**Ah the Good Old Days 7PM-7:30PM**

**INTRODUCTION**

**Narrator:** Welcome to the planners’ time machine. Are you ready to relive 50 years of planning? Or at least get a glimpse of what you missed? The following skits provide a hopefully humorous look at some of the key issues that have shaped the world as we know it today. So sit back, fasten your seatbelts, pull down your goggles and enjoy a half century of planning in Maine.

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| **SCENE ONE** | Props list:   * 1960s black Phone * Yellow pad and pencil * Green Book |

**Narrator:** It’s 1968. Anytown’s new part-time planner is at his desk in the back of the storage room in the basement of the Town office.

*Planner at desk reading Green Book – person comes rushing in*

**Planner:** John, what brings you in? I didn’t think I’d see you until the planning board meeting.

**John:** I was just at the chamber breakfast. We have a problem right here in River City. It’s a shopping center – a shopping center with a capital S. The developer was at the meeting. He is going to have something called a discount department store – **huge** – Mammoth Mart-size – over 25,000 square feet. And a grocery store. And over 200 parking spaces out front. It’s awful!

**Planner:** Wow that is **big**! Enormous!!

**John:** This is going to destroy downtown. Bubba even said he may move his hardware store out there. We have to do something! And quickly!

*Planner jumps up – stands up straight and puffs out his chest*

**Planner:** Relax John – you have a planner now to take care of things like this.

**John**: Right? What are you thinking?

**Planner** (*shouts)*: Urban Removal! I was just reading this article in the Journal of the American Institute of Planners. HUD gives towns grants for revitalization. We could get one.

**Narrator:** And AIP is the expert – they know!

**John:** Go on –

**Planner:** We could plant some trees along Main Street.

**Narrator** *(whispers to audience)***:** Planners have always liked trees – they solve any problem!

**Planner:** And we could put in some of those fancy crosswalks with bumpers or whatever they’re called so people can get across the street.

**Narrator** *(whispers to audience)***:** And concerned about pedestrians – don’t want to get them killed! That’s bad for business.

**John:** But we have to do something about parking – he’s going to have 200 spaces right in front of the stores.

**Planner:** Well we could build a parking lot.

**John:** Great idea – let’s tear down those old houses on Back Street and build a parking lot there.

**Planner** (*looking concerned)*: And what about the people who live in those houses?

**John:** Don’t worry about them – they will find someplace else to live. And they don’t buy much in downtown anyway.

**Planner:** I’m not sure - - -

**John:** Just put this on paper and we can discuss it at the meeting next week. (*Stomps out)*

**Planner** *(Shakes head)***:** OK

**Narrator**: And the rest is history and we planners helped make it happen!

**SHEET CROSSES BY FOR SCENE CHANGE -** *1970s planner sits down at desk*

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| **SCENE TWO** | Props list:  Green Book |

**Narrator:** Now it’s 1975. Planners have now moved upstairs to a desk behind the Building Inspector.

*Planner at desk reading – person comes rushing in*

**Planner:** Emma, what brings you in? I didn’t think I’d see you until the conservation commission meeting.

**Emma**: I was at that meeting at the regional planning commission last night - at least we got something for our dues. It was about residential growth. Some guy named Randall was talking about how new homes are destroying our rural character and then they talked about how houses cost more in services than they pay in taxes.

**Planner**: I just read a study from the Lincoln Institute about that. But that doesn’t consider the Maine school funding law.

**Emma**: A bunch of us stopped for a drink after the meeting – don’t you dare tell anyone about that. We talked about how we can stop those developers from destroying our towns.

**Planner**: And - - -

**Emma**: Some towns are talking about increasing the minimum lot size in rural areas – that will keep the subdividers away!

**Planner**: Well I guess we could propose going to an acre and a half in the rural zone.

**Emma**: NO NO – (*shouting)* Three acres or five acres is what we need! That will preserve our rural character, protect the environment and save our farms.

**Planner:** I’m not sure about that. Won’t that just spread out development and eat up a lot more land.

**Emma**: Don’t be a dummy! No developer will ever do a subdivision in this town if a lot has to have 5 acres or even 3 acres.

**Planner**: I’m not convinced of that. Maybe we could have a building permit limit or something like that. I think people will like large lots.

**Emma**: Hogwash – those developers aren’t dumb enough to try to sell large lots in this town. Who would buy them? I know real estate in this town.

**Planner**: Well - - -

**Emma:** Earn your pay for a change. Stop worrying about those developers. Just put together an amendment to increase the minimum lot size to 3 acres – that should be enough to outsmart those developers and I will propose it to the planning board at their next meeting.

**Planner**: OK but I’m still not convinced that will stop development or preserve the town’s rural character.

**Emma:** Just do your job and write it up! (*aside)* Planners!

**Narrator**: And the rest is history and we helped make it happen!

**SHEET CROSSES BY FOR SCENE CHANGE –** *Planning Director comes in behind the sheet, sits down*

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| **SCENE THREE** | Props list:   * none |

**Narrator:** Now it’s 1981. Anytown Planning Department. Large lot zoning is indeed now spreading out development and eating up land. Anxious to explore solutions to these problems, Anytown’s Town Planner is in the Planning Director’s office after a workshop about the latest solution to big lot zoning gobbling up the Town’s farmland. **(***1980s planner walks into planning director’s office***)**

**Town Planner**: It’s called cluster housing. You keep the same density, or offer a bonus, in exchange for developing a smaller area of land and using the rest for farmland, ballfields, or natural areas.

**Planning Director**: But won’t the neighbors have a problem with early morning tractors and the sweet smell of manure in the evening?

**Town Planner**: Naw. They’ll love it because they’ll be able to buy fresh eggs and corn.

**Planning Director**: Ok, ok, but won’t the neighbors’ cats and dogs harass the deer? And aren’t people starting to complain about coyotes attacking pets?

**Town Planner**: Hah! That sounds a bit like one problem taking care of another.

**Planning Director**: What about the cost of a long commute and kids on school buses for an hour or more? The Town will have to pay a fortune in transportation costs.

**Town Planner**: (*looking smug*) Yup we’ll see more “town” in the “country.” You know how subdivisions are invariably named after the place they consume!

**NARRATOR**: And the rest is history and we helped make it happen!

**SHEET CROSSES BY FOR SCENE CHANGE – (11** *people are standing behind the sheet, milling around)*

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| **SCENE FOUR** | Props list:   * Calendar |

**Narrator:** Now it’s 1996. It is the decade of growth management and locally prepared Comp Plans. It’s Anytown’s last Comp Plan Advisory Committee meeting and the 30-member Committee has dwindled to 5 over the two-year period of Comp Plan preparation. *[As the Narrator is speaking, s/he is flipping a calendar as 6 people slowly leave the stage one by one and the 5 remaining people sit down]*. Dozens of volunteers worked thousands of hours until they are exhausted by the whole process.

**Planning Board Chair**: Congratulations everyone for a job well done. The Comp Plan was adopted by Council last night. Our last task is to set up the Committee to Implement the Plan. Any volunteers?

[*Two of the remaining 5 members stand and slink out of the room. The remaining 3 look at each other*.]

**Committee member 1**: Ok, I’m in.

**Planning Board Chair**: You’ll be rewarded in heaven John! Anyone else?

**Other Committee Member**: *(looking at each other and over their shoulders at those who left*): ummmmm…

**Planning Board Chair**: Trust me – it will only take a few months!!

**Other Committee Member**: (*half raising his/her hand*): uh, well yeah, I guess… ok…

**NARRATOR**: And the rest is history and we helped make it happen!

**SHEET CROSSES BY FOR SCENE CHANGE** *and* *Someone walks in front of the sheet reading a copy of the “Cost of Sprawl”, stops mid-stage and faces the audience so they can see the cover of the book, stops a moment, then continues walking off stage*

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| **COMMERCIAL BREAK** | Props list:   * “Entire Pie Chart” for Mounted Slices (below) * Pie slices: * Ozzies and Harriets – 24% * Small Town Civics - 24% * Suburban Thoreaus – 23% * Introspectives – 15% * Young Turks – 12% |

**Narrator**: And now a word from our sponsor.

COMMERCIAL BREAK – [*5 people representing the market segments from the Homebuyers Survey dance onto the stage holding a “piece of the pie”*, on cue they say:

**Small town Civics**: I wanna live in a Great American Neighborhood!!!

**Young Turks, Introspectives**: Me too. Me too.

**Ozzies & Harriets**: I don’t feel safe *unless* I can see my neighbor’s house.

**Suburban Thoreaus**: I don’t feel safe *if* I can see my neighbor’s house.

**Introspectives**: I want to be able to walk to a corner store.”

**Young Turks**: I just want to be left alone.

**Suburban Thoreau**: ditto that, and to go skiing out my back door.

*(each person who holds a piece of pie comes to the “Entire Pie Chart” to place his/her slice of pie on the designated spot to make the pie whole; when the pie is whole, the commercial ends with narrator saying):*

**Narrator**: “Brought to you by the Maine Homebuilders Associations saying “we will build to suit all.’”

**SHEET CROSSES BY FOR SCENE CHANGE –** *Planner and Architect come in behind sheet and sit down*

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| **SCENE FIVE** | Props list:   * Lap top |

**Narrator:** Now it’s 2006. A planner and an architect are in a hip neighborhood in downtown “Any-*ville*”. Sense of place is where it is at. They are settling in for a lunch meeting in the outdoor lounge at the River Café.

**Architect**: Wow. The view of the river is great here. Check out how the outdoor space matches the line of the river and the historic buildings. Gorgeous.

*[Waitress comes up to the table and hears what they are saying…]*

**Planner**: Yeah, the regs were relaxed downtown, we’ve created a ***code*** pretty much based around the ***form*** of the neighborhood.

**Waitress (***holding pad to take order***)**: Yes, isn’t this area great? I live on the 2nd floor over the craft beer pub across the street. I can walk to work here and there are new stores all along this stretch.

**Planner**: Cool, its like urban-is -ummmm *(pronounced ur-ban- ism slurred into the next word)* …. **new** again.

**Architect**: I can see it continuing into that vacant mill down the street. I’m working the AutoCAD drawings in my head this minute.

**Planner**: (*to Waitress*) Two Baxter ales and a couple of lobster rolls please

**Waitress** – you got it (*exits*)

**Planner**: (*to Architect*) Can you draw what you see?

**Architect**: I can do you one better. Check out this new program (*pulls out lap top*). You take a photo and then add the imagined streetscape – new windows, doors, trees, benches, awnings … we can visualize a new streetscape and building.

**Planner**: Wow, awesome. I could really use that in the Brownfields application I am working on to get that building ready for redevelopment.

**Architect**: Totally. And the mill equipment can be upcycled into street art.

**Planner**: That’s a **creative** way to build an **economy**. These days, there’s real money in authenticity!

**NARRATOR**: And the rest is history and we helped make it happen!

**SHEET CROSSES BY FOR SCENE CHANGE – [***but stops mid-stage and turns perpendicular to the audience to create a separation between the Regional Planner on one side, and the Planning Board Member sitting on the other]*

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| **SCENE SIX** | Props list:   * 2 cell phones * Newspaper * Lap top * Phone ringer sound * Oversized button, saying Agenda 21 with a bar through it |

**Narrator:** Now it’s 2010. A regional Planner and a Planning Board member in deepest, darkest rural Maine are talking on the phone. Fears of rampant land use control are stoked by legislative proposals opposing the implementation of Agenda 21 in rural Maine. The stomach for land use regulation in rural New England is at an all-time low…

[*Phone rings*]

**Regional Planner**: Rural County Planning Commission, Jan speaking.

**Planning Board Member:** Good Morning Jan. Its Ben from the Ruralfield Planning Board. That was kind of a difficult meeting last night.

**Regional Planner (Jan):** Oh, hi Ben. A bit, yeah. Just a sign of the times I guess. What can I do for you?

**Planning Board Member (Ben)**: Well, Ted asked me a question after the meeting. You know that one who was talking about the UN conspiracy stuff.

**Regional Planner (Jan):** Yeah, I remember Ted.

**Planning Board Member (Ben)**: Well he wanted to know whether we HAD to create a zoning ordinance once we get the Comp Plan done?

**Regional Planner (Jan)**: No, it’s not mandatory. Just a good idea to ensure good neighborly relations. But a lot of small towns never take their Comp Plans to that step.

**Planning Board Member (Ben)**: OK thanks. That will sure help with getting it passed at town meeting. I’ll see you next month. (*Ben hangs up and leaves)*

**Regional Planner (Jan):** Will do, bye.

**Regional Planner (Jan)** (*picks up newspaper*): Hmmm, methadone clinic proposed in Ruralfield. That ought to add a little flavor …..

[*Ted comes in and sits down where Ben had been sitting*]

*[Phone Rings*]

**Regional Planner (Jan):** Rural County Planning Commission, Jan speaking.

**UN Conspiracy Guy (Ted)** [*agitated*]: Hello, Jan? This is Ted from Ruralfield.

**Regional Planner (Jan):** Hi Ted. How are things?

**UN Conspiracy Guy (Ted)** (*grim*): Not good. Did you hear there is a methodone clinic proposed in Ruralfield?

**Regional Planner (Jan)**: Yes, I just saw that in the paper.

**UN Conspiracy Guy (Ted)** (*agitated*): We have to do something about it! You know what kind of people that will bring into this town?

**Regional Planner (Jan)**: Uuuh, people who want to get clean from using drugs?

**UN Conspiracy Guy (Ted)**: No! They just want the government to pay for their habit. They don’t work, they don’t pay taxes. Property values will go down. We have to do something about this!

**Regional Planner (Jan)**: Well, Ted, if you want your town to control those kinds of land uses you need to enact a zoning ordinance. I didn’t think that was exactly your cup of tea.

**UN Conspiracy Guy (Ted)**: Well something has to be done. We just can’t have that in this town.

**Regional Planner (Jan)** (*rummaging on computer*): OK Ted, I have a model ordinance I can send you….

**NARRATOR**: And the rest is history and we helped make it happen!

**SHEET CROSSES BY FOR SCENE CHANGE** *–Planner comes in behind sheet and stands on one side of the stage; 1st Selectman, 1st Millennial Resident, 2nd Millennial Resident holding hand of 4 year old resident come on stage and face the planner across the stage, 4 year old resident on his/her knees*

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| **SCENE SEVEN** | Props list:   * a few papers for waving and effect |

**Narrator:** Now it’s 2018. The scene is a community meeting to gather input on a grant application to renovate the recreation area. The original grant that built the rec area was awarded way back in 1974. Now, the tennis courts have broken down fencing and small shrubs are literally growing up through the many-times-repaired cracks. The old guard still sits on the Select Board but some new faces and new families are living in a small town. A Planner is facilitating the meeting. Let’s watch…

**Planner**: Thank you all for coming this evening. As you know from the Facebook notice, we need to hear from the community to compete for this grant. We have some audience polling devices tonight to capture everyone’s priorities. I have to say it’s great to see so many young people. Let’s hear what kind of improvements you want to see at the rec area? Yes, 1st Selectman?

**1st Selectman**: I won’t support anything that costs the taxpayers money (*stands up, waiving papers, miming a speech)*

**Narrator**: The 1st Selectman continues for close to 10 minutes along the same vein, refers to the need for tax dollars as match when the Town Manager has already stated that there is a dedicated donor fund that will pay for matching dollars, then brings up regional airport, then the cost of road paving…..

**1st Millennial Resident:** Aren’t we getting a little off topic here?

**Planner:** Perhaps**,** young man in the 3rd row did you have a comment as well?

**1st Millennial Resident**: Yes, thank you. I do appreciate the concern over tax dollars but I was born in this town and those tennis courts needed repairs when I was 5 years old. Now they have shrubs growing out of the cracks!

**1st Selectman**: You’ve seen the stuff they use to repair roads? It’s called cold patch. That’s how you fix those cracks.

**Narrator:** [*Says to Audience*] He really did say that.

**Planner:** Yes, the young woman up in back.

**2nd Millennial Resident**: I have 3 kids and can’t afford to pay $5 a head for little league. I really need this facility for my kids and their friends.

**Narrator:** A 4 year-old with his parents raises his hand for all he is worth and is called upon by the Planner

**4 Year old Resident**: (*on his/her knees* ) When, when me and my friends, when, when we play there, and when you trip on the cracks, you fall down and get a boo boo

**Planner**: Thank you Braven. That is important information to back up our grant application!

**1st Selectman**: We used to have a Recreation Committee in this town. Who is going to make sure this isn’t just a place for more drug deals?

**Narrator**: OH, MY!!! (*slaps head*)

**Planner**: It would be a very powerful statement in our grant application to have a Recreation Committee form out of this meeting. Anyone interested in joining a new Recreation Committee can sign up here (*puts paper down on table*) – oh! I see you are already circulating a sign-up sheet. Love the initiative!!!

**Narrator**: The millennial generation stood up to the old guard that evening, formed a Recreation Committee, offered a bunch of in-kind assistance with site work and public art projects, and is submitting the grant application next month.

And the rest will become history and we helped make it happen!

**SHEET CROSSES BY FOR SCENE CHANGE – (***The Great Planinsky comes in - in front of sheet)*

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| **POSTLOGUE/AFTERWARD/**  **LESSON/MORAL** | Props list:   * Beer glass * Wand * sign saying Shakespeare in the Park 8PM |

**Narrator:** and now a final word from the Dumbledore of Planning in Maine ….the Great Planinsky

**The Great Planinsky:** *(Faces audience and intones in a sing song voice)* We thank you dear audience. Our job is nearly done. We sought to poke fun - hoped not to offend. We leave you to your celebrations and ask that you…

[*in normal voice*] Look to the past for guidance.

Look to the future for possibilities.

Be grounded in place. (*hold up local beer in one hand; sign saying Shakespeare in the Park 8PM*)

Have a little humility - for today’s solutions can and have led to tomorrow’s problems.

*DEEP BOW – ARMS WIDE OPEN*

* END -