

LAND USE DEPARTMENT

The Department administers the business of the Town's land use agencies, including the Architectural Review Board, Conservation Commission, Historic District Commission, Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Commission, Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, and Zoning Commission. The Land Use Department conducts planning of the Town's land in parallel strategies – the first being *current planning* via regulation of individual's site-specific initiatives (“reactive” to market forces) and the second being *long-range planning* via implementation of the Town's Plan of Conservation & Development (“proactive” to municipal needs). We maintain a “one-stop shop” approach in guiding homeowners and developers alike from conceptual design through permitting.

The Department is open to the public daily from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; the Enforcement Officer maintains regular office hours daily from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. (reserving afternoons or evenings for “field work” or public meetings, respectively); and the Town Planner is available by appointment Monday through Thursday. Carol Suits, our Administrative Assistant, unfailingly supports the day-to-day functions of the Department. This year, we congratulate and thank Carol for her dedicated service of twenty-five years at the Town Hall! We are blessed with the wealth of knowledge, experience and humor that Carol continues to provide.

The Department coordinates planning, permitting, and implementation of municipal improvements proposed by the land use agencies or the Board of Selectmen's Land Acquisition Committee, Village Gateway Committee, Founders Memorial Park Committee, and Boston Post Road Corridor project. Through the Board of Selectmen, we continue 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 gathered to address 1) the Board of Selectmen's plan for improvements and design guidelines for Old Saybrook's *Boston Post Road commercial corridor*; 2) the Historic District Commission's investigation of expanding and upgrading the *South Green Historic District* to safeguard the legacy of its aesthetic and historic integrity; 3) the Board of Selectmen's charette-style meeting facilitated by Yale Urban Design Workshop to characterize the *Boston Post Road commercial corridor*; and 4) the Land Use Department's collaborative planning approach to proposed redevelopment of the Ferry Point neighborhood.

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, we hosted many excellent programs: 1) *Design Strategies for the Commercial Corridor Development* by the Yale Urban Design Workshop; 2) *Connecticut's Changing Landscape* by UConn's Center for Land Use Education & Research; 3) *Tour of Commercial Corridors in Glastonbury and South Windsor* by the Land Use Department; and 4) *Tour of Old Saybrook's Public Access to Coastal Environments* by the Land Use Department. As always, we are 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 encourage others to get involved, as well, by contacting us at 395-3131.

Christine Nelson, AICP, Director of Land Use