



LAND USE

Above: Thornton Brook Preserve, Coventry's newest parcel of open space, became accessible to the public in the summer of 2014. Photo by Eric Trott.

TOWN OF COVENTRY ANNUAL REPORT

Fiscal Year:
2014 – 2015



Bird at Eagleville Lake – Stonehouse Rd.

LAND USE OFFICE

Inland Wetlands Agency

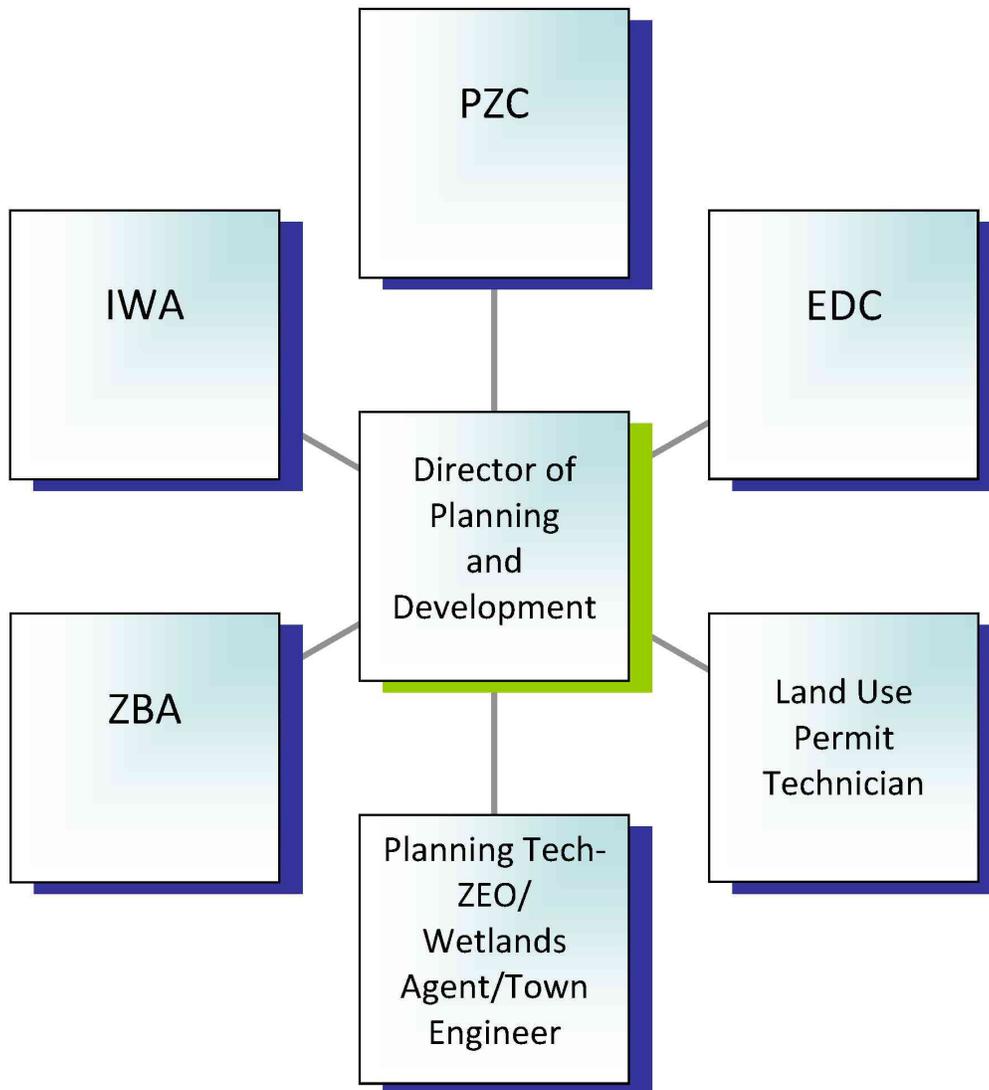
Zoning Board of Appeals

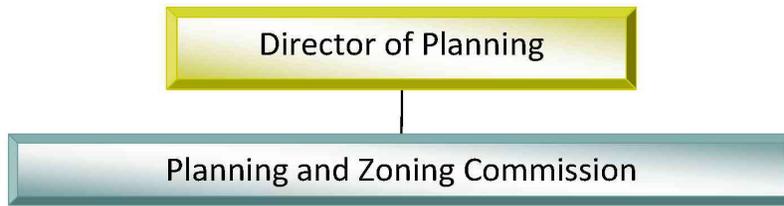
Economic Development Commission

Planning and Zoning Commission

Eric M. Trott, Director of Planning and Development
Michael Antonellis, Planning Technician/Zoning Enforcement Officer
Todd Penney, P.E, Town Engineer/Wetlands Agent
Heidi A. Leech, Land Use Permit Technician

Organization and Staffing Charts





Planning and Zoning Commission

Fiscal Year	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15
Meetings	49*	22*	20	17	14	16
Applications	25	27	13	10	13	15

The Commission meets twice a month for regular meetings. Only one meeting is regularly scheduled for the month of December.

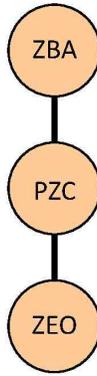
*The number of meetings was higher during certain fiscal years due to the fact that the Commission held special meetings for review of the revised Zoning Regulations, Zoning Map and Plan of Conservation and Development.



Economic Development Commission

Fiscal Year	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15
Meetings	11	11	9	10	10	8

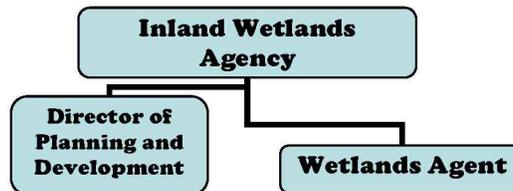
The EDC is scheduled to meet once a month excluding the month of November.



Zoning Board of Appeals

Fiscal Year	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15
Regular Meetings	7	10	6	4	7	5
Special Meetings	0	1	0	0	1	0
Applications	17	15	7	2	5	7

The Board is scheduled to meet once a month.



Inland Wetlands Agency

Fiscal Year	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15
Meetings	11	13	12	12	13	11
Applications	35	39	28	28	31	24

The Agency is scheduled to meet once a month.

**LAND USE OFFICE
BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS SERVED**

Planning and Zoning Commission

The purpose of the Land Use Office and Commission is to protect public health, safety and welfare through the administration of the zoning and subdivision regulations. The Office/Commission is responsible for reviewing development applications (i.e. subdivision, special permit, text/map amendment, site plan review) as well as guiding and managing land use activities. The Commission reviews and updates the zoning regulations, subdivision regulations, plan of conservation and development, and zoning map.

The Director of Planning and Development reviews all subdivision, special permit, site plan review and text/map amendment applications. In addition, technical assistance is provided to the Planning and Zoning, Economic Development, Conservation Commission, Coventry Lake Advisory and Monitoring Committee. The Director of Planning and Development oversees the Land Use Office and staff (Planning Technician/Zoning Agent, Wetlands Agent, Permit Technician and Recording Secretaries.) The Director regularly meets with members of the public, realtors, attorneys, etc., to discuss development procedures and options to provide guidance and advice on land use matters.

The Planning Technician/Zoning Agent is responsible for insuring that the Town's zoning regulations are complied with and directs enforcement activities when necessary. The PT/ZEO reviews all zoning permit applications, inspects properties for certificates of compliance, and proper erosion and sedimentation controls. The PT/ZEO answers daily zoning inquiries (phone, walk-in). The PT/ZEO provides staff assistance to the Zoning Board of Appeals, Planning and Zoning Commission and Conservation Commission.

Inland Wetlands Agency

The Inland Wetlands Agency (IWA) provides regulatory oversight for all activities (land disturbances as defined by the Regulations) involving wetlands, water bodies, and watercourses; including defined upland review areas from the wetlands, water bodies, and watercourses. The IWA reviews enforcement activities directed by the Wetlands Agent. The IWA reviews and updates its regulations. The IWA is responsible for administering the State's Aquifer Protection Regulations as directed by Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (D.E.E.P.).

The Inland Wetlands Agent is responsible for ensuring that the Town of Coventry's wetlands regulations are complied with and directs enforcement activities when necessary. The Wetlands Agent reviews all zoning permit applications that may involve regulated wetlands activities and inspects properties for proper installation of erosion and sedimentation controls. The Wetlands Agent answers daily wetlands inquiries and provides staff assistance to the Inland Wetlands Agency. The Planning Technician/Zoning Agent and Director of Planning and Development assist in the basic Wetlands Agent functions when the Agent is not in the office.

Zoning Board of Appeals

The Zoning Board of Appeals is responsible for the review of variance, special exception and motor vehicle dealer and repairer applications. The ZBA also reviews appeals taken of the decisions/actions of the ZEO.

Economic Development Commission

The Economic Development Commission is responsible for promoting the Town's business development in an effort to provide a blend of necessary services and employment while enhancing the commercial tax base of the Town. The EDC reviews all major economic development proposals and provides recommendations on an advisory capacity. The Director of Planning and Development provides staff support to the EDC.

Conservation Commission

The Conservation Commission is an advisory commission that focuses on environmental, conservation and open space matters. The Commission is responsible for making recommendations on open space purchases, planning and updates to the Open Space Plan and Natural Resource Inventory. The Commission is also involved in other efforts, such as stone wall awareness and maintenance, Adopt a Road program and provides recommendations to the Planning and Zoning Commission on land use applications.

Coventry Lake Advisory & Monitoring Committee

The Coventry Lake Advisory & Monitoring Committee is a subcommittee of the Conservation Commission that focuses on issues relative to Coventry Lake and its associated watershed. The Committee serves as an advocate for the Lake, compiles data and performs analysis on information that pertains to lake water quality, aquatic invasives and other threats to it. The Committee organizes activities for the Coventry Lake Awareness Month each July and works with Staff to organize the yearly State of Coventry Lake Forum. Efforts are underway in the development of a Lake Management Plan as well.

Farmers' Market Subcommittee of the Economic Development Commission

After the announcement in March of 2015 by the operators of the Coventry Regional Farmers' Market that 2015 would be their last season, the EDC swiftly created a subcommittee to plan for an ongoing presence of a farmers' market at the Hale Homestead in 2016 and beyond. Planning Staff serves as staff support of the subcommittee. The Committee will continue to support efforts to maintain the Market as it transitions to the Oversight Committee of the Market who will be also supported by the Market Master who will be hired as a part time Town employee.

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

Members: (As of June 30, 2014 end of fiscal year)

Raymond Giglio	Ed Marek	Darby Pollansky
William Jobbagy	Christine Pattee	Roberta Wilmot
Eric M. Trott, Director of Planning and Development		
Heidi Leech, Permit Technician		

COMMISSION HIGHLIGHTS

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS:

Due to the downturn of the economy over the past few years, the number of economic development projects approved by the Commission during the fiscal year continues to be on the same level of previous fiscal years. Although the volume of projects has decreased, these projects still involve substantial improvements to existing businesses.

Twin Hills Golf Course received a special permit approval to construct a large pavilion near the existing clubhouse. The project increases the opportunity to support the golf course’s customers by providing protection from the elements.

The Commission reviewed and approved a zone change application for a property located at the corner of Depot Road and Main Street. The application involved the change of zoning classification from GR – 40 to Neighborhood Commercial to allow for a new commercial building that would support office and service opportunities. The Commission approved the change due to its consistency with the Plan of Conservation and Development and harmonizing with the neighborhood. Unfortunately, the decision was appealed to Rockville Superior Court by a neighbor. The matter is still pending in the Courts.

The Commission approved an amendment to the previously approved Special Permit of Blazawski for a motor vehicle repair and sales operation on Boston Turnpike. As the applicant/owner continues to perform the improvements associated with the use, a modification of the parking layout was necessary to provide better visibility and site access.

Although the Commission approved a Special Permit for Coventry Motor Cars to construct an addition to their building two years ago, the applicant/owner began executing the project in 2015. The project entails a large structural addition that provides more storage and repair capacity for the business. The Design Guidelines of the Zoning Regulations were applied to ensure that proposal harmonizes with the existing structure on site.

Although the Commission approved a Special Permit for the On the Go Gas Station to construct a new building and canopy three years ago, the applicant/owner began executing the project in 2015. The project entails the construction of a new, larger convenience store, canopy over the existing gas pump islands, significant landscaping and picnic/seating area. The Design Guidelines of the Zoning Regulations were applied to ensure that proposal harmonizes with the neighboring commercial uses.

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS:

Due to the current economic downturn, fewer residential subdivisions and developments have been submitted for consideration when compared to previous years. It appears that this trend will continue for the foreseeable future. The Town is fortunate to be in a situation where a number of larger subdivisions were approved in the past which provide an adequate 'bank' of available lots for development. However, the Commission approved one new open space design subdivision proposal of a sizable nature as well as smaller 1- 2 lot subdivisions.

The Commission approved a 9 lot open space subdivision proposal on Dunn Road. The development, called Haynes Woods, provides a mix of smaller and larger frontage and rear lots within the development. The proposal includes the conveyance of nearly 13 acres of conservation easement/open space that protects an important wetlands complex to the rear of the site.

The Commission approved a special permit to allow for the redevelopment of existing residential lot on Coventry Lake. This trend has increased slightly over the past couple of years. Staff attributes the availability of public sewer as assisting the situation, since the wastewater needs are more easily addressed.

OTHER ACTIVITIES:

The Commission approved a series of amendments to the subdivision and zoning regulations that provide more flexibility and responsiveness, in particular to the business community. Staff monitors issues that arise with the Zoning Board of Appeals and the general permitting of uses to identify trends with the zoning regulations to determine where improvements can be made that can increase flexibility and clarity.

PLANNING STAFF HIGHLIGHTS:

Planning Staff serves as the lead staff with a subcommittee that was formed from the Economic Development Commission to organize efforts to continue a farmers' market presence at the Hale Homestead, since the current Market announced that 2015 would be their last year in March of 2015. Staff coordinated several public forums to gain input from the general public, vendors and volunteers in order to best shape the next evolution of the Market for 2016. Staff worked with staff from the State of CT Dept. of Agriculture to gain insight on how to proceed in the planning of the Market. The Subcommittee and Staff prepared a detailed presentation which outlined all of the findings and information that was gained from ongoing investigation on how to best operate the Market by the Town and presented it to the Town Council. The Town Council agreed to provide \$20,000.00 of seed money to prepare for the Market and hire a part-time Market Master. These funds will allow for the leveraging of other State grant funds that will provide further financial support for the Market operation. The Town is committed to maintaining a farmers' market at the Hale Homestead and continues to provide a successful community event that supports local agriculture and business.

Planning Staff continues to serve as the Town's representative on the Route 6 Regional Economic Development Council and serves as secretary of the Council. The Council was formed by the Towns

of Andover, Bolton, Columbia and Coventry to analyze the economic development potential for the Route 6 corridor that traverses each of the member towns. The Towns recognize the importance of working cooperatively to plan for the region's future along a significant transportation corridor. Although the Council does not meet on a regular basis as it did in the past to orchestrate the preparation of the Corridor Studies, the main task that the REDC continues to work on is the preparation of zoning regulations and design guidelines that will serve all four towns of the Corridor. The goal is to have harmonious and consistent regulations and design criteria that will achieve the goals and recommendations of the Corridor Studies. Due to vacancies that occurred in the Bolton, Coventry and Columbia Planning Offices, as well as project priority conflicts, it caused for a delay in the work associated with the project.

Land Use Staff continues to improve the GIS platform in the office. A GIS User group consisting of a number of Town Hall Staff continues to meet once a month with the Town's IT consultant to discuss ways of improving and expanding the GIS system. The Land Use Office uses the information to provide more effective and comprehensive research and planning for the community as well as permit administration.

The Town Council adopted a Blight Ordinance in 2010 to address properties that have become distressed or abandoned. The focus is to gain compliance from the property owners to correct weed lots, dilapidated structures, debris storage and motor vehicle/equipment storage. The Land Use and Building, Health and Fire Offices are the hub of activity for enforcing the ordinance. Planning Staff serves as the coordinating staff for the enforcement activities by receiving, coordinating and administering efforts with the various Town Staff involved. A great deal of time continues to be dedicated to coordinate efforts of the enforcement program. The program has proven to be successful overall in addressing many blighted properties throughout Town. The Town Council also adopted a revision to the Ordinance that provides broader allowances for the Town to enter private property and assist in clean-up efforts when required. A great deal of time has been spent during the past fiscal year working with the Town Attorney's office to address several significant blight matters that needed a court remedy.

Planning Staff prepared a DEEP Open Space Acquisition Grant in order to purchase the Williams property on Cooper Lane, which was ultimately approved for funding. The Town has financially partnered with Joshua's Trust to leverage funding with the State grant. The 63 acre property is a very significant one due to the fact that it abuts the Couch Preserve, which is owned by Joshua's Trust, as well as other important natural resource features. Staff continues to administer the grant, but an award of 'quiet title' must be obtained from the Court for a small strip of land that was identified in the survey preparation. This must be accomplished to facilitate the conveyance.

Planning Staff worked with the Director of Parks and Recreation to prepare a DECD Office of the Arts Placemaking Grant in order to prepare a strategic arts plan for the community. The Grant was funded and allows for a consultant to be hired through the Peer Advisory Network, which is an agency who typically works with the Office of the Arts. In early 2015, public forums were held to encourage involvement from the arts community and begin work on the Plan. These forums became the initiative to create the Coventry Arts Guild, an independent group representing all forms of art and artists in the community. The Guild is committed to partnering and working cooperatively to

further the arts in Coventry. Work continues on the preparation of the Plan and the further of the goals of the Guild. The Plan is expected to be completed during the spring of 2016.

The Planning and Zoning Staff and Parks and Recreation Department continue to work with the Conservation Commission to prepare new trail maps of various Town parks that can be available as either a hardcopy or for download on the Town's website. Staff performs site walks to obtain GPS data points for the mapping and site inventories and evaluations are collected that serve as a basis for the map narrative. Maps are available on the Parks and Recreation Department website for the following Town properties: Millbrook Park, Riverview Trail Park, Patriot's Park Woods and Creaser Park. A new map was prepared for Thornton Brook Preserve and work continues on one for Laidlaw Park.

The Town partnered with a software development company that is located in Coventry, Mob Action Games, to place all the Town trail maps and information on a collective website and app. My Town Trails serves as an interactive clearinghouse for Town trails information and mapping. An iPhone and Android app has been developed as well for smart phone use.

Planning Staff facilitated volunteer efforts to continue the performance of trail improvements on two walking trails that were in need of attention. The Girl Scouts performed trail blazing activities in Laidlaw Park to improve access on existing trails to encourage expanded use. The Town is very appreciative for the volunteer efforts of the Girl Scouts and the 4H Club.

Planning Staff continues to work with the State of CT Department of Agriculture on a project that involves the purchase of development rights on the Reynolds Farm, a significant 100 acre agricultural property that possesses frontage on the Willimantic River. The Town intends to utilize existing open space purchase funds and leverage them with funds from the CT Farmland Trust, Joshua's Trust and the CT DoAg. The closing on this project is expected in the winter of 2015.

Planning Staff worked closely with the Coventry Lake Advisory & Monitoring Committee to plan for the 2015 State of Coventry Lake public forum that is held annually in September. Guest speakers were chosen for the forum based upon an agreed upon topic. This year's focus was on aquatic invasive species and the use of Jet Articulated Vehicles on the Lake. Dr. Kortmann, the Town's lake specialist, spoke in detail about the aquatic invasive situation in the Lake as well as other potential issues of concern. The Committee provided an update on their work to prepare a Lake Management Plan, which Planning Staff is assisting in the preparation.

Planning Staff prepared a Department of Housing Main Street Investment Fund Grant to request funds to execute a number of improvement projects in Coventry Village that dovetail with other grants and projects soon to be executed. The proposed projects include: continuation of sidewalks where the CT DOT project and STEAP project ends; pocket park at Teleflex; gazebo, bridge, landscaping in Millbrook Park; improvements to the Tracy Shoddy Mill to allow for adaptive re-use. The Town was awarded the grant and continues to execute the various projects, some of which are directly involved with the State of CT DOT Village project.

Planning Staff worked with Staff from the Town of Mansfield to prepare a DEEP Aquatic Invasives Grant to request funds to execute an eradication plan that will address the Fanwort infestation in

Eagleville Lake. The Town learned of the problem by way of a report that was prepared by the CT Agricultural Experiment Station in 2013. The Towns were awarded the grant which enabled the hiring of a consultant to apply an herbicide in the Lake to eradicate the Fanwort effectively. However, additional treatments are recommended for continued effectiveness. The Towns will likely re-apply for funding if available.

Planning and Zoning Staff continue to work on an ongoing vision of the extension of the Millbrook Greenway. In the spring of 2014, a community forum was held to seek input on a variety of planning options for the continuation of the trail system, some involving private property. The input was very helpful to determine the most feasible connections. One key parcel the corridor is the Decue property on Depot Road that the Town acquired via tax sale last year. Planning Staff prepared a DEEP Recreation Trails Grant to in mid-2015 to request funds to construct improvements that will continue the Greenway. DEEP intends to award the grants in late 2015.

Planning Staff serves as the Coventry representative with the Tolland County Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Committee. Staff attends meetings every other month with the Committee and participates in a variety of activities sponsored by the Chamber and Committee. For example, the Committee has been involved with the coordination of the Chamber's involvement with the 'Lifestyles Expo' planned for November at Star Hill in Tolland. This event allows for great exposure for the individual communities in the region as well as local businesses and services.

Planning Staff continues to be involved in the coordinated effort with the Towns of Andover and Bolton as well as the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) to pursue the acceptance of the former RTE 6 Expressway properties that were obtained by the State of CT DOT during the Expressway's design. Since the Expressway will not occur, these properties can serve as significant open space properties for the Towns. Some properties located in Bolton are key for significant transportation related improvements that were identified in the planning studies of the RTE 6 Regional Economic Development Council.

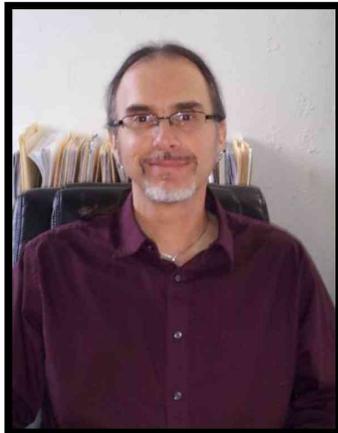


Eagleville Lake – Stonehouse Rd.

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION – ACTIVITY LEVEL

A comparison between FY 13/14 and 14/15 indicates that the overall number of applications remained relatively the same from the previous fiscal year.

The number of special permits decreased and subdivisions increased slightly over the past fiscal year.



Eric M. Trott
Director of Planning and Development



Michael Antonellis
Planning Technician/Zoning Enforcement Officer
(Resigned as of 8/21/2015)



Heidi A. Leech
Land Use Permit Technician

**PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
ACTIVITY LEVELS**

	ACTION	13/14	14/15	APPLICATION DIFFERENCE
Special Permit	Approved	9	3	-6
	Denied	0	0	
	Pending	0	0	
Subdivision	Approved	3	4	+1
	Denied	0	0	
	Pending	0	0	
Zone Changes	Approved	0	1	+1
	Denied	0	0	
	Pending	0	0	
Zoning Text Changes	Approved	1	3	+2
	Denied	0	0	
	Pending	0	0	
Subdivision Text Changes	Approved	1	0	-1
	Denied	0	0	
	Pending	0	0	
Subdivision Amendments	Approved	0	3	+3
	Denied	0	0	
	Pending	0	0	
Special Permit Amendments	Approved	1	1	0
	Denied	0	0	
	Pending	0	0	
Site Plan Review	Approved	0	0	0
	Denied	0	0	
	Pending	0	0	
Scenic Road Designation	Approved	0	0	0
	Denied	0	0	
	Pending	0	0	

INLAND WETLANDS AGENCY

Members: (As of June 30, 2015 end of fiscal year)

Darby Pollansky	Lori Mathieu	David Sorich
Raymond Chicoine	Thomas Woolf	Charles Clapp
Michael Burokas		
Todd Penney, PE – Town Engineer/Inland Wetlands Agent		

Total number of applications considered by the Inland Wetlands Agency (IWA): **16**

- ❖ Outcome of applications:
 - Non Jurisdiction Ruling: 1
 - As of Right Ruling: 3
 - Permit Denials: 0
 - Permit Approvals: 12
 - Permit Extensions: 0
 - Permit Withdrawals: 0
 - Permit Modifications: 0

Total number of applications considered by the Inland Wetlands Agent: **20**

- ❖ Outcome of application:
 - Permit Denial: 0
 - Permit Denials: 0
 - Permit Approvals: 20
 - Permit Extensions: 0
 - Permit Withdrawals: 0
 - Permit Modifications: 0

Nature of activities reviewed/regulated:

- ❖ Residential subdivisions/condominium developments
- ❖ Single Family House Developments
- ❖ Main Street Sidewalk Construction Project
- ❖ Drainage improvements
- ❖ Commercial Expansion
- ❖ Other:
 - Utility work.
 - Accessory structures
 - Filling/grading

INLAND WETLANDS AGENT

The Wetlands Agent serves as staff support to the Inland Wetlands Agency (IWA) for their regular monthly meetings. The Agency continues to operate very efficiently under the Agent's guidance and has provided a very smooth transition in the level of service to the Agency and community at large.

The number of Inland Wetlands Agency applications increased to **16** in FY14/15; from 14 in FY13/14. The number of Agent permits increased to **20** in FY14/15; from 17 in FY13/14. Wetlands Agent Permit applications are administrated in a shorter timeframe and with a simpler process compared to full Wetlands Agency permits. This has proven to be a valuable option for applicants.

The applications received and approved this year were fairly straightforward. There were a few minor subdivisions and only one home "tear down and rebuild" at the Coventry Lake perimeter. The Agency approved an application for the Times Farm Channel 3 Kids Camp for improvements to their main roadway network which included a pavement surface supplemented with low-impact design stormwater management. This approach allows better access to camp facilities while achieving improved stormwater mitigation.

While most applications and decisions were of a fairly routine nature, one Inland Wetlands Commission decision is currently in the midst of a legal appeal. The Commission received an application to construct a two-family home with its subsurface disposal system falling in the regulated area of the onsite wetland's Upland Review Area. The Agency took a very judicious review of the application with the applicant's experts, along with the testimony of the intervener's experts and ruled in favor of the applicant. An appeal was filed and is now in the hands of the Town Attorney for handling through the court system. A decision by Rockville Superior Court is expected by the end of 2015.

Wetlands Staff continues to work with all of the Coventry residents who need to be involved in a Wetlands permitting process. The approach to each application is consistent; help the applicant navigate through the permitting requirements while maintaining the health and integrity of each wetland complex involved.



Todd Penney, PE – Town Engineer/Wetlands Agent

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Members: (As of June 30, 2015 end of fiscal year)

Raymond Chicoine– Vice Chair	William Riordan - Secretary	
Carol Chipkin	Valdis Vinkels	Stephen Curtiss (alternate)
Joram Echeles (alternate)	JoAnn Watson (alternate)	
Michael Antonellis, Planning Technician/Zoning Enforcement Officer		

PETITIONS: 7

Approved 6

Denied 0

Pending 0

Withdrawn 1

Appeal 0

There were seven applications to the ZBA this year. These applications mostly involved relief of the dimensional standards on lake lots or preexisting home lots. Six applications were approved by the ZBA based on a zoning hardship being demonstrated by the applicant. One application was withdrawn by the applicant.

The fairly low number of applications to the Zoning Board of Appeals represents the efficiency and flexibility of the Zoning Regulations providing less need for variances. This also reflects the ability of Staff to work with applicants and find creative solutions to enable projects to proceed in a compliant fashion.

ZONING ENFORCEMENT

Michael Antonellis, Planning Technician/Zoning Enforcement Officer

ZONING PERMITS ISSUED (Agent Approved) **204**

Single Family Dwellings	19
Condominium Units	8
Accessory Structures	124
In-law Units	2
Clubhouse	0
Residential Additions/Attached Garages	15
Home Occupations	6
Commercial Use/Signage	11
Interior Renovations	7
Agricultural Buildings	0
Other	12
Total:	204

CERTIFICATES OF USE AND OCCUPANCY **37**
(Signed for zoning compliance by ZEO)

Single Family Dwellings	18
Condominium/Adult Community	4
In-law Units	0
Accessory Uses – Building and Structures	7
Residential Additions/Attached Garages	7
Commercial Signage	1
Agricultural Structures	2
Outdoor Wood-burning Furnace	0
Total:	42*

*Total differs due to more than one permit included on single C.O.

ZONING INSPECTIONS

117

Erosion and Sediment Control	11
Limits of Clearing	0
Certificates of Occupancy	37
Pre-Approval Inspection	1
Seed & Mulch/Grading – Bond Release	6
Zoning Complaints (Initial & Follow-up)	28
Blight Complaints (Initial & Follow-up)	34
Other	0
Total:	117

VIOLATION ENFORCEMENT INSPECTIONS (Initial Inspections Only):

The following is a breakdown of the types of inspections made by the Zoning Enforcement Officer in response to written, signed complaints lodged by citizens for potential zoning and blight violations.

Erosion and sedimentation, outdoor wood-burning furnaces, and drainage complaints associated with poor grading are investigated expediently by the PT/ZEO due to their potential impact on the environment, and possible harm to citizens and private property.

	# of Complaints Investigated
Erosion and Sediment Control	0
Drainage	0
Permit Conditions Not Met	3
Non-Permitted Activity or Structure	9
Signage	0
Illegal Dumping/Oil Spills	0
Clearing/Filling	0
Junk Yard	2
Greater than 1 Unregistered Vehicle	1
Unlicensed motor vehicle dealer/repair	0
Outdoor wood burning furnace	0
Residential motor vehicle sales	1
Nuisance	4
Blight	27
Total:	*47

*Listed are INITIAL inspections only. Additional inspections are commonly required to ensure compliance with the Regulations.

Zoning complaint inspections have decreased. This trend may be attributed to the fact that more complaints are now submitted as blight complaints. However it seems that blight complaints may be leveling off. Additionally, although complaints have decreased, staff involvement and enforcement efforts have increased. As older, longer term enforcement matters have come to fruition there has

Land Use

been an increase in contact with the Town Attorney's office. It seems that as of recently there has been more matters being suggested by public as a zoning based 'nuisance'. This has created more work by Staff to help resolve the moving target of a nuisance claim, mostly because a nuisance can be difficult to quantify and qualify.

What these numbers do not reflect are conversations with residents about possible complaints. Before a resident submits a complaint Zoning Staff tries to emphasize neighborly discourse as to avoid contentious situations with neighbors before Town Staff becomes involved. Often time's issues can be resolved if parties are willing to cooperate.

OTHER PROJECTS:

Mill Brook Greenway

Planning and Zoning staff was charged with identifying a corridor through the Village area along the Mill Brook that has the potential of extending a greenway/trail. The proposed trail would connect Patriot Park to the larger, regional, Willimantic River Greenway. ZEO/PT was able to use GIS to identify areas along the Millbrook which would be most suitable for the introduction of a trail. By evaluation topography, wetlands, proximity to Millbrook, shortest distances between town-owned parcels, in addition to other information. A public forum was held to obtain public opinion about the proposed Greenway and evaluate the level of support from the community.

Route 6 DOT Parcels

CT DOT has recently expressed interest in releasing ownership of old Rte 6 Expressway parcels to the towns they are located in. This has generated the need to evaluate what DOT claims they own versus what Coventry records indicates. Through GIS analysis, land records research, and the help of CRCOG, staff has been able to reach a majority of agreement as to which parcels would be involved in a transfer of land if it were to occur. This process and discussions with DOT and CRCOG are ongoing.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

Zoning Staff serves on the GIS user group which meets regularly to discuss better ways to integrate GIS and maximize its capacity. ZEO/PT regularly uses GIS to perform a variety of duties and meet the demands of several departments within Town Hall including, Engineering, Parks and Recreation, Town Manager, DPW, and not the least of which is the Land Use Department. As the need grows for GIS the ZEO/PT is able to utilize their skills to a more full extent, which benefits Town Hall as well as the community.

Switch to CRCOG

ZEO/PT has been in charge of the integration into the online services provided by CRCOG. ZEO/PT has been in contact with both CRCOG and their vendor AppGeo to provide data and assist in the integration of online services. ZEO/PT has coordinated the transfer of mapping data and geodatabase data so AppGeo can provide parcel updates, so Coventry can benefit from having record or updated boundary lines throughout town.

Economic Development

ZEO/PT has been serving as staff support to an EDC subcommittee committed to providing newly drafted regulations for the purpose of establishing a Wayfinding Sign program throughout town. This program would provide businesses that don't have the benefit of being located in a highly visible area the opportunity to direct traffic towards their business.

Also, the ZEO/PT was able to provide a short narrative on income equality within the town as it relates to the county and State as a whole. By utilizing existing resources like the Census, this was easily obtainable and summarized into a short memorandum which explained the use of certain information linked with income inequality. The memo's findings included that Coventry has a low occurrence of income inequality, and income is fairly uniform throughout the town in comparison to the state as a whole.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Members: (As of June 30, 2015 end of fiscal year)

Sondra Astor Stave	Bill Jobbagy	Roberta Wilmot
Timothy Liptrap	Barbara Barry	Richard Giggey
Mark Lavitt	Sam Belsito	Carol Polsky
Eric M. Trott, Director of Planning and Development		
John Elsesser, Town Manager		

Coventry's Economic Development Commission (EDC) continued their efforts to attract new business appropriate for the community while supporting existing business and tourism efforts. The EDC recognizes that economic development requires a long-term commitment to create a positive atmosphere to attract appropriate development proposals.

A member of the EDC continues to revise and improve a 'New Business Primer' education resource for the business community. The primer is a 'one-stop-shop' source of information on what is required and recommended to start or expand a business. This resource is distributed to new home occupation businesses to assist them in their 'start ups'. The member also is involved with the Northeast CT Economic Alliance a regional business financing source that supports small business development.

The same member of the EDC also serves as a Committee volunteer with The Last Green Valley. This offers a link between the Town and an important regional organization that assists with grant funding, education and other vital resources.

A member of the EDC continues to be involved with the operation of the Visitor's Center, which serves as a business, cultural and civic information resource for the Town and the region. The Visitor's Center is being operated solely by the efforts of the volunteers. The Commission and Staff have recently discussed new opportunities to encourage visibility and expand the volunteer support of the Visitor's Center. One idea that is likely to be implemented involves working with the artist community to provide showcase space at the Visitor's Center in exchange for staffing it and greeting visitors. The newly formed Coventry Arts Guild provides a unique opportunity for this.

The EDC continues to strongly support the efforts of the Coventry Farmer's Market. The Market was moved to the Hale Family Homestead in 2008 and has proven to be extremely successful and a significant economic development feature which supports the local agricultural and small business community as well. The Commission continues to consider ways in which the visitor's of the Market can be connected to the other businesses in Town in order to further support the local economy.

Due to the announcement that the Market's last season will be 2015, the EDC established a subcommittee to pursue the ongoing presence of a farmers' market at the Hale Homestead. The subcommittee has worked since March of 2015 to conduct public forums and research on methods to best operate the market by the Town. The EDC is committed to supporting the Farmers' Market at the Hale Homestead in 2016 and beyond.

The EDC attended a regional economic development forum in Mansfield with the Economic Development Commission's in the region. The goal of the forum was to share information, tools that the towns employ to assist in business attraction and retention and understand how the EDCs can work better in a cooperative fashion. The event was very successful and will likely lead to others that can be hosted in neighboring communities.

Members of the EDC have served on a subcommittee that is examining the potential of the Town allowing for 'wayfinding' signage for the business community. The goal is to determine a method to permit and install small signage at street intersections to assist customers to find businesses that are located off of main roads in town. The final recommendations will be made to the Steering Committee for the Town Council to consider.

The EDC met with representatives from the Creative Living Community of CT to discuss future potential adaptive re-use of the Caprilands site that are consistent with its significant agricultural history. The Commission also sent correspondence to the Judge of Probate to urge that the Probate matter be completed in a timely manner to assist in fostering the execution of the will of Adema Simmons.

The EDC explored the potential of creating a 'coworking' space as an adaptive re-use of the Caretaker's House at Patriots Park. The coworking use supports small and local business by providing usable meeting and office space with amenities to assist in their operations that the Town rents to the businesses for a fee to accommodate the care and maintenance of the space. The EDC and Staff determined that there would need to be a significant demand for the space from the business community to support the project and that it was not prudent.

The Towns of Coventry, Mansfield, Tolland and Bolton worked cooperatively to prepare a Regional Performance Incentive Grant to gain funds to hire a consultant who would prepare an analysis on how the towns can leverage development and mutual benefit from the UCONN Tech Park Project that is underway. The Towns expect to learn of the grant award later in 2015.

The EDC met with a local building who is proposing a zone change for the property located at the intersection of RTE 31 and Depot to discuss the merits of the proposal. The zone change could facilitate the construction of commercial building to allow office and service space for businesses. The EDC supported the proposal due to its consistency with the Plan of Conservation and Development.

Planning Staff and the EDC have developed and maintains a commercial property target development list that serves as an important quick reference resource that identifies key locations in Town that have economic development potential. The list describes the benefits of the site and potential compatible uses that could be considered on each.

The EDC continues to revise and update the Town's economic development brochure/business listing to maintain its relevance and accuracy. This marketing piece is a simple, yet effective way to identify the local businesses and provide a quick reference that can be easily offered to the public at various visible locations in Town.

Planning Staff continues to work with Water Pollution Control Staff, DEEP and State of CT Office of Policy and Management to promote the expansion of the Bolton sewers into Coventry to address wastewater and economic development needs on RTE 44 near the town line. In addition, Staff remains vigilant in its efforts to satisfy the concerns of DEEP Staff relative to sewer service area expansions in this area.

In an effort to maintain open communication with businesses in the community, the EDC has made efforts to meet one on one with several businesses at the Commission level. The goal is to better understand the needs of the businesses and determine how the Commission can assist. The meetings have been helpful for both parties by sharing information and insight into small business support.

The EDC continues to discuss and provide support to various businesses seeking approvals from the Planning and Zoning Commission. The EDC often serves as the 'business cheerleader' or advocate to assist in the processing of an application.



OFFICE OF CONSERVATION COMMISSION

To: John Elsesser Town Manager

From: Coventry Conservation Commission: Leroy A. Lowe Jr., Chairman; Art Hall Vice Chairman Bob Proctor, Sec./Treas.; Paul Manzone, Vincent Messino.

Date: October 12, 2015

Subject: 2014/2015 Annual Report

The Coventry Conservation Commission has been busy this past year, as this report will show.

Bike Plan and Routes

The commission is working on establishing a Bike Plan and routes for the town. The commission has established a frame work for the bike plan. To date the commission has five (5) bike routes with more to come.

Management Plan for Patriot's Park Woods.

The Commission is working on the management plan for Patriot's Park woods.

Site Plans and Town Referrals

1. 14-09, Pine Knoll Associates 2724 Main Street. Re-subdivision of lot 2 (2.2 acres RU 40).
2. 14-10S, Coventry Auto Sales and Service. 1000/1010Main Street. Enlargement of existing non-conforming use and construction of 30'x30' repair garage.
3. 14-12, Bennett subdivision (3 lots, 6.04 acres), 98 Talcott Hill Road.
5. 15-02S Edgewater Drive single family residence on a nonconforming lot.
6. 15-05 Maynard Re-subdivision, 337 Riley Mountain Road.
7. 15-06S Twin Hills country Club. 199 Bread and Milk Street (Rt. 31). Constructing new Pavilion.
8. 15-07 Haynes Woods re-subdivision, Dunn Road. Presentation by Andrew Bushnell and Hyland Development Associates.

The commission reviewed and made comments on these site plans and town referrals. This information was sent to the town staff and other agencies for their review and comments.

Workshops

None

Adopt-A-Road Program

As always the program is running smoothly with the support of the Land use Office and the Department of Public Works.

Items of general interest

1. We submit items to the town newsletter.
2. We hold elections of officers.
3. We submit a new budget each year.
4. We participate in land use commission consortium meetings hosted by the Coventry Town Council.
5. We submit commission agendas and meeting minutes. Information flyers and postings are available for review on a commission-sponsored bulletin board in the town hall.

The Coventry Conservation Commission Worked on the following items of Special interest.

1. The conservation commission sponsored a Stonewall Cleanup Day, members of the conservation commission cleaned up the stone wall at the Nathan Hall Homestead (adjacent to the farmers market and parking area). This has become an annual event held on the last weekend in March.
2. The conservation commission cleaned up Daly Rd. for Earth Day cleanup.

The Coventry Conservation Commission would like to thank the town staff for its assistance and guidance in helping us accomplish many of our projects throughout the year.

I would like to thank the members of the Conservation Commission for their dedication and hard work throughout the year.

Respectfully Submitted

Leroy A. Lowe Jr.
Chairman