

Problem-Based Learning: Spanish Springs CAB, June 17, 2026

Why This Matters

- Real-world example of how local governments make development decisions.
- Highlights the balance between various community priorities, including economic opportunity and community well-being.
- Compliance with all legal requirements is critical, and this includes local, state, regional, and federal standards that are reviewed by multiple agencies. It also includes relevant case law.
- The adopted code requires that proposals meet specific findings, and this is a key element in the decision-making process.

Highlights of Takeaways

- Understand that land-use planning and zoning have numerous code, statutory and legal requirements
- Evaluate potential impacts
- Explore public policy decision-making
- Practice civil discussion and processes leading up to a public hearing
- Support decisions using evidence

Key Questions to Consider

- How do we balance development with quality of life?
- What are the benefits—and how can potentially negative impacts be adequately mitigated?
- What role does the government play?
- What project conditions, if any, should be required for approval?

Overview of the Planning Process

- The developer consults with the county about the types of permits needed
- Neighborhood meeting for public input (for most permits requiring a public hearing)
- Application submitted to the County
- Review by multiple agencies and the public
- Evaluation of impacts and compliance with legal, code, and statutory requirements
- Public hearing (if required) for the deciding body to receive a recommendation from staff and hear from the applicant and the public before deciding whether to grant the request

Final Task

- Review all evidence
- Participate in a simulated agency review
- Make and defend a recommendation:
 - Approve
 - Deny
 - Approve with conditions

Closing Thought

There is no single “right” answer, but all decisions should be well-reasoned and supported by evidence, with thoughtful consideration of input from stakeholders, adopted codes and statutes, required findings, and relevant case law.