

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND LAND MANAGEMENT

Marcia Rasmussen,
Director of Planning and Land Management

MISSION

To guide the development and use of private and public lands within the Town of Concord in a manner that preserves and celebrates the unique character that is Concord.

ORGANIZATION AND STAFFING

The Department is comprised of fourteen full-time and two part-time individuals within four distinct Divisions – Building and Inspections, Health, Natural Resources and Planning. The range and extent of authority exercised by these Divisions is found in State law and in the Town's bylaws. In June, we welcomed Susan Rask as the Public Health Director and Division manager for Health. In October, Administrative Assistant Paula Trebino submitted her resignation; recruitment is expected to begin in January 2012. Two part-time staff were also hired to serve as the summer conservation crew; they worked with the Natural Resources Division staff on trails maintenance, field mowing and invasive species control of Town open space and conservation lands.

These four Divisions provide staff support to the Town's regulatory boards and committees: the Board of Appeals, Board of Health, Natural Resources Commission, Planning Board and Historic Districts Commission. DPLM staff also provides support to the Community Preservation Committee, Historical Commission and Comprehensive Sustainable Energy Committee, in addition to many other sub-committees and task forces that may be appointed to address specific issues from time to time, such as the Mill Brook Task Force, Conservation Restriction Stewardship Committee, West Concord Task Force and the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Advisory Committee.

Planning & Land Management staff also work cooperatively with other Town departments to further the

goals and objectives of the Town. Some of the projects in which we have been involved include: an integrated planning initiative for wastewater and potential development, the staff Communications Team and the Facility Manager's Committee.

Detailed reports on the regulatory activities of the various boards staffed by DPLM are included in this Annual Report.

BUILDING INSPECTIONS AND ZONING ENFORCEMENT

John Minty,
Building Commissioner

The Building Inspections Division issued 806 building permits in 2011, which is a 1% increase in the number of building permits issued compared to 2010. This is the greatest number of building permits ever issued in Concord during any one year period. The overall value of 2011 construction was just over \$44 million. Of this total, \$34.7 million (79%) was residential construction with \$9.3 million in commercial work accounting for the remaining 21%. Note: last year we issued building permits for the 350 unit Long View Meadow 40B project. This one project was an anomaly, representing \$44.6 million in construction value in one permit alone.

Discounting this Long View Meadow project; the value of "new residential dwelling units" built in Concord went from 12.3 million last year to 17 million in 2011; a 38% increase. This residential construction value represents 30 new single family dwelling units built in 2011. Of these 30 new dwellings, 21, or 70%, were the result of "tear downs" (the demolition of an existing house to allow the construction of a new, often larger, home). Over this past year, 17.3 million dollars were spent on alterations or additions to existing single family residential homes. This is a decrease in value of 9% from last year.

In 2011, plumbing permits increased 11%, gas permits by 6%, and electrical permits by 16%. This was also the first year that the Building Division has issued Mechanical permits. Since July 1 we have issued 26 mechanical permits.

The Building Division collected \$554,211 in permit fees in 2011. Again, if we discount the Long View Meadow project fee collected last year, this is an increase of \$44,759 in permit fees collected over last year (an 8.8% increase).

The level of building construction activity continued to increase in 2011 as it did in 2010. The demands on the Building Inspections Division staff remained high. As a division, the Building Inspections staff is strongly committed to pursuing aggressive Zoning and Sign By-law enforcement. Our technical assistance to property owners, builders, real estate professionals, other Town departments, boards, committees and staff, increases each year. Beyond issuing building permits and carrying out site inspections, the Building Inspections Division staff spends an increasing amount of time reviewing subdivision proposals, special permits, site plans, variance requests, making zoning determinations and addressing zoning complaints. The new 8th Edition of the MA State Building Code, as well as last year's Zoning Bylaw amendments (especially related to nonconforming uses and structures), have made it increasingly challenging for the Division staff to deal with the quickly changing and growing level of highly technical and complicated regulation that we are empowered to enforce.

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Alice Kaufman, Chair
 Roberto Braceras,
 Steven Ng
 David Fisher, Associate
 David Broadwin, Associate
 John Brady, Associate

The Board of Appeals is authorized by Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40A and is responsible for conducting public hearings and meetings for matters relating to the zoning bylaws of the Town.

In July, Alice Kaufman was elected as Chair. Having completed his term, Patrick C. Toomey left the Board in August; John Brady joined the Board in September.

The Board conducted twelve (12) public hearings and twelve (12) public meetings in 2011, during which it considered forty-seven (47) applications. One (1) application was withdrawn at the request of the applicant. Forty-one (41) special permits were granted. Two (2) variances from the Sign Bylaw were granted. One (1) amendment to a previously approved variance was granted (in conjunction with a special permit). Two (2) applications are still pending. No decision made by the Board was appealed. One (1) appeal of a decision of the Building Inspector/Zoning Enforcement Officer was filed and denied. (Some of these applications included multiple activities; therefore, the activity totals in the table on the following page may exceed the number of applications.)

Performance Information						
# Permits Issued	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006
New single family homes	30	41	26	28	22	26
Multi-family attached units	0	21	6	5	7	9
Additions/Alterations	686	644	537	595	618	674
Commercial	90	90	97	83	92	96
Total Building Permits:	806	796	666	711	739	799
Electrical	745	642	643	716	761	790
Mechanical	26	-	-	-	-	-
Plumbing	470	424	435	462	468	524
Gas	340	320	326	315	344	358
Signs	41	30	50	44	34	45
Total all Permits:	2428	2212	2120	2248	2346	2516
Value of Const. (millions)	44.0	90.0	40.6	64.4	66.5	94.7
Permit Fee Revenue	\$554,211	\$955,212	\$486,410	\$506,070	\$593,835	\$1,056,554