

LAND USE DEPARTMENT

The Land Use Department conducts planning of the Town's land in corresponding strategies – the first being proactive to municipal needs (long-range planning) via implementation of the municipal improvements, programs and standards recommended in the Town's plans including the Plan of Conservation & Development and the second being “reactive” to market forces (current planning) via regulation of property owners' site-specific initiatives. To do so, the Department administers the business of the Town's land use agencies – Aquifer Protection Agency, Architectural Review Board, Conservation Commission, Historic District Commission, Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Commission, Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, Zoning Commission – and committees of the Board of Selectmen, such as the Land Acquisition Committee.

In addition to the regular workload of processing permits for these boards and commissions, we were busy this year with special Town-initiated projects, including the conclusion of the ten-year program of the Architectural Review Board's *Design Excellence Awards*; the Board of Selectmen's successful application for approval of *Incentive Housing Zone* adoption, its inventory of *seasonal dwellings* and *history of conversions*, drafting an update to the Seasonal Dwelling chapter of the Town Code, and design and permitting of *plans for sidewalks* along more of the south side of the Boston Post Road, a study of the *Spencer Plains Gateway* node of the Boston Post Road, and an *inventory of flood permits and variances* to supplement FEMA's update to the *Flood Hazard Study*. As a pilot community for The Nature Conservancy's *Coastal Resilience Tool*, we began to gather base data and brainstorm scenarios for coastal flood inundation as it might be influenced by sea level rise. We look forward to carrying on with implementation of many more plans for improvement of Old Saybrook in the next fiscal year.

We worked closely with the Parks & Recreation Department and the former Fort Saybrook Monument Park Association to update and replace many of the storyboards in the series of education stations at Fort Saybrook Monument Park.

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 partnered with the land use staff of adjacent towns to coordinate a program about *Managing Stormwater: The ABCs of BMPs in LID* by Wendy Coffin, P.E., of Woodard & Curran and *Coastal Management* by DEP's Office of Long Island Sound Programs. 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. We encourage others to get involved, as well, by contacting us at (860) 395-3131.

The Department is open to assist the public daily from 8:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. Chris Costa, Enforcement Officer, maintains regular office hours daily from 8:30 A.M. to 12:30 P.M. Sandy Prisloe, Environmental Planner, is available Tuesday through Thursday mornings regarding permitting and for consultation otherwise by appointment. Christine Nelson, Town Planner, is available by appointment Monday through Thursday. Sarah Lyons, Administrative Assistant, supports the day-to-day functions of the Department, and Joanne Rynecki, our Land Use Clerk, works on projects with us as needed each week. Joanne and Sarah, as well as our other administrative clerks, Maura Farbotka, Kathy Noyes, and Kim Barrows can be found at the regularly scheduled public meetings of these agencies throughout the evenings of each month. We are thankful for Pamela St. Clair filling in absences in various positions over the past year while we restructured some functions.

This year, we said farewell to our long-time friend and co-worker Carol Suits, who retired after 31 years at the Town Hall. We already miss Mrs. Suits' wisdom in giving perspective to curious situations. But, more often than not we are grateful for her example in how to enjoy learning “something new every day”. *Thank you, Carol.*

Christine Nelson, AICP, Director