

**Planning Board
Annual Report
2016**

The Planning Board's responsibilities include the review and approval of Subdivisions and Site Plan projects requiring Special Permits; Approval Not Required (ANR) Plans for subdividing lots, and applications submitted under the Scenic Roads Act. The Board holds public hearings for zoning bylaw amendments and submits recommendations to Town Meeting relative to these proposals; serves as the Stormwater Authority to oversee the Stormwater Management Bylaw, and is in charge of updating the Town's Master Plan. Agendas are posted on the Bulletin Board outside Town Hall, and on the Town Web site (www.townsend.ma.us). Meetings are open to the public.

This year saw a few changes on the Planning Board. Laura Shifrin and Edwin Howard, II, were elected and Kathy Araujo and Jerrilyn Bozicas were appointed to the Board joining Lance McNally (chair), Chris Nocella (Vice-Chair). Long-time Planning Board Administrator, Jeanne Hollows, retired in March and we welcomed Michele Decoteau as her replacement in October. Land Use Coordinator, Karen Chapman, adeptly helped to fill the gap.

Jeanne Hollows and Land Use Coordinator, Karen Chapman, along with Carla Hitzenbuhler, Board of Health Administrator, worked with the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) to apply for a Community Development Block Grant to assist low income residents with building code upgrades, failing septic systems, and fuel assistance. This application was not funded and we anticipate trying again in the near future.

After many meetings and behind the scenes work, two new roads were approved and accepted at Town Meeting last year: Alyssa Drive and Trophy Avenue.

The Planning Board has been working on new Bylaws that will be voted on at the Annual Town Meeting in 2017. These Bylaws have taken many months and many hands to craft, reflecting the vision of the community.

The Planning Board worked with residents who had submitted a petition to amend the Ground-Mounted Solar Energy District Bylaw by adding seven new properties to the three town-owned properties that were already in the Solar Overlay District. This amendment was presented at the Annual Town Meeting in May and was defeated. The Planning Board then solicited nine residents to serve on a Solar Bylaw Review Committee to address the need to update the Solar Bylaw. The Solar Bylaw Committee members were: Kathy Araujo (Chair), Veronica Kell, Wayne Miller, Kym Craven, Kathy Thompson, Sarah Chambers, Justin Kennedy, and Carolyn Sellars.

This is the Purpose of the draft Bylaw:

Ground-mounted Solar

The purpose of this bylaw is to promote the creation of new large-scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic installations by providing standards for the placement, design, construction, operation, monitoring, modification and removal of such installations that address public safety, minimize impacts on scenic, natural and historic resources and to provide adequate financial assurance for the eventual decommissioning of such installations.

In 2016, the Planning Board applied for and received a District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) Grant from MRPC to review the Town's Zoning Bylaws in relation to improving housing opportunities. The first two Bylaws are ready to be voted on at the Town Meeting.

Accessory Apartments

For the purpose of (a) providing small additional dwelling units to be occupied without adding to the number of buildings in the Town, or substantially altering the appearance of the Town, (b) providing alternative housing options; and (c) enabling owners of single-family dwellings larger than required for their present needs to share space and the burdens of home ownership.

55+ Communities

These communities will become part of the Open Space Multifamily Development Bylaw. In order to provide for the public interest by the preservation of open space in perpetuity, variety in residential housing which allows for development more harmonious with natural features and to promote the maximum possible protection of open space, visual quality, and watershed protection, and to encourage efficient provision of necessary utilities and community services, the following requirements are established for open space multifamily development within the Town of Townsend.

We've worked to draft one additional Bylaw:

Medical Marijuana

The purpose of this bylaw is to establish specific zoning regulations for the placement, siting, design, security, monitoring, modification, and removal of Registered Medical Marijuana Dispensaries (RMD) and the products produced or dispensed. These zoning regulations help to promote economic development and protect the property, history, and most importantly, the children of our community.

This past year the Planning Board heard five Site Plan Reviews/Special permits, five ANR plans to subdivide lots, and two Stormwater permits.

In addition to the responsibilities as members of the Planning Board, members served on other committees as Planning Board Representatives. Kathleen Araujo served as the Chair of the Solar Bylaw Committee and Laura Shifrin served on the Community Development Committee.

The Planning Board remains committed to turning the vision of the community into reality through thoughtful development while protecting the nature of our beautiful town. If you are interested in joining us as an alternate member, please fill out the Volunteer Response Form at the back of this book or at the Town website.

Respectfully submitted,

The Planning Board

Lance J. McNally

Christopher Nocella

Kathleen Araujo

Laura E. Shifrin

Edwin H. Howard, II

Jerrilyn T. Bozicas