

Planning and Development Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-699

AN ACT CONCERNING ALTERNATE MEMBERS OF MUNICIPAL PLANNING

Title: COMMISSIONS.

Vote Date: 3/2/2021

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 2/3/2021

File No.: 62

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

N/A

REASONS FOR BILL:

Communities in Connecticut, especially small ones, may struggle to fill rosters of planning commissions. To remedy this, SB 699 aims to allow members of municipal zoning commissions and municipal boards of appeals to serve as alternate members of municipal planning commissions. There is a provision that alternate individuals must recuse themselves if there is a conflict of interest between discussions in their multiple roles.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

N/A

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association: Voiced support but had a reservation and note of caution. The concern involved municipalities with joint planning and zoning commissions. Testimony stated SB-699 should apply only to the potential membership of stand-alone planning commissions and not joint planning and zoning commissions, to prevent members from deciding on, "both regulations are variances thereof." Testimony explains that CGS §8-19a currently prohibits alternate members to be drawn from municipal zoning or zoning boards of appeals. Bill 699's allowing of alternate membership is not expected to create conflict, as the jurisdictions of the two possible groups are, "quite distinct." In communities where the board member pool is small, SB-699 may help keep a full roster. Members would also be able to recuse themselves if conflict arose.

Betsy Gara, Executive Director of Connecticut Council of Small Towns: Voiced support saying, "SB-699 removes this impediment to allow full members of either municipal zoning commissions or of zoning boards of appeals to become alternate members of the municipal planning commission." Reiterates that the bill prohibits ZBA or planning commission members from serving as alternates on zoning or combined planning and zoning commissions.

Sen. Cathy Osten- 19th District: Voiced support for permitting local zoning members to serve as alternates of planning commissions. Testimony mentions a constituent who was elected as a member of his town's zoning board of appeals, and an alternate on the planning commission. The constituent then resigned from planning. The constituent pointed out there is no prohibition in the General Statutes that prohibits being in the two groups, however.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

N/A

Reported by: Colin Savino

Date: 3/15/2021