

## LAND USE DEPARTMENT

The Land Use Department conducts planning of the Town's land in corresponding strategies – the first being *long-range planning* via implementation of the municipal improvements, programs and standards recommended in the Town's Plan of Conservation & Development (“proactive” to municipal needs) and the second being *current planning* via regulation of property owners' site-specific initiatives (“reactive” to market forces). To do so, 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 Department is open to assist the public daily from 8:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. Carol Suits, Administrative Assistant, supports the day-to-day functions of the Department. Chris Costa, Enforcement Officer, maintains regular office hours daily from 8:30 A.M. to 12:30 P.M. Christine Nelson, Town Planner, is available by appointment Monday through Thursday. Our Environmental Planner is available for consultation by appointment. Moreover, our administrative clerks, Joanne Rynecki, Maura Farbotka, Pamela St. Clair and Kim Barrows, are found at the regularly scheduled public meetings of these agencies throughout the evenings of each month.

This year, we coordinated workshops with neighboring towns to provide continuing educational opportunities for the “citizen planners” who volunteer so much of their valuable time and expertise as decision-makers in land use matters. This year, we covered *Public Hearing Procedures* by Mark K. Branse, Esq. and *Coastal Management* by DEP's Office of Long Island Sound Programs. We sent a delegation of members to the intensive *Land Use Academy* at UCONN's Center for Land Use Education & Research. As always, we are delighted to work with the members of the land use agencies who volunteer time and expertise as the human resources of the Town. We encourage others to get involved, as well, by contacting us at 395-3131.

We were especially busy this year with special Town-initiated projects, including the Architectural Review Board's *Design Excellence Awards*; the Board of Selectmen's *open space acquisitions* on Bokum Road and Sherman Street, its application for incentive payments for *Incentive Housing Zone* adoption, its *stormwater inventory* of catch basins and outfalls, its inventory of *seasonal dwellings* and *history of conversions*, its update of the Town's *Regulations for Public Improvements* (road regulations), and its application for American Recover & Revitalization Act (ARRA) funds to construct the “shovel ready” *plans for sidewalks* along much of the south side of the Boston Post Road; the Board of Selectmen's ad hoc Bikeways Committee and the *award-winning* Founders Memorial Park Committee; the Conservation Commission's *study of native species* at Gt. Cedars Conservation Area, its *fishway* at Town Park, and its audit of the *conservation and preservation categories of the State Plan*; the Historic District Commission's revision to its *regulations and by-laws*; the Planning Commission's update of the *Subdivision Regulations* regarding road standards, the Parks & Recreation Commission's replacement of the *groins* at Town Beach and its update of *education stations* at Fort Saybrook Monument Park; the Zoning Commission's updates to the *Gateway Conservation Zone* regulations; as well the Zoning Commission's adoption of the State's first *Incentive Housing Zone* (mixed-use overlay) and subsequent approval of 16-units of affordable housing at the State's first *Incentive Housing Development* on Town-owned land at 45 Ferry Road in conjunction with HOPE Partnership, a non-profit housing developer based in Old Saybrook. In furtherance of the Town's continuing efforts to share these successes, we created “Town Initiatives” webpages about *Aquifer Protection*, *Connecticut River Gateway Conservation*, *Design Excellence*, *Floodplain Management*, and *Incentive Housing*. We look forward to carrying on with implementation of many more municipal improvements, programs and standards in the next fiscal year.

We worked closely with the Estuary Transit District to locate opportunities for *bus shelters* and *signage* for other bus stops throughout the town, and to include the *Nine Town Transit bus routes* in our mapping of multi-modal transportation resources.

A great resource to us this year was the research and collections at the Old Saybrook Historical Society's Stevenson Archive and Library. Members of the Society assisted a volunteer of The Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation's *Historic Barns of Connecticut* project in interviewing property owners and cataloging the architectural features of these structures. The historians at the Archive also helped us to locate graphics and drawings to update the look of the education stations in need of replacement at Fort Saybrook Monument Park as a part of the Town's 375<sup>th</sup> Celebration.

We say farewell to our dear colleague Kelly Volansky, who served as the Environmental Planner for the past three years. Ms. Volansky maintained our data inventories, performed many analyses using the Geographic Information System (GIS), developed beautiful maps depicting the Town's plans, and represented us at the State's annual GIS Day at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford. Just as importantly, Kelly's background as a biologist served the efforts of the Planning and Conservation and Inland Wetlands Commissions to balance conservation and development of land in Old Saybrook.

**Christine Nelson, AICP, Director**