

## **OFFICE OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

**Planning    Zoning    Building Safety    Code Enforcement  
Public Health    Economic Development    Active Projects  
Geographic Information Systems    Stormwater/Environmental  
Programs**

### **Mission**

*To fairly and effectively plan for and manage community change in accordance with the Milford Master Plan and the goals of the Board of Selectmen as set forth in the Town's land use, building, and health regulations by providing professional advice, technical assistance, and enforcement in a fair and consistent manner to citizens, boards and commissions, departments, and regional agencies.*

The Office of Community Development is composed of several departments that handle the Town responsibilities of planning and land use/development regulation; administration and enforcement of the Milford Zoning Ordinance; building safety; permitting, code compliance and enforcement; public health; economic development initiatives and programs; project management of special capital improvement and environmental projects; the stormwater management program; and management of the Town's geographic information systems (GIS).

An important function of the Office is assistance to the general public, business owners, and developers in understanding and navigating the many local, state, and federal regulations that determine what a property owner is able to do with his or her property and building. Staff members also provide technical and administrative support to boards (Planning Board, Selectmen and Zoning Board), and advisory groups such as the West Milford Tax Increment Financing Advisory Board (TIF Board), Facilities Committee, the Economic Development Advisory Council (EDAC), Traffic Safety Committee, and their subcommittees and working groups. Responsibilities include research, writing, and preparation of such required documents and plans as the Milford Master Plan, the Capital Improvements Plan (CIP), development regulations, and zoning amendments. In order to stay current with changes in law, codes, and regional and state issues staff members actively participate in their respective professional organizations. An excellent working relationship with the Nashua Regional Planning Commission allows the Office to cost-effectively take advantage of that organization's programs and resources to benefit Milford when tackling transportation, environmental, natural resource, housing, health, and economic development planning projects.

Based on applications and discussions during 2013 it appears that construction and development is growing after five years of seeing little activity, itself reflective of the

economy in general. Construction is a major component of the local economy and provides employment and business. Although Milford (and New Hampshire, according to state economists) is very unlikely to see the population growth cycles of the 1970s through the 1990s, there will always be a need to provide affordable housing opportunities and places of employment for Milford residents while balancing growth and development with the community's desire to maintain its character, open spaces, farms and infrastructure. This is reflected throughout the Milford Master Plan.

**Active Projects** managed by this Office and a status at the close of 2013 include the following:

- **South Street Improvements:** At final design stage pending agreement on utility locations and easements, acquisition of easements, NHDOT approvals, bidding, and construction. This project is heavily regulated by federal and state requirements due to funding. The project is currently anticipated to take 4-6 weeks for construction, and it is anticipated to begin Fall 2014 if all falls into place. Upon completion there will be underground utilities and wider pavement from Union Square to the Christian Science Church, new sidewalks and lighting, and relocated utilities to the back of the sidewalks. The project area is Union Square to the north side of the railroad. The purpose of this project is safety and enhancement of the visual character and appearance of this entryway into the Oval.
- **Route 13/Emerson Road/Armory Road Intersection Improvements:** Pending NHDOT final design approvals. This project is federally funded with local matching funds and is subject to federal and state requirements. Upon completion there will be designated left-turn signalization for eastbound and west bound traffic, additional turning lanes, and new signal equipment. The purpose of this project is to improve safety at an intersection experiencing more and more traffic and high accident rates.
- **Town-Wide Pedestrian/Bicycle Plan:** This project began at the close of the year and will result in a master plan for sidewalk, bicycle, and trail connections throughout Town. This project is grant funded and will supplement the Planning Board's ongoing efforts to create livable neighborhoods as well as provide a tool to prioritize capital improvements expenditures.
- **Traffic and Transportation Improvements:** Efforts were underway at year's end to commence the next phase of preliminary planning associated with the downtown locations prioritized for federal special project funding. Locations include Nashua Street between Clinton Street and Tonella Road; the westside neighborhood (Lincoln, Union, Cottage, and Garden Streets); the Oval; Amherst/Grove/Mont Vernon Streets; and the South/Prospect/Marshall/Lincoln Streets gateway.

- **Recreation Chapter of the Master Plan:** This project will add a chapter to the Master Plan identifying short-term and long-range recreation needs for the Town.
- **BROX Property Initiatives:** Several projects are underway associated with the Town-owned BROX Property, including an update for the Planning Board of the 2005 Community Lands Conceptual Master Plan and laying the groundwork for earth materials removal for Town-sale to fund needed infrastructure improvements in the 'community land' portion of the site.
- **Former Police Station Environmental:** Discussions between the Town, the TIF Board, development interests, NH DES and the EPA have indicated that additional testing is needed at the site of the old police station on Elm Street in order to determine full development potential of the site for future commercial use. This Office is coordinating the effort to reach a resolution.
- **Economic Development:** Projects include website enhancement for site location and business development; expansion and feasibility of infrastructure expansion into developable commercial areas; hotel feasibility; assistance in branding and marketing; economic development surveys; and streamlining of development procedures.
- **Land Use and Zoning:** With guidance from the Planning Board and the Milford Master Plan, the Office continues to refine and recommend needed revisions to the Zoning Ordinance and the Development Regulations that reflect changing conditions in Town. A major effort during the latter half of 2013 was an analysis of a rezoning proposal to create additional developable commercial land between South Street and Ponemah Hill Road and north of the Route 101 Bypass. All rezoning analyses must address such concerns as access and traffic generation, public utilities, and neighborhood impacts.

Following are reports from the departments within the Office of Community Development: Planning/GIS, Building Safety and Code Enforcement; and Public Health; and Stormwater/Environmental Programs:

**Planning/Geographic Information Systems- Jodie Levandowski, Town Planner/GIS Coordinator**

The Planning/GIS Department provides services to residents, developers and local volunteer boards by reviewing and processing proposed projects within the town. The Department administers the Town of Milford Development Regulations as well its Zoning Ordinance and reviews all applications for consistency with the Milford Master Plan. Additionally the Town's geographic information systems are developed and maintained in the office.

2013 saw an increase in the number of subdivisions and site plan applications compared to 2012. Regarding subdivision approvals, there were 8 applications that created 11 new single-family lots. The major new development conditionally approved

by the Planning Board in 2013, currently known as 'Hutchinson Point', is located at the intersection of Mont Vernon Road and North River Road. It will consist of 24 new residential condominium units containing a mix of single-family, duplex and garden-style apartments on a private drive and is designed as a '55+ senior housing development. There were 12 new site plan applications, of which 5 were amendments to existing plans and 5 were entirely new applications. The approved major site plans included a new 180 foot telecommunications tower (Crown Castle International) off McGettigan Road, a 3,000 SF industrial building addition (CoorsTek) on Powers Street, and a major site renovation to an existing major national restaurant chain (McDonalds) on Nashua Street.

The Department provided a wide variety of professional community planning services to the citizens of Milford and prospective applicants. Between on-going developments, administrative duties and a variety of special studies and projects, the department remained busy throughout 2013. Some highlights and notable accomplishments from 2013 include the following:

- Throughout the first half of 2013 Staff along with the Milford Planning Board, completed an update to the Milford Gravel Regulations. The Town's existing Gravel Regulations were written to reflect the State regulations. The State's RSA's have changed, requiring the Town to update the regulations to reflect changes (Completed in October 2013).
- In June 2013 the Office of Community Development launched its first issue of "**FORWARDMilford**" a newsletter from the department containing news and updates in planning, building, the economy and resource management. The newsletter is issued bi-monthly and provides a resource for residents and developers to stay up-to-date on new projects and development in town. Copies can be found in the Office of Community Development and on the Town of Milford webpage.
- The Office of Community Development along with NRPC and the Milford Planning Board held a scoping workshop that concentrated generally on housing types and options. The workshop was held in the Town Hall Auditorium on July 23rd. Approximately, 20-30 property owners, developers, residents and other stakeholders attended the July session. Participants were asked how and to what extent the future of residential and open space development should be in Milford. With this public input NRPC began to draft regulations that reflected the consensus developed at the scoping sessions. The Planning Board will continue to focus their efforts on providing multi-generational and mixed housing options throughout 2014.
- Staff along with consultant CDM Smith developed a water and sewer GIS system using existing source information provided by the Water Utilities Department. Using existing information all culverts, catch basins, pipes, valves, hydrants and other applicable sewer and water features located within the town rights-of-way were mapped, attribute information recorded, and GIS databases were developed.

The Milford Geographic Information Systems program remains active and current. Staff continually works to keep the Town's mapping information up-to-date and accurate. New subdivisions and site plan information is regularly updated into the system along with numerous corrections to the parcel boundary lines and road layers to address inaccuracies.

In 2013 Planning staff in conjunction with the Information Technology Department began the process of hosting the Town's GIS server to include ArcGIS Server installation to allow departmental access to GIS mapping information. This will provide viewers with the ability to turn layers and map sets on and off, access to assessing database, map printing, and links to Google and Bing maps. This integration will allow for all GIS Viewer updates to be completed on a monthly basis and will assure the Town's GIS files are accurate and up-to-date within a 30-day window.

In addition to the Town online GIS Viewer website which is available to all residents, beginning in December 2013 staff began incorporating a more interactive Planning Board webpage. The webpage will allow viewers the ability to see locations of upcoming applications, access meeting agendas and project details on a map display. The map will create an added visual experience when visiting the Planning and GIS webpage.

You will be able to access this information by going to:

<http://www.milford.nh.gov/town/community-development/planning-gis>. Also, please visit the Town's website for all land use regulations, applications and Planning Board minutes.

While performing these duties, an emphasis is continually placed on customer service and community involvement. Department staff strives to recognize public needs by posting on the Town website all Planning Board meeting agendas and staff memos, public hearing notices, meeting minutes, application forms, rules of procedure/bylaws, and regulations, as well as having them available in the Department. 2014 looks to be a productive year as a number of special planning projects are on the horizon.

### **Building Safety / Code Enforcement – Dana MacAllister, Building Official**

2013 was a busy year for commercial/industrial projects in Milford. 39 permits were issued for commercial remodeling projects, a new 40,000 square foot building was constructed on Meadowbrook Dr, the Pine Valley Mill redevelopment project on Wilton Rd. was started converting a portion of the historic mill into 50 one and two bedroom affordable residential apartments, and the new Milford Ambulance facility completed in December. Overall 530 permits were issued, with the majority of permits being for electrical work (199) and renovations/additions (105). Permit processing, plan review, and inspections are necessary for all these projects.

The Building Department also completed its ISO (Insurance Services Office) review in the fall. This review is performed every 10 years for municipal building departments across the United States and serves as a guide for insurance companies when setting rates (a lower number can translate into lower homeowner insurance rates). The review takes into account many factors when determining the rating including plan review

processes, inspection methods and staff training. For 2013 we were able to improve our rating to 3 for both commercial and residential categories, putting Milford in the top four building departments in New Hampshire. For any questions on the report, or to view a copy, please contact our office at the number below.

In addition to plan review and project inspection, we are also available to discuss home improvement projects with Milford residents and assist them to determine which codes apply to their project. Asking questions and seeking guidance at a very early stage saves time and money. If you have any questions about the building codes or are planning a home improvement project feel free to send an email or call our office at 249-0620.

In addition to building safety our Department also investigates potential violations of the Milford Zoning Ordinance. In 2013, 64 non-health complaints were logged with zoning complaints (for example unpermitted businesses, site plan violations, signs) being the most often reported (16). Of the complaints investigated in 2013, 84% were resolved, with the remaining open complaints under investigation or in the process of being resolved by the property owners.

#### **Health - Dana MacAllister, Health Officer**

In 2013 the Health Department received 25 health-related complaints, with trash (6) and tenant/landlord (4) complaints being the most often reported. Out of the health complaints investigated in 2013, 97% were resolved, with the remaining open complaints under investigation or in the process of being resolved.

Information regarding state health regulations and other health related information is available at the Community Development Offices in Town Hall or on our website <http://milford.nh.gov>. Seasonal and H1N1 influenza, West Nile Virus (WNV), Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) and Lyme Disease continue to be major concerns with public health and we reaffirm that precautions such as covering coughs and sneezes, hand washing and vaccination is the best way to limit the spread of influenza while proper clothing with long sleeves and pants and insect repellants are your best protection for WNV, EEE, and Lyme disease.

Assisting the Health Department with their areas of expertise as Deputy Health Officers are Tim Herlihy (Building Department), Fred Elkind (Environmental), and Eric Schelberg (Ambulance Service).

#### **Stormwater/Environmental Programs – Fred Elkind, PE, Environmental Programs Coordinator**

During 2013 the part-time department of Stormwater/Environmental Programs was kept busy with many responsibilities. The Department managed the development of a feasible approach to the long-discussed dredging of Osgood Pond, switching the emphasis from a cooperative yet costly methodology proposed by the Army Corps of

Engineers to a Town-funded project to be completed by the Town. Associated with this project was the required application for dredging the Pond to the NH DES Wetlands Board. The application included engineering for a phased project of approximately 11.5 acres. At year's end the application had been submitted to the State and the Town was awaiting its review and approval.

The Department also coordinated the following: a groundwater investigation on a 6 acre site with possible contamination; coordination with the Public Works Department for video inspection of approximately 10,000 linear feet and the cleaning of 1000 linear feet of municipal storm sewer; review of and participation in response to draft EPA Stormwater MS4 permit requirements; engineering review for six major development projects; and assistance in inspections and code enforcement on projects with major site alterations.

The Community Development Office consists of 5 full-time and 5 part-time employees that handle not only the major projects described within this report but also the day-to-day counter, telephone, and email requests for service from the public, other departments, and the many boards and committees. This past February we welcomed Tim Herlihy as Deputy Building Inspector/Code Enforcement Officer/Deputy Health Officer and Brandi Litts joined the team in August filling a part-time Administrative Assistant position. Rita Johnson, part-time GIS Technician, manages the day-to-day operation of the GIS. Shirley Wilson manages the administrative duties of the "Front Office". Chris Costantino, part-time coordinator for the Conservation Commission, also shares office space in this Office.

In closing, I want to express my appreciation to the dedicated staff of this Office. Customer service is part of our philosophy and we strive to take the extra step to help people through the often complex and overwhelming processes required by local, state, and federal codes and regulations, all while keeping in mind the expressed desires of the community as a whole. I also want to thank the chairs of the Planning Board, Janet Langdell, and Fletcher Seagroves of the Zoning Board as well as the many citizen volunteers, who provide insight, assistance, and patience working with this team.

For further information, visit the Office website at [www.milford.nh.gov](http://www.milford.nh.gov).

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Parker  
Community Development Director