

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 also administers the Town's Floodplain Management program. Each year, the Department assists in the work of a special initiative—this year, Old Saybrook was certified as a bronze Sustainable CT community for its efforts to strive to be thriving, resilient, collaborative, and forward-thinking; to build community and local economy, to equitably promote the health and well-being of current and future residents, and to respect the finite capacity of the natural environment.

Reactive to market wants, the Department conducts current planning of the Town's land. Regulation of property owner's site-specific initiatives—permitting, enforcement, and inspection—require public review and extensive public record keeping for these regulatory agencies. During the 2019 fiscal year, the Department supported the following functions:

Permitting—Processed a total of 274 of the 26 different types of permits for development that the land use agencies may allow. The Department provides one-on-one consultation with property owners, business tenants and land developers occurs throughout each day of the year, including the Town's needs for design and permitting of municipal improvements.

Procedural Guidance— Provided orientation to 7 newly elected or appointed members of the land use agencies. Hosted a gathering of the land use agencies about the Shared Land Use Mission: the chairmen briefly introduced their basic mission, membership make-up, facilities and staff; described how they interact with other agencies, individuals or the community; and showcased successes or made suggestions to overcome challenges in their implementation of municipal improvements, programs and standards.

Public Engagement—Provided staffing for 121 regular public meetings, another dozen informational workshops, and many other sessions with stakeholders in municipal projects. Our clerks, Lynette Wacker, Sharon Migliaccio, Maggie Paccione, Bridget Riordan and Meryl Moskowitz, can be found at the meetings of these agencies each month providing timely reporting and ensuring compliance with Freedom of Information laws. This year, we thank Stella Beaudoin for her 8 years of clerking for many of our agencies, most notably the Architectural Review Board.

Proactive to municipal needs, the Department conducts long-range planning of the Town's land. Municipal initiatives—studies, programs, physical improvements—as recommended in the Town's plans including the Plan of Conservation & Development. During the 2019 fiscal year, the Department supported the following initiatives:

Coastal Resilience and Climate Adaptation—Worked with the State Historic Preservation Office to edit "Resilient Historic Resources: Best Practices for Planners—Guidance for Connecticut Municipalities in an Era of Climate Change".

Economic Development— Supported the Economic Development Director in stakeholder meetings and community workshops about the local, regional and state "factors that affect economic development"; drafted the strategy for the Economic Development section of the Town Plan.

Historic Preservation— Began to populate a document management interface to enhance the Town's online mapping with information about the 200+ most historic resources on properties throughout Old Saybrook. Assisted the Old Saybrook Historical Society in annually recognizing Achievements in Preservation by awarding Barbara Maynard, who was instrumental in founding the Saybrook Point Monument Park among her achievements. Supported the nomination of the historic Shoreline Electric Trolley Power Plant to the National Register of Historic Places. Christine Nelson was appointed to the Connecticut Historic Preservation Commission for a two-year term.

Marine Planning for Long Island Sound—Co-hosted one of several regional events premiering short films about all the reasons, activities and ecology in the Sound that the Blue Plan aims to support. Issued the Long Island Sound “Blue Plan” as a product of the Connecticut DEEP Resource and Use Inventory; planned for adoption by the Connecticut General Assembly during the 2020 session. Old Saybrook is one of 2 Connecticut coastal communities represented on the Blue Plan Advisory Committee.

Mariner’s Way Redevelopment—Completed efforts with the Economic Development Director to adopt a Master Plan for a Tax Increment Financing District. Applied for planning, design and construction funding from the CT-DOT Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant program for the Mariner’s Way Streetscape for 2021.

Municipal Improvements—Manufactured a municipal directory sign for the Economic Development Commission’s placemaking and wayfinding initiative at Saybrook Point neighborhood. Conducted baseline surveying of existing conditions at Town Park for potential disc golf course.

Natural Hazard Mitigation—Updated the 2014 Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan with GZA Environmental Inc. as supported by the 2015 Report of Findings of the Sea Level Rise Climate Adaptation Committee and by the 2018 Community Coastal Resilience Study and Infrastructure Evaluation.

Open Space Conservation—Designed a second entrance and parking for a trailhead for The Preserve open space from Ingham Hill Road; planned for clearing and construction in 2020. Facilitated acquisition of a 1.0 ac. parcel in Ragged Rock Marsh by the State as mitigation for disturbing 0.10 ac. tidal marsh in a State Route 154 bridge project.

Residential Development—Concluded a study of the Town’s obligations to better market itself as fair, inclusive and affordable in the preparation of an update to the Residential Development section of the Town Plan.

Town Center Improvement—Completed design of streetscape enhancements around the train station (Stage Road) and town center (Route 1) via a \$125k grant from the Governor’s OPM under its Responsible Growth Transit Oriented Development program; requested \$889k in construction funding via the CT-DOT Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program (LOTICIP) for 2021. Undertook sidewalk design along Route 1 between Pond and Lynde Streets under a \$225k grant from CT-DOT Community Connectivity Grant Program; planned construction under this program for 2020.

The Land Use Department is open to assist the public from 8:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Chris Costa is the Zoning Enforcement Officer. Patrick Hegge is the Environmental Planner. Lynette Wacker is our Project Assistant and a Clerk along with Sharon Migliaccio, Maggie Paccione, Bridget Riordan and Meryl Moskowitz for our public meetings. Sarah Lyons, Administrative Assistant, manages the day-by-day, month-to-month and year-in-year-out business functions of the Department.

Christine Nelson, AICP, Director