

# PLANNING BOARD

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## ~ 2011 REPORT ~

The Milford Planning Board is the local land use planning and regulatory body charged with facilitating the community's long-term planning activities including developing and, from time to time, amending the Town's Master Plan; overseeing completion of the annual Capital Improvements Plan; identifying strategies to implement these plans; recommending revisions to zoning ordinances and local regulations; and applying those ordinances and regulations as they relate to commercial and residential development. A community's Master Plan is the document intended to define the community's vision for itself, and to guide policy decisions and implementation strategies to fulfill that vision.

The prevalent theme throughout our community this year has been the promotion of economic development initiatives in order to increase our tax base and bring additional employment opportunities to Milford. Given its geographic location in southern NH, proximity to major east-west and north-south highways, and existing core businesses and industries, Milford is going to grow. For the Planning Board, this has meant developing ways to best manage this growth and to position Milford to be ready to take advantage of opportunities when they arise as the economy improves while, at the same time, protecting one of our major assets – Milford's community character.

Along with the Community Development Office, the Board continues to advocate for local and regional transportation network improvements, including an interchange off Route 101 in the area of the Brox property, that enhance the movement of people and goods to and in our community. The board will be completing an update to the Traffic and Transportation Chapter of the Master Plan in early 2012. As with all Master Plan revisions, the objective is to maintain a timely plan that is consistent with current community needs and best practice strategies.

Working together, the Planning Board, Economic Development Advisory Council, Board of Selectmen and West Milford Tax Increment Financing Advisory Board are bringing two significant zoning ordinances to the voters in March 2012. The first is the West Elm Street Gateway District designed to encourage industrial-commercial development or redevelopment and enhance access management in this area while still complementing Milford's community character. The proposed Commerce and Community District is the second, longer term initiative that applies innovative land use planning techniques to a key area of future development – the area known as the Brox Property and the surrounding vacant land in close proximity to Route 101. The Commerce and Community District ordinance defines a framework for future development using a form based code approach. This land use planning approach looks first to the visible space and physical environment and focuses on creating integrated places and neighborhoods. In contrast, traditional zoning focuses on segregating uses and creating buildings. In addition to promoting mixed-use development, the Commerce and Community District ordinance seeks to attract economy enhancing development by streamlining the permitting process through an expedited review procedure. Both of these initiatives strive to promote Milford as a vibrant community where individuals, families and business enterprises can thrive.

During the year, Milford saw glimmers of an improving economy as some smaller and larger businesses moved expansion projects forward or established new enterprises in our town. We welcomed the Memphis BBQ & Blues restaurant to west Elm Street; saw Hitchiner Manufacturing work on completing another major expansion of their facility in west Milford; watched with anticipation as Café on the Oval initiated a significant mixed residential and commercial revitalization of the Dyer Block; and saw the rejuvenation of longstanding commercial property in east Milford with the opening of the new East Milford Self Storage facility. On the north side of the river, plans moved forward on the new H2O Waste Disposal Services facility; and Milford looks forward to the grand opening of the new JP Pest Services employee training and community outreach center in south Milford. All of these projects are hopeful signs as we work together to increase the town's tax base, increase the availability of local employment opportunities, and ensure Milford's attractiveness as a great place to live, work and visit.

An ongoing Planning Board goal is to enhance communication as we work together on comprehensive planning to meet Milford's current and future needs. As part of that initiative, the Planning Board and Community Development Office hosted a discussion forum and community planning work session in May. This type of event is becoming an annual part of the Planning Board's efforts to increase communication and dialogue among Milford's many committees, commissions and councils, and with the public at large. Additionally, the board strives to enhance public awareness and engage community members in the planning process by more effectively using our Town website and public access television, sending pertinent information directly to property owners, conducting information booths at public events and at the transfer station, and, as always, inviting the public to attend our work sessions.

The Planning Board extends its hearty thanks to the entire Community Development Office for their outstanding assistance and to the citizen volunteers who contribute their expertise and energy to the many groups that work with the Planning Board for Milford's betterment. In particular, our sincerest thanks and best wishes to Sarah Marchant as she moves on to greater adventures and new challenges. Throughout her five years as Milford's Town Planner, Sarah has consistently demonstrated her outstanding abilities and dedication to furthering innovative community planning.

The Planning Board wishes to thank the residents, business owners and organizations who have shared their thoughts, questions and suggestions throughout the year. We welcome your input and look forward to hearing more from you in the coming year. By working together and sharing ideas we can improve our community today and for future Granite Town residents. If you are interested in learning more about volunteer opportunities to help guide the future growth and development of Milford, please contact the Planning Board at 249-0620 and become part of the process!

Respectfully Submitted,  
Janet Langdell, Chairperson



*Thank You*