

LAND USE DEPARTMENT

The Land Use Department administers the business of the following agencies: Aquifer Protection Agency, Architectural Review Board, Conservation Commission, Planning Commission, Historic District Commission, Inland Wetland & Watercourses Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals and Zoning Commission. The Department conducts long-range planning of the Town's land, proactive to municipal needs, via implementation of municipal initiatives – physical improvements, programs and standards recommended in the Town's plans including the Plan of Conservation & Development. Each year, the Department undertakes the work of an ad hoc committee of one of these or another agency to focus on a special initiative – an inventory, study, plan, or program. The Department conducts current planning of the Town's land, reactive to market wants, via regulation of property owner's site specific initiatives – permitting, enforcement, inspection and public record-keeping for these regulatory agencies. Each year, the Department typically coordinates planning, design and permitting of municipal amenities, occasionally seeking funds for construction.

During the 2013-2014 fiscal year, the Department assisted the Conservation Commission's ad hoc Sea Level Rise Climate Adaptation Committee and the Board of Selectmen's standing Preserve Committee. Additionally, we attended regular and special meetings of the Economic Development Commission throughout the winter to draft regulations per the Mariner's Way Plan. In total, the Department provided staffing for 125 public meetings of all of these agencies this fiscal year.

The Department also administers the Town's Floodplain Management program, which in recent years since multiple updates to the FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps and standards for construction in flood hazard areas, as well as coincidental coastal storms, has gotten more complicated and become another realm of expertise for which the Town is providing. True to form, Chris Costa studied and passed the rigorous test to become a Certified Floodplain Manager to coordinate better her teamwork with the Building Official and the Town Engineer.

In support of the regulatory work of these agencies this year, the Department scanned and received authorization from the Secretary of State for disposition of many of the obsolete records accumulating in storage for the past 20 years. These were for many of the large projects proposed but not constructed in favor of something else – Walmart, The Home Depot, Old Saybrook Shopping Center II, Lowe's, Saybrook Commons multifamily housing, The Preserve multi-use development, appeals to court, and re-applications, and on and on. The volumes of study and design truly were evidence of the long hours of our volunteer boards and commissions in reviewing proposals for sequential permits and conducting public hearings for each, as well as that of the expertise the Town relied on in making its decisions.

Chris Costa, Enforcement Officer, maintains 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, Town Planner, is available Monday thru Thursday by appointment. Sarah Lyons, Administrative Assistant, supports the day-to-day functions of the Department, as well as assistance in our case work. Many thanks to our intern, Katelyn Monroe, who tallied the status of implementation of the action items of every Town plan.

The Land Use Department is open to assist the public from 8:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday and from 8:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. on Friday. Our clerks, Kathy Noyes, Meryl Tsagronis, Kim Barrows and Stella Beaudoin can be found at the public meetings of these agencies each month. Many, many thanks (again!) to Melanie Roberts for being our quarterback in purging the file room.

Christine Nelson, AICP, *Director*