

PRACTICAL ETHICS



Florida Planning & Zoning Association
Estero Recreation Center

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Two Ways to Look at Ethics

1. Rule-Utilitarianism
2. Intuitionism



1. Rule-Utilitarianism

Moral actions conform to the rules that generate the greatest good.

Do what is going to have the biggest benefit to the most people.



2. Intuitionism

Some moral truths are just known.

People simply know, or have an *intuition*, about what is morally right or wrong.



WHAT TO DO?

1. Define the problem.
2. Collect all the facts.
3. Confirm all the facts.
4. Identify alternatives/outcomes.
5. Select the best alternative.
6. Resolve the problem
7. Relax and breathe a sigh of relief.



CASE STUDIES



Adapted from “Everyday Ethics for Practicing Planners”
by Carol D. Barrett, FAICP



CASE STUDY #1

At a recent planning conference, you hear negative things about the quality of work performed by a known planning consultant.

Some of the comments were made by people who may not have had first hand knowledge of the work; Others were made by former clients of the consultant.

CASE STUDY #1 – *Cont.*

This same firm just submitted a response to an RFP to do work in your community. You call all the references listed and they come back fine.

What should you do next?

CASE STUDY #1 – *Cont.*

SHOULD YOU:

- A. Assume that because you have checked the references given by the consultant they have “checked out” everything is fine?

CASE STUDY #1 – *Cont.*

SHOULD YOU:

- B. Conduct reference checks with people who were not on the list provided by the consultant?

CASE STUDY #1 – *Cont.*

ETHICAL ISSUE REVEALED:

You need to make sure that you are not gossiping but that instead you are responding to legitimate issues affecting the expenditure of public dollars.

So...



CASE STUDY #1 – *Cont.*

YOU SHOULD:

Expand the reference check which allows you to fairly treat your colleagues (the consultant) by giving them an opportunity to prove that the comments made were not accurate. Gives each party equal time.

Example of Rule-Utilitarianism

- conforms to greatest good.

CASE STUDY #1 – *Cont.*

Planner's Code of Ethics:

- C.1. A planner must protect and enhance the integrity of the profession and must be responsible in the 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.*

CASE STUDY #2

You are a planning director. Your citizens are outraged because a company wants to expand an existing landfill, which serves your county and others. The landfill is a permissible use under your Code.

You are ordered by the County manager to stop the project, at least for the next 6 months, until the election is over.

What should you do next?



CASE STUDY #2 – *Cont.*

SHOULD YOU:

- A. Find a reason to deny the landfill expansion?

- B. Send the applicant to the County manager's office since this is obviously political not a planning issue?

CASE STUDY #2 – *Cont.*

ETHICAL ISSUE REVEALED:

You have a responsibility to enhance the integrity of the planning profession.

So...

CASE STUDY #2 – *Cont.*

YOU SHOULD:

Advise the County manager that the use is permissible under the regulations and sign any permits/approval required by your office, despite the County manager's direction.

Example of Intuitionism

- inherent knowledge of right from wrong.

CASE STUDY #2 – *Cont.*

Planner's Code of Ethics:

A.3. A planner must strive to provide full, clear, and accurate information on planning issues to citizens and governmental decision-makers.

B. A planner owes diligent, creative, independent and competent performance of work in pursuit of the client's or employer's interest. Such performance should be consistent with the planner's faithful service to the public interest.

CASE STUDY #2 – *Cont.*

Planner's Code of Ethics (cont.):

B.1. A planner who reviews the work of other professionals must do so in a fair, considerate, professional and equitable manner.

B2. A planner must accept the decisions of a client or employer concerning the objectives and nature of the professional services to be performed unless the course of action to be pursued involved conduct that is illegal or inconsistent with the planner's primary obligation to the public interest.

CASE STUDY #2 – *Cont.*

Planner's Code of Ethics (cont.):

C.1. A planner must protect and enhance the integrity of the profession...

SIMPLE RULE



Treat others as you want to be treated

Thank you!

