

LAND USE DEPARTMENT

The Land Use Department conducts planning of the Town's land by being proactive to municipal needs (long range planning) via implementation of municipal improvements, programs and standards recommended in the Town's plans including the Plan of Conservation & Development as well as being "reactive" to market forces (current planning) via regulation of property owner's site specific initiatives. To do so, the Department administers the business of permitting, enforcement, inspection and public record-keeping for the Town's land use agencies, including Aquifer Protection Agency, Architectural Review Board, Conservation Commission, Planning Commission, Inland Wetland & Watercourses Commission, Historic District Commission, Zoning Commission, and Zoning Board of Appeals. Local elections brought in new members to each agency this year to which the Land Use Department made available one-on-one orientation to each of 21 new "citizen planners".

During the 2011-2012 fiscal year, the Department expanded its assistance to the Conservation Commission's ad hoc Outreach Committee and the Planning Commission's ad hoc Natural Hazard Mitigation Committee. These additional committees increased our annual schedule to 180 public meetings.

In addition to the regular workload of processing permits for these boards and commissions, we were busy this year with special Town-initiated projects, including launching a new town web page that includes information to educate public about the proposed FEMA Flood Map revisions. We are preparing to launch a new on-line mapping program in July of 2012 that will provide the public with access to "GIS-like" mapping and capabilities, as well as the Assessor's field card information.

Congratulations to Joanne Rynecki, Land Use Clerk, who completed her degree in Urban Studies this year. As her required internship, Joanne took the lead on preparing the *Visual Preference Survey* for the Department to guide discussion with the boards and commissions regarding how the Zoning Regulations' *town-wide design standards* might better depict effective structures, information and graphics for signs.

Chris Costa, Enforcement Officer maintains regular office hours daily from 9:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. Monday through Friday; Sandy Prisloe, Environmental Planner maintains office hours from 9:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday; both the Enforcement Officer and Environmental Planner reserve afternoon and evening hours for consultations, inspections or public meetings, Christine Nelson, Director and Town Planner, is available Monday thru Thursday by appointment. Sarah Lyons, Administrative Assistant, supports the day-to-day functions of the Department, and Joanne Rynecki, Land Use Clerk, coordinates the workflow between staff and the clerks of the various boards and commissions. Joanne also works on projects with us as needed.

The Land Use Department is open to assist the public from 8:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. Monday thru Thursday and from 8:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. on Friday. Our clerks, Kathy Noyes, Susan Graham, Kim Barrows and Stella Beaudoin can be found at the regularly scheduled public meetings of these agencies each month.

Christine Nelson, AICP, *Director*