

## LAND USE DEPARTMENT

The Land Use Department administers the business of the following agencies: Aquifer Protection Agency, Architectural Review Board (ARB), Conservation Commission, Planning Commission (PC), 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 ad hoc committees to focus on special initiatives—this year, it is the Mariner's Way Advisory Committee (representatives of ARB, Board of Selectmen, Economic Development Commission and PC), a Coastal Resilience Work Team of municipal department directors and program administrators and inter-Departmental effort to implement the action plan of the Plan for the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System.

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 2016-2017 fiscal year, the Department supported the following functions:

**Permitting**—Processed a total of 253 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.

**Public Engagement**—Provided staffing for 142 public meetings. Our clerks, Kim Barrows, Stella Beaudoin, Sharon Migliaccio 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.

**Procedural Guidance**—Hosted a joint session of the Zoning Commission, Planning Commission and Architectural Review Board with legal counsel, Mark Branse, to refresh their understanding of the legal bounds of discretionary decision-making. Additionally, Chris Costa met with the Architectural Review Board to and the Chamber of Commerce's sign task force to discuss temporary signage and the categories of permits for many land uses.

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 2016-2017 fiscal year, the Department supported the following initiatives:

**Historic Preservation**—Worked with the Building Inspector in support the Board of Selectmen's historic preservation initiative to draft a Demolition Delay section of the Town Code. This project was an action item in the 2003 Cultural & Historic Resources section of the Town Plan of Conservation & Development and supported by the 2015 Historic Resources Inventory. Began a database of the 200 most historic resources on properties throughout Old Saybrook beyond those listed on the National or State Registers of Historic Places to include inventories since the 1930s and as recent as the State Historic Preservation Office's 2016 survey of Cornfield Point neighborhood and near- and off-shore submerged archaeological finds. Considered nominations for recognition of Achievements in Preservation as part of a committee of the Old Saybrook Historical Society. The award was given to Herbert and Sharon Clark for preservation of the historic Older Elisha Bushnell House (built 1678) at 1445 Boston Post Road.

**Marine Planning for Long Island Sound**—Co-hosted with the Town of Westport, NOAA Sea Grant, The Nature Conservancy and other marine-dependent organizations, large public events in Norwalk and Groton to kick-off the Connecticut DEEP Resource and Use Inventory and Long Island Sound "Blue Plan". Christine Nelson was appointed in 2016 to represent Old Saybrook as one of 2 Connecticut coastal communities on the Blue Plan Advisory Committee and co-chairs the Stakeholder Engagement Subcommittee.

**Municipal Improvements**—Organized design, permitting and manufacture of municipal signs: for the Parks & Recreation Commission's replacement of broken and weathered interpretive signage at Fort Saybrook Monument Park with 3 installations; for the Economic Development Commission's placemaking and wayfinding initiative at Saybrook Point neighborhood; for the Harbor Management Commission at the Clothesline Marine Facility; for the Board of Selectmen at the Cromwell Place public coastal overlook in the North Cove historic district.

**Natural Hazard Mitigation**—Worked with the Town Engineer to update the Floodplain Management Ordinance to address conflicts between the Town Code and the State Building /Fire Safety Code and to adjust the schedule of fees to reflect the cost to the Town to issue flood hazard permits. Conducted an infrastructure evaluation and coastal resilience study via a \$125,000 grant from the Governor's OPM under its Responsible Growth Transit Oriented Development program. This project was an action item in the 2014 Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan and supported by the 2015 Report of Findings of the Sea Level Rise Climate Adaptation Committee on the impacts of sea level rise on Old Saybrook.

**Open Space Conservation**—Developed concept plans for the State/Town joint Conservation Management Committee and secured \$92,000 from the Connecticut DEEP under its Recreational Trails program (with a \$8,000 match from the Trust for Public Land for conceptual design) to construct the principal entrance and parking for the trailhead for The Preserve open space from Essex Road (Route 153) in Westbrook. Acquisition of The Preserve is an action item in the 1994 Conservation Plan and the 2014 Scenic Roads section of the Plan of Conservation & Development.

**Route 1 East Redevelopment**—Worked with the Economic Development Director to host public, stakeholder and agency meetings and to design place branding, analyze market conditions, improve road/streetscape infrastructure and consider site reuse for the Mariner's Way portion of the Boston Post Road (East) via a \$200,000 grant from Connecticut DECD under its Brownfield Areawide Revitalization program (with an additional \$20,000 match). The 2006 Economic Development and 2014 Mariner's Way sections of the Plan of Conservation & Development recommended these items.

**Stormwater Management**—Worked closely with the Town Engineer and Public Works staff to register for a new permit as required under the Connecticut Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Program and to issue an update to the 2008 Stormwater Management Plan. Many thanks again this year to John Porter of the Department of Public Works, who spent many hours locating, verifying and mapping the Town's stormwater infrastructure.

**Town Center Improvement**—Worked with the First Selectman to begin reconstruction of North Main Street to improve drainage and add sidewalks in the Town Center node of pedestrian activity. The Department coordinated design and permitting of the project with the Town Engineer. Began design of further streetscape enhancements around the train station (Stage Road) and town center (Route 1) via a \$125,000 grant from the Connecticut DOH under its Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) program. This project was an action item in the 2006 Sidewalk Plan and supported by the 2000 Town Center section of the Plan of Conservation & Development.

This year, we give thanks and best wishes in retirement to Sandy Prisloe, who has served as the Town's Environmental Planner and Inland Wetlands Enforcement Officer since October 2010. Through this position, the Town implements its wetland and watercourse preservation, aquifer protection, land conservation and open space stewardship in concert with the comprehensive plan for development. Sandy has been instrumental in the spatial analysis of the Town's geographic information about natural hazard mitigation, scenic roads, stormwater management, sea level rise and revitalization of Route 1 East.

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. Meryl Tsagronis is our Project Assistant. Sarah Lyons, Administrative Assistant, manages the day-to-day business functions of the Department.

**Christine Nelson, AICP, Director**