your Neighborhood  
November 4, 6-7:30pm

Learn how worker-owned cooperatives (co-ops) can create new businesses and help existing businesses in your neighborhood stay open. A worker-owned co-op is a business that is owned by the people who work there. They can provide decent wages and greater democracy in the workplace. Converting existing businesses to worker-owned co-ops can keep businesses open that would otherwise close. For example, if a business is facing bankruptcy, or the business owner is retiring. You’ll also learn about a neighborhood-based loan that can help new and existing businesses.

Whether someone works at a co-op or not, workers in Philadelphia have rights. These rights make sure they get paid, get the time off they’ve earned, and receive their schedules in advance. Many workers do not realize they have these rights or know what to do if they’re violated. Wage theft, violation of sick leave laws, and unfair scheduling can create and perpetuate low incomes. Help make sure your neighbors are receiving the pay they’ve earned and treatment they’re entitled to in the workplace. Learn what to do if your neighbors’ rights at work have been violated.

Special Topic #3: Navigating City Government: Building Relationships and Leveraging City Resources  
November 12, Thursday, 6-7:30pm

Navigating City Government in a city the size of Philadelphia can be a challenge. Every wondered how city government works? How you can interact with elected officials ethically? What resources are available for you to help your community? This class will help address some of these questions and more!

In this class, we will cover Philadelphia City Government, the legislative and policy process and learn how to use your government. You’ll learn ways to get involved and hear one Philadelphian’s dive into local politics. You’ll hear how ordinary citizens can build, leverage and benefit from relationships with council, community organizations, block captains, etc. as you tackle planning projects in your community.

The class will also cover the importance of transparent and ethical relationships with public officials and you’ll learn about standards of governmental conduct, campaign finance, and lobbying.
Presentations Workshop

Final Presentations

Give a 5-minute presentation on a project that you or your organization is working on, or a dream project. Receive feedback from your fellow CPI participants and professional city planners. This meets the final paper or presentation requirement.

This is a low-stress way to get public speaking practice and have a networking opportunity with your classmates and professional city planners! Attendance is optional.

Additional Course Info:

The Fall session marks the 20th course of CPI and the FIRST time we will be online. We’ll try to make these classes as interactive and engaging as we can. Watch your email for more information about our online hub for between class conversations. Classes will be held in Zoom.

To learn more about the instructors for each class, go to the CPI website, “Course Info” page. http://cizensplanninginstitute.org