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American Institute of Certified Planners Exam

APA AICP

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QUESTION NO: 1 - (SIMULATION)

Scenario

You work as a city planner in Town X. You recently accepted additional planning employment in Town Y, which is about 15 miles away and in the next county. Towns X and Y are similar in many respects. As a consultant for Town Y, you recommend a 50-foot buffer around a lake to protect water quality. Town Y is about to take action on this recommendation. However, in town X there are no buffer regulations and substantial residential development has been proposed to include construction to within 10 feet of a lake. The mayor and the council are very supportive of the proposed development, but a lake conservation group is demanding a buffer of at least 50-feet around the lake. What might you do?

ANSWER: See Explanation Below For Answer

Explanation:

First, understand that the moonlighting should have been clearly explained to the primary and secondary employers and approved in writing (Rule of Conduct 4). Full written disclosure to both towns prior to accepting work in Town Y should have said that there might be conflict. Planners should try to foresee consequences, and this situation is a logical consequence of working in two very similar communities. Even with full written disclosure before beginning to work for Town Y, as soon as the potential for conflict became apparent, you should have furnished a second written disclosure to both employers and received written permission to proceed (Rules of Conduct 3, 4). However, a planner should not advocate for two opposing positions simultaneously. (Rule of Conduct 3) So unless there is a very real difference between the two situations, such as a different geologic structure of the lakes, you should remove yourself from doing one job or the other. To continue in both positions and allow the conflicting recommendations to proceed will likely diminish your reputation and effectiveness in both communities (Ethical Principles 2, 3).

QUESTION NO: 2 - (SIMULATION)

Scenario

A pro-development city manager tells you, the planner, that you must provide findings to support a shift in a natural resources boundary in order to accommodate a particular development. What might you do?

ANSWER: See Explanation Below For Answer

Explanation:

First, you should clarify all relevant policies and regulations. Suppose the relevant policies are in conflict or are difficult to interpret. You might ask the planning director the city attorney for assistance in defining the situation. Second, determine how the boundary was established and study how it might be shifted.

Suppose the data that are available for the analysis are unreliable, inconsistent, or out-of-date. You might ask the planning director, another planner, or another source (such as the state GIS library) for assistance in obtaining better data. You might verify the accuracy of the data you collect by learning how it was developed and how recently it was developed because sometimes data are in error and natural conditions do change over time (Ethical Principle 1)

QUESTION NO: 3

When was the TVA established?

- A. 1930
- B. 1933
- C. 1936
- D. 1939

ANSWER: B

QUESTION NO: 4 - (SIMULATION)

Scenario

You are a planner in a city that has recently opened a new shelter for homeless people. The shelter opens each evening during the winter and provides a place for people to sleep during the night in dormitory-style rooms with cots. Some community members would like the shelter closed because they feel that the large number of people who congregate on the sidewalks near the shelter as they wait for it to open pose a threat to public safety. Your planning director decides to address these concerns by classifying the shelter as a hotel. The planning director knows that the zoning ordinance specifies that a hotel must provide private sleeping quarters, which the shelter does not. By classifying the shelter as a hotel, the planning director is taking steps to close the shelter based on the ground that it is in violation of the zoning ordinance. Suppose you believe that the planning director has assumed a position that is not politically feasible and consequently will be reversed. What might you do?

ANSWER: See Explanation Below For Answer

Explanation:

You might choose to take no action. However, waiting until a higher authority reverses poor or unethical planning decisions is not the best course of action for a professional planner. Also, remember that a professional planner does have a special responsibility to plan for the needs of the disadvantaged (Ethical Principle 1)

QUESTION NO: 5

How many acres in one square mile?

- A. 600
- B. 620
- C. 640
- D. 660

ANSWER: C

QUESTION NO: 6

When did the ACIP and ASPO join to form the APA?

- A. 1976
- B. 1977
- C. 1978
- D. 1979

ANSWER: C

QUESTION NO: 7 - (SIMULATION)

Scenario: Negative Comments about Consultant Work

At a recent national planning conference, you hear some very negative things about the quality of work done for clients by a well known consulting planning firm. Some of the comments are from people who may not have first-hand information. At least one of the critical statements was made directly by a former client. The firm, by coincidence, has now submitted a proposal to do work for your community. You call all of the references supplied by the consultant. They check out fine. What should you do next?

Ethical Issues: How do you make sure that you don't pass on gossip, but do respond to legitimate issues affecting the expenditure of public dollars?

Action Alternatives:

1. You have checked the references and they were fine. The folks you talked to are reasonable and had direct knowledge of the consultant's work. You do not want to appear to be looking to make trouble for yourself or anyone else. You decide no further action is necessary.
2. When spending public money, you have a responsibility to make sure that the public will get the best value. This requires you to be zealous in determining whether there are any reasons for not hiring the consulting firm. After all, consulting firms do not ever list clients who they think might give them a bad reference. You call for references checking with names not on the list provided by the firm.
3. Other

Commentary: Negative Comments About Consultant Work

Code Citations:

- C.1 A planner must protect and enhance the integrity of the profession and must be responsible in criticism of the profession
- C.2 A planner must accurately represent the qualifications, views, and findings of colleagues.
- C.3 A planner who reviews the work of other professionals must do so in a fair, considerate, professional, and equitable manner

ANSWER: See Explanation Below For Answer

Explanation:

You want to be fair in your treatment of a colleague while at the same time making sure that you do not engage a consultant who will not be able to fulfill the requirements of the professional services agreement.

Alternative 1 saves you work, but ignores the fact that you have information which affects your confidence in one of the proposers. You would not be in violation of the Code by doing nothing because you would have followed all of your community's standard procedures for hiring. However, you would have failed to be attentive to the apparitional intent of the Code.

Alternative 2 would be the most desirable and is most consistent with the Code requirement to fairly treat the views of a colleague. In this case you wish to treat fairly the views of those who have disparaged the consultant as well as the view of the consultant him or herself. Unless you have specifically stated in your RFP that the only references you will check are those provided by the consultant, you are free to seek out additional information. To be fair, you should mention to the consultant that you will be checking with other colleagues. If you have major unresolved issues as a result of further checking, the consultant should be given an opportunity to respond.

QUESTION NO: 8 - (SIMULATION)

Scenario

You are responsible for recommending contracts to the city council. Your immediate supervisor has asked you to prepare a recommendation for a large contract for an individual you know is a good friend of your supervisor. After reviewing the contract, you conclude that the contract amount is not commensurate with the scope of work provided. You believe the contract is a waste of taxpayer dollars if it were to be granted. What might you do if your supervisor pressures you for a favorable recommendation?

ANSWER: See Explanation Below For Answer

Explanation:

If you have any doubt about your conclusion, you might present the situation to a mentor or to a planner who is not involved in the situation (in another jurisdiction, for example) to discuss it. (Rule of Conduct 18) Planners are responsible to their employers; you might go to your supervisor with clear information on which your analysis was based, such as prices asked by other consultants for similar work, and point out your concerns. Your supervisor may appreciate your honesty and professionalism and accept your recommendation. Should you be required to falsify your recommendation, other options might be to "blow the whistle" or to go to an attorney. If supervisor is member of AICP, file an ethics charge against your supervisor (Procedure 5) or ask for an advisory ruling about your own conduct (Procedure 3)

QUESTION NO: 9

Who said "A budget is goals with a price tag attached."?

- A. Etzioni
- B. Davidoff
- C. Burgess
- D. Wildavsky

ANSWER: D

QUESTION NO: 10

Transportation Demand Management strategies include all but?

- A. Car pools
- B. Expanding the number of lanes on a highway
- C. Bicycle racks on buses
- D. Guaranteed ride home program

ANSWER: B