

### *Agricultural Leases and Community Gardens*

**Agricultural Leases:** The Division continued to work with local farmers to retain land in agriculture, managing 13 agricultural leases covering 211 acres of farmland, and supporting three community gardens. With the unexpected passing of Patrick McGrath earlier this year, Division staff began evaluating the McGrath farmland to continue the centuries old legacy of farming this land. Approximately 39 acres of Town-owned land along Barrett's Mill Rd. are under consideration for agricultural leases.

**Community Gardens:** The long standing tradition of organic community gardening continues to thrive under the helpful guidance of coordinators Ray Andrews, Jim Catterton, Dale Clutter, Elisabeth Elden, Rebecca Sheehan Purcell, Tracy Sharakan, and Kitty Smith.

**Cousin's Field Community Garden (CFCG)** completed the season with 30 gardeners in 22.5 plots. The small perennial area was expanded to include strawberries and herbs along with the perennial raspberry and blueberry co-ops. CFCG is delighted to collaborate with the coordinators at the Hugh Cargill and East Quarters locations and looks forward to continued benefit from this collective wisdom and community spirit. CFCG is delighted to have connections with other Concord groups such as Gardens for Life and Conantum Gardening Club who generously share their knowledge by inviting CFCG gardeners to their events.

**East Quarter Farms** community garden has grown to be a large and thriving community of passionate gardeners of every level of ability from beginner to expert. Besides individual plots, small and large, there are common areas with blueberries, raspberries, herbs, and a beehive.

The Hugh Cargill Community Garden is on rich farmland bequeathed to the Town by Hugh Cargill in 1793 for the benefit of the poor in Concord. The HCCG has grown over the years, and is now about 60 families and individuals working 80 garden plots. The HCCG hosts a midwinter gardeners' meeting, an annual spring sign-up meeting and a late summer pot luck supper; guests are welcome. This was a very good growing season for most gardeners, and vegetables were again donated to Open Table and flowers to the Town House and Stone Soup Dinner.

The garden lost good friends this year with the deaths of Bronco Elliott in February and Nat Marden in June.

### *Environmental and Educational Activities*

The Division sponsors the longstanding tradition of early morning Conservation Coffees held on the first Tuesday morning of most months at 7:30 a.m. These lively and stimulating gatherings of citizens, federal, State, and local officials provide an interesting and effective forum to exchange information, ideas, and concerns about conservation and the environment.

Division staff prepared and distributed a Homeowners Guide to Working Near Wetlands and Streams to all Concord residents. This well received brochure was developed to inform residents about wetland regulations and permitting requirements.

Division staff, in conjunction with the Council on Aging, developed a Senior Walking Program in response to an overwhelming desire from seniors to enjoy the wonderful trail systems that Concord has to offer in a safe communal environment. This program has been very successful with two walks scheduled each week.

## **PLANNING BOARD**

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The Planning Board's authority is contained in MGL Ch. 41 "Improved Methods of Municipal Planning" and MGL Ch. 40A "The Zoning Act". Additional responsibilities are found in the Town Bylaws and the Town Charter.

The Board held 24 public meetings; 1 joint meeting with the Historic Districts Commission, Natural Resources Commission, Public Works Commission, and Historical Commission (see Millbrook Tarry Design Planning Workshop below); and 5 public hearings. The hearings were for the following: zoning amendments to be considered by the Annual and Special Town Meetings; an

application for an eight-lot Definitive Subdivision of land at 9B and 247 Monsen Rd.; and two applications for a two-lot Definitive Subdivision of land at 80 Squaw Sachem Trail.



*Planning Board Site Visit to Monsen Rd. / Scimone land subdivision with developer Mark White*

### *Residential development*

22 “Approval Not Required” (ANR) plans were submitted to the Board. 12 of these plans approved changes of lot lines that did not create additional building lots. 8 plans created 8 additional building lots. 2 plans were denied.

A 2-lot Definitive Subdivision of land at 80 Squaw Sachem Trail filed in 2011 was denied in June. In August a 2-lot Definitive Subdivision of land at 80 Squaw Sachem Trail was granted with conditions; it contained a provision that Lot B2 as shown on the submitted plan be subject to a Reservation of Land for Public Purposes under Section 6.20 of the Planning Board’s Subdivision Rules and Regulations. This Reservation will allow the Town until July 1, 2013 to identify a source of funds for the purchase of the reserved land.

At this time, the Board has continued its review of the 8-lot Definitive Subdivision of land at 9B and 247 Monsen Rd.

### *Comprehensive permits*

A Comprehensive Permit (Chapter 40B) application filed with the Board of Appeals in November for the construction of 8 homes on a single lot at 1257 Elm St. is under review by the Planning Board for a recommendation.

### *Commercial, institutional and other development*

16 site plan/special permit applications received affirmative recommendations to the Zoning Board of Appeals (4 of these were filed in 2011). 3 site plan reviews (for Concord Academy, Fenn School, and Middlesex School) received affirmative recommendations to the Building Commissioner. 4 applications were withdrawn. 1 application for the redevelopment of 50 Beharrell St. is still under review by the Planning Board for a recommendation to the Board of Appeals.

### *Zoning amendments and Town Meeting actions*

The Planning Board sponsored five articles at Annual Town Meeting that all passed. One article defined a large-scale, ground-mounted solar facility and outlined the requirements and standards for installation. One article redefined the Industrial Park District into 2 distinct districts (IP A, in the vicinity of Baker Ave. and Baker Ave. Extension & IP B, off Virginia Rd. near Hanscom) and expanded the hotel and motel use to allow extended-stay hotel use in the Industrial Park A District. Another article defined “mobile medical facility” accessory use and allowed the Board of Appeals to grant a special permit for such use for more than 2 years. One article addressed special dimensional exceptions and clarified that a historically-significant structure may remain on any of the lots created by the special permit. The last article addressed the Residential Cluster Development bylaw and clarified that 50 feet is the maximum additional setback from the overall tract boundary that may be required by the Planning Board.

The Planning Board supported a petition article that passed at the Special Town Meeting that added the combined business/residence use as a permitted use in the Limited Business District #7, located at 100 Main St.

### *Public Workshops*

The Board held 2 public workshops. A design planning workshop was held in November to consider redevelopment of Millbrook Tarry on Lowell Rd. Members of the Planning Board, Historic Districts Commission, Natural Resources Commission, Public Works Commission, Historical Commission, Town staff to these boards/ commissions, members of the public, and the potential development’s design team attended the workshop. Feedback from the workshop will be compiled into a report and shared with the boards/commissions

and development team prior to follow-up discussions and site analyses in 2013.

In December, the Planning Board invited homeowners in the Residence B District to a meeting to discuss potential zoning bylaw amendments proposed for the Residence B District that address both how building height is measured and the permitted height within the side yard setback exception area. The Board proposed these changes in response to residents' concerns and feedback gathered from a Residence B Survey distributed by the Concord Housing Foundation in 2011. The proposed changes are the same as the Residence C Zoning District changes approved at 2011 Town Meeting.

#### *Other Actions*

Goal setting sessions and reviews of draft language for potential zoning bylaw amendments were held at several of the Board's meetings in anticipation of submitting zoning bylaw amendment warrant articles for the 2013 Annual Town Meeting.

The Board nominated members to the West Concord Advisory Committee, the Historic Districts Commission and the Community Preservation Committee.

The Board endorsed a street improvement plan for 31X Garfield Rd.; endorsed 80 Squaw Sachem Trail Subdivision plans; considered Form F – Release of lots for both 82 Autumn Lane and 14A Strawberry Hill Rd. a/k/a Finigan Way; and discussed remote participation by Committees per the Open Meeting Law.

Members of the Planning Board served on the following regional committees: MAGIC (Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination) and HATS (Hanscom Area Towns). Board members also participate on other Town Committees such as the West Concord Advisory Committee and the Community Preservation Committee.

#### *West Concord Advisory Committee (WCAC)*

The West Concord Advisory Committee (WCAC), a subcommittee of the Planning Board, was formed pursuant to recommendations from the West Concord Task Force, whose work provides the foundation and guiding vision for the West Concord Advisory Committee charge. The main duty of the WCAC's seven regular and two associate members is to serve as a resource for the Planning Board by providing input to developers

and property owners as well as the Board when plans and concepts are proposed for development, renovation, circulation, beautification, etc. in West Concord. Several members of the West Concord Advisory Committee also took on liaison responsibilities, interacting with other Town boards and committees; reporting to the broader group about issues related to the Village.

The WCAC reviewed and provided comments to the Planning Board on several major proposals related to the Village area, including: a proposal to rebuild 113 Commonwealth Ave. into 2,500 square feet of retail space for Concord Outfitters and another 1,000 square feet for another retail tenant, as well as a second floor for storage; a proposal to build a TD Bank on the site of the current Mobil Station at the intersection of Main St. and Baker Ave., and a proposal to redevelop 50 Beharrell St. into a mix of housing and light industrial spaces. This last proposal also involves redeveloping what's known as the "old Chrysler parking lot" on Commonwealth Ave. into 6,750 square feet of retail space.

The WCAC, as part of its regular business, kept abreast of a number of other topics over its first 10 months, including: Route 62 traffic studies and reconstruction proposals; the redevelopment of Junction Park; Warner Pond Dam Pocket Park upgrades; Bradford Mills development; Concord Outfitters' plan to relocate farther down Commonwealth Ave.; the offering, by auction, of a 1.9-acre parcel of land on Baker Ave. behind Citizen's Bank on Main St.; the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail; and the Winthrop St. housing project proposal. WCAC members also wrote two "Perspectives" op-ed columns for the *Concord Journal*, and established a relationship with the newspaper to contribute at least one column a quarter. The Committee supported the purchase of 51 Lawsbrook Rd. for the purposes of expanding Rideout Playground and established an online message board to keep constituents informed about meetings and action items.