

# OFFICE OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

## 2015 Annual Report

Planning ~ Zoning ~ Building Safety ~ Code Enforcement  
Public Health ~ Economic Development ~ Active Projects  
Geographic Information Systems ~ Stormwater Management

### **Mission Statement**

*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 charged with 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 projects; the stormwater management program; and geographic information systems (GIS) operations.

This Office is most often the first stop for individual property owners and developers to obtain an understanding on how to navigate 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 many boards (Planning Board, Zoning Board and the West Milford Tax Increment Financing District Advisory Board), the Economic Development Advisory Council (EDAC), Traffic Safety Committee, and various subcommittees and working groups. Responsibilities include research, writing, updating and preparation of such required documents and plans as the Milford Master Plan, the annual 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 and support groups. An excellent working relationship with the Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) 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.

Development activity in Milford continued to trend upwards in 2015 and was reflective of strengthening economic conditions. Construction is a major component of the local economy providing employment and benefitting local businesses. Milford is unlikely (as is New Hampshire in general according to economists) to see the population growth cycles of the 1970s, '80s, and '90s however there will always be the 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, agriculture, and infrastructure. These goals are reflected in the Milford Master Plan.

The status as of the end of 2015 of major projects undertaken and managed by this Office follows:

***South Street Improvement Project:*** The long anticipated federally/locally funded South Street Improvement Project was given the go-ahead to advertise for construction bids in May 2015. Due to the busy construction climate, only one bid was received and it was deemed too high and not within the approved construction budget. The project area is Union Square southerly to the railroad crossing of South Street, and will consist of utility pole relocation and undergrounding of overhead utilities, new concrete and asphalt sidewalks, new period lighting, and paving is anticipated to be rebid in January 2016 with the hope for more competitive bidding, with construction to begin as soon as weather permits in the spring.

***Route 13/Emerson Road/Armory Road Intersection Improvements:*** Construction of this intersection improvement project consisting of added turn lanes and designated left-turn signalization at the congested Route 13/Emerson and Armory Roads intersection began in the Spring of 2015 and was completed by August. The result of this federally/locally funded project is a safer intersection with improved traffic movement.

***Osgood Pond Reclamation Project:*** A federal Land Water Conservation Fund grant was applied for and successfully obtained in September in the amount of \$150,000 (to be matched in the same amount through a combination of local and state funding sources) and which will be used to dredge and reclaim approximately 3-5 acres. The intent of the project is to restore an area of Osgood Pond to a depth allowing for restoration of aquatic habitat as well as fishing and boating opportunities. It is anticipated that this project will begin in the Spring of 2016.

***Brox Gravel Removal Project:*** An earth materials excavation plan was completed in early 2015 to implement recommendations in the updated Brox Community Lands Master Plan to excavate earth materials in accordance with the future planned development of a portion of the site for multi-use community needs as contemplated by the Town since the property was purchased in 2000.

***Brox Property Commercial-Industrial Development:*** This Office continued to work with an out-of-state company interested in the purchase of 93 acres of the commercial-industrial portion of the Brox Property, thus implementing the wishes of Town voters to sell the non-community lands portion of the property. Although the sale did not transpire, this Office, in partnership with the West Milford Tax Increment Financing Advisory Board and town officials, continues to meet with interested parties with the intent of selling the property for property tax generating revenue.

**Former Police Station Property:** In 2006 Town voters authorized the Board of Selectmen to sell the former police station property on west Elm Street. As the site is adjacent to, and partially impacted by the ongoing OK Tool EPA Superfund cleanup project, additional environmental testing was conducted on the site as required by the NH Department of Environmental Services and the next step for the Town is to undertake an 'Activity and Use Restriction' agreement with the NHDES and EPA which will outline the development parameters of the site for potential purchasers.

**Economic Development Advisory Council (EDAC):** This Office provides all the staff support for the 15-member EDAC. Work projects during 2015 focused on participating in the joint Business Retention & Expansion Program undertaken by a partnership between the Souhegan Valley Chamber of Commerce and the Towns of Milford and Amherst. The program was offered by the UNH Cooperative Extension Service and geared towards conducting a survey of local businesses to determine what is necessary to change or enhance to allow businesses to grow and expand. The results of the survey indicated several areas which EDAC members decided to build its work program on, including workforce development and building linkages between educational opportunities and businesses.

**2016-2021 Capital Improvements Plan:** Each year the Planning Board appoints a citizens' advisory committee to review and update the Town's 6-year capital improvements plan that serves as a planning and budgeting tool relative to all planned capital expenditures in excess of \$75,000. This Office supports the committee and prepares the final document for ultimate review and adoption by the Planning Board. The CIP is an essential tool to carry out recommendations contained in the Milford Master Plan and aids in guiding the growth and development of the Town.

Through the course of the year the Office was faced with the task of staff reorganization due to the resignation of two key individuals, Building Inspector Dana MacAllister in June and Town Planner/GIS Coordinator Jodie Levandowski in July. Both professionals were instrumental in building the Community Development Office into bringing new initiatives forward and continuing to make this Office a progressive and customer-service oriented environment. Tim Herlihy, the Deputy Building Official, was promoted to Building Official in October. To assist in the Building Department's operations, the part-time Administrative Assistant position held by Brandi Litts was transitioned into a full-time position. Shirley Wilson continues to support and manage administrative operations of the Office and provides essential service to the public and other departments when needed. Also providing valuable assistance to Office operations is Fred Elkind, part-time Environmental Programs Coordinator; Chris Costantino, part-time Conservation Commission Coordinator; and Lorraine Carson, part-time Land Researcher.

In mid-November Lincoln Daley was hired to take over the Director's position upon my retirement. I wish Mr. Daley the best and am confident that he is up to the challenges and opportunities that present themselves every day in managing the Town's land use and economic development goals.

It has been an honor serving the citizens of Milford and its many dedicated volunteers since 1993 on behalf of the Office of Community Development. The Town is also very fortunate to have employees that are truly committed to performing their jobs. It has especially been a rare privilege to work with the “community development team” over the years and for that I will be forever grateful.

The following sections will further describe 2015 activity within the various departments under the Community Development Office umbrella.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Parker,  
Community Development Director

### ***PLANNING/GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS:***

The Planning/GIS Department provides services to residents, developers and local volunteer boards by reviewing and processing proposed projects with the Town. The Department administers the Town’s Development Regulations as well as the Zoning Ordinance and reviews all land use applications for consistency and compliance with those regulations and the Milford Master Plan. Additionally, the Town’s Geographic Information System (GIS) is managed and maintained in this department.

Development activity in 2015 reflected the gradual and growing improvement in the local economy. There was an increase in subdivision and site plan applications with 36 applications before the Planning Board compared to 20 in 2014. New projects, either permitted or under construction at year’s end, include an office expansion for Ciardelli Fuel Co., Inc.; a major 60,000 SF expansion of the Alene Candle manufacturing plant on Scarborough Lane; tenant fit-ups for Dollar Tree at Richmond Plaza and the GFI/Cirtronics building on Route 13 South; the relocation of Good Mojo Dog Center on Elm Street; the expansion of Datron on Emerson Road; and conversion of the old Milford Lumber building on Elm Street for offices. A major single-family 55-lot subdivision, “Autumn Oaks”, was approved by the Planning Board in September. This subdivision is located off Mile Slip and Boynton Hill Roads. The 60-unit “East Ridge” multi-family development located off Capron Road at the east end of Nashua Street received its approvals earlier in the year and it is anticipated that construction will start on that project in 2016. Milford Medical Center completed construction on its major expansion project on Nashua Street mid-year.

Building plans have been submitted for a new CVS Pharmacy approved for the corner of Nashua and Clinton Streets, and the downtown Cumberland Farms convenience store is undergoing remodeling. Preliminary plans are being developed for commercial uses off Hammond Road and South Street.

***BUILDING SAFETY/HEALTH/CODE ENFORCEMENT:***

2015 was another busy year for commercial projects in Milford; 46 commercial building permits were issued including the Alene Candles addition, DTM Autowerks and Ciardelli's office addition. Large scale commercial remodels included Dollar Tree, Good Mojo, 300 Elm Street, and a coffee shop expansion for Union Coffee. For residential projects, 29 new home building permits were issued, and 186 permits were issued for remodeling projects, additions and accessory structures. Overall 658 permits were issued, with the majority of permits being for electrical work (262) which includes 38 new residential solar installations and 1 commercial Solar Installation.

New large subdivisions this year included West Meadow Court, which was started this year with 7 new homes and Autumn Oaks. Ongoing residential subdivisions active this year were Falcon Ridge, The Reserve, Beacon Way, and Timber Ridge.

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.

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Herlihy,  
Building Official



***ZONING ADMINISTRATION / ZONING BOARD:***

This Office supports the Milford Zoning Board of Adjustment by meeting with property owners to determine whether their proposals must obtain Zoning Board approval for variances, special exceptions, or equitable waivers granting relief from the Town-adopted zoning regulations and by administering the New Hampshire rules which govern applications, public notices, and Board action follow-up. 2015 was a busy year for the Office and Zoning Board, as 9 variances and 11 special exception applications were heard by the Board, along with several miscellaneous applications. The Zoning Board also spent considerable time refining its rules and procedures and in working with the Community Development Office and Planning Board on potential amendments to the Zoning Ordinance.