

LAND USE DEPARTMENT

The Land Use Department administers permitting, enforcement, inspection, and public record-keeping for the land use agencies of the Town. This year, the Department began to serve the Conservation Commission and the Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Commission on a full-time basis to increase efficiency in meeting the needs of the public in the permitting process. The Department continues to serve the Planning Commission, Architectural Review Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, and Zoning Commission. We coordinate with other officials and departments as needed, and, this year, collaboratively implemented many new practices through the Scenic Road Ordinance, the Driveway Ordinance, the Floodplain Ordinance, and the Wetlands Violation Fining Ordinance.

The Land Use Department conducts planning of the Town's land use on behalf of the land use agencies. This past year, the Department focused upon several projects at the foundation of long-range planning – inventorying natural resources, indexing open spaces, surveying road endings, and collecting local knowledge of economic, public health, ecological, recreational, and cultural assets not previously mapped. We thank Kosta Spiliopoulos and Heather Friedmann, especially, for their diligent investigation of these resources. The Department made significant progress in its effort to implement its computerized mapping/database program – the *Geographic Information System*. The program allows the Department to create land use maps and create project maps for use by residents, staff and land use commissions. Additionally, the Department completed several updates to the on-going Plan of Conservation & Development and looks forward to now implementing the many programs designed to meet the goals of the Town.

Through the Board of Selectmen, the Land Use Department continues to bring together on a quarterly basis the executive boards of the agencies that regularly deal with land use issues. The goal is to encourage cooperation, engage communication, and promote efficiency on an intra-municipal basis. This year, the land use agencies came together for: 1) the kick-off of the Conservation Commission's *Inventory of Natural Resources* and open spaces; 2) the *Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials (NEMO) Municipal Initiative* to educate the Town on the effects of non-point source pollution on water quality; 3) the Connecticut River Estuary Regional Planning Agency's *Dock and River Forums*, its *River Roundtables*, and eventual *Action Plan*; 4) the Harbor Management Commission's *Harbor Management Plan*; and 5) the Water Pollution Control Authority's public relations initiative to develop "*Overwhelming Public Support*" of its efforts in the beach communities. As evidenced by the land use agencies' reports, Old Saybrook is quickly becoming a leader in sustainable land use practices that meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Additionally, the Department coordinates workshops to provide continuing educational opportunities for its "citizen planners" who volunteer so much of their valuable time and expertise as decision-makers in land use matters. This year, the Department hosted many excellent programs: 1) NEMO's *Linking Land Use to Water Quality*; 2) the Cooperative Extension System's *Roles & Responsibilities of Municipal Agencies*; 3) Mark Branse's *Public Hearing Procedures*; 4) the Connecticut Land Use Education Partnership's *Site Plan Review*; and 5) the Cooperative Extension System's *Sustainable Economic Development*. As always, the Department was delighted in working with the members of the land use agencies that volunteer time and expertise as the human resources of the Town. The volunteerism demonstrated by commission members spurred more residents and students to offer their time to work on land use projects that pique their particular interests. We thank Lew and Kate Lewandowski for their time in photographing and researching the land records regarding the numerous road endings throughout town. The Land Use Department encourages others to get involved, as well, by contacting us at 395-3131.

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