

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. And, we provide professional design guidance in municipal improvement of the Town's infrastructure.

The Department is open to the public daily from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Carol Suits, our Administrative Assistant, unfailingly supports the day-to-day functions of the Department. This year, we welcomed Damon Hearne as part-time Environmental Planner, who has deftly stepped in to take on the existing, reorganized functions of wetland enforcement and geographic information system (G.I.S.) map-making on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. Chris Costa, our 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, Christine Nelson, as Town Planner, is available by appointment Monday through Thursday.

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, Founders Memorial Park Committee, and Municipal Cemetery Committee. Through the Board of Selectmen, we continue to bring together on a quarterly basis 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) CRERPA's *Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan*, 2) the Planning Commission's *Sidewalk Plan*, 3) the WPCA's *Community Septic Solutions*, and 4) the Board of Selectmen's “*Where We've Been*”, “*Where We Are*”, and “*Where We're Going*”.

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) *Freedom of Information* by the Connecticut Freedom of Information Commission; 2) *Roles & Responsibilities of Land Use Boards & Commissions* by UConn's Center for Land Use Education & Research; 3) *Public Hearing Procedures* by Eric Knapp, Esq.; and 4) *Map Reading 101* by UConn's Center for Land Use Education & Research. 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*