

## LAND USE DEPARTMENT

The Land Use Department conducts planning of the Town's land by being proactive to municipal needs (long range planning) via implementation of municipal improvements, programs and standards recommended in the Town's plans including the Plan of Conservation & Development—as well as being “reactive” to market forces (current planning) via regulation of property owner's site specific initiatives. To do so, the Department administers the business of permitting, enforcement, inspection and public record-keeping for the Town's land use agencies, including Aquifer Protection Agency, Architectural Review Board, Conservation Commission, Planning Commission, Historic District Commission, Inland Wetland & Watercourses Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals and Zoning Commission. During the 2013-2014 fiscal year, the Department assisted the Planning Commission's ad hoc Natural Hazard Mitigation Committee, the Board of Selectmen's ad hoc Route 1 Task Force, the Board of Selectmen's ad hoc Beaver Committee, and the Conservation Commission's ad hoc Sea Level Rise Climate Adaptation Committee. In total, the Department provided staffing for 106 public meetings of these agencies this fiscal year.

In support of the regulatory work of these agencies this year, the Department streamlined the process and overall cost of the Town for mandatory mailings of personal notice of pending regulatory changes or variances to adjacent property owners. We also made a study of the cost of administering the floodplain program to update the fees collected and set-aside into an off-budget account to offset directly the cost of services to issue those permits.

In addition to special Town-initiated projects of the land use agencies, the Department took the lead in several in-house efforts: leading internal discussions of management issues related to natural conservation areas related to the potential annexation of an additional 1,000 acres of forest; an internal stocktaking of the implementation of each section of the Town's Plan of Conservation & Development, as well as other yet-effective Town Plans related to land use; continued maintenance and upgrades to the Town's geographic information system (GIS) in collaboration with other Departments, such as the Assessor, to put a variety of spatial data online; and administrative assistance in coordinating RiverCOG's Tri-Town Route 1 Corridor Study—we are thankful to the following for volunteering on the Study Advisory Committee: Francesca Vinciguerra, high school student; Kathy Connolly, bicycle and street tree advocate; and Kevin Kennedy, commercial real estate agent.

Chris Costa, Enforcement Officer, maintains office hours daily from 9:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Sandy Prisløe, Environmental Planner, maintains office hours from 9:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday. Both the Enforcement Officer and Environmental Planner reserve afternoon and evening hours for consultations, inspections or public meetings. Christine Nelson, Town Planner, is available Monday thru Thursday by appointment. Sarah Lyons, Administrative Assistant, supports the day-to-day functions of the Department, as well as assistance in our case work. Many thanks to Joanne (Rynecki) Gadon for the past 6 years on the Land Use team, most recently as our Project Clerk, the workhorse behind all our inventories and reality-checker for all our studies. Also, many thanks to our windfall intern, Will Smith, who volunteered valuable legwork and mapping skills for the beginning of a tenant-based inventory of commercial units.

The Land Use Department is open to assist the public from 8:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday and from 8:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. on Friday. Our clerks, Kathy Noyes, Meryl Tsagronis, Kim Barrows, Joanne Kegel and Stella Beaudoin can be found at the public meetings of these agencies each month; thanks again to Melanie Roberts for joining us for a short spell this year.

**Christine Nelson, AICP, Director**