



## LAND USE

*Photo by Amelia Ingraham,  
Winner of Youth Winter Category,  
300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Photo Contest.*



**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**FISCAL YEAR**  
*2011 – 2012*



*Millbrook Park*

**LAND USE OFFICE**

*Inland Wetlands Agency*

*Zoning Board of Appeals*

*Economic Development Commission*

*Planning and Zoning Commission*

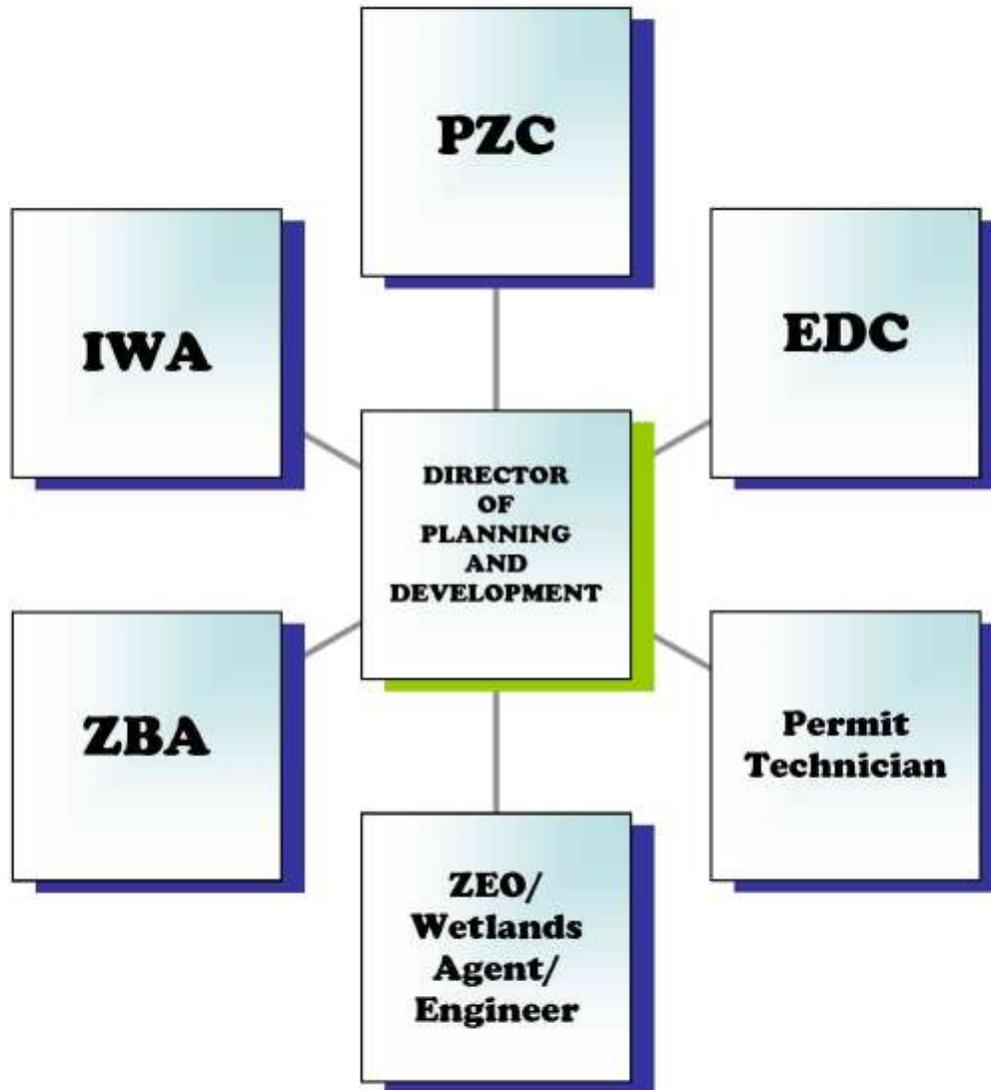
*Eric M. Trott, Director of Planning and Development*

*Bonnie Potocki, Zoning Agent*

*Todd Penney, P.E., Town Engineer / Wetlands Agent*

*Brenda Bennett, Permit Technician*

## ORGANIZATION AND STAFFING CHARTS





**Planning and Zoning Commission**

	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12
Meetings	25*	59*	49*	22*	20
Applications:	28	21	25	27	13

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

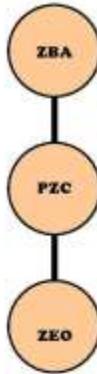
\*The number of meetings changed over the past two fiscal years due to the fact that the Commission held special meetings for review of the revised Zoning Regulations, Zoning Map and Plan of Conservation and Development.



**Economic Development Commission**

	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12
Meetings	11	11	11	11	9

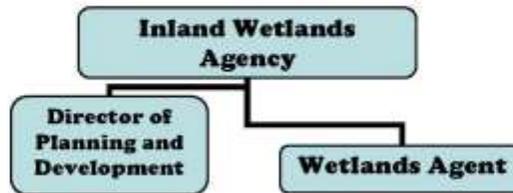
The EDC is scheduled to meet once a month excluding the month of November.



**Zoning Board of Appeals**

	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12
Regular Meetings	8	5	7	10	6
Special Meetings				1	0
Applications	9	9	17	15	7

The Board is scheduled to meet once a month.



**INLAND WETLANDS AGENCY**

	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12
Meetings	12	*13	11	13	12
Applications	50	51	35	39	28

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 reviews all applications/activities that could potentially impact the Town's wetland areas (i.e. subdivision, single-family, accessory use, etc.) 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 D.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.

Due to the resignation of the prior Wetlands Agent staff who served as a contractual consultant from the North Central Conservation District and the retirement of the Engineering Technician, a new arrangement involving the Wetlands Agent duties was created. In 2007, the Town hired a full-time Town Engineer/Wetlands Agent who serves as Staff to the Inland Wetlands Agency and administers the applications for the Agency.

#### 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.



'Skungamaug River – Folly Lane'

## PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

**Members: (As of June 30, 2012 end of fiscal year)**

**Jonathan Kreisberg, Raymond Giglio, Roberta Wilmot, Darby Pollansky, Bill Jobbagy, Christine Pattee, Carol Polsky**

**Eric M. Trott, Director of Planning and Development**

**Brenda Bennett - Permit Technician**

### COMMISSION HIGHLIGHTS:

#### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS:

Despite the downturn of the economy over the past few years, the Commission has still authorized a number of significant economic development projects over the past fiscal year. These project involve either new uses or substantial improvements to existing businesses.

Planning Staff and the Commission worked closely with the owners of Cassidy Hill Winery to draft a zoning text amendment to allow for weddings and other social events at their establishment. Over the years, many visitors had expressed interest in renting the site to have their function and the owners wished to accommodate them, which is typical for such a use. Subsequent to the approval of the text amendment, the Land Use/Building/Fire/Health Staff worked extensively with the owners to develop a plan and application to facilitate the Commission's approval.

Planning, Building and Fire Staff carefully worked with the owner of the Lakeview Restaurant and his designers to accommodate a new addition on the shores of Coventry Lake over an existing deck. Although the project scope needed to be altered subsequent to the Commission's ultimate approval for the project, the end result created an attractive and functional enclosed space to extend the 'season' for the establishment.

The Commission reviewed and approved a unique proposal for two home occupations in one new residence, pursuant to the flexible criteria of the zoning regulations. The owners of a coffee roasting business and a spa designed the layout of their new residence to accommodate their personal, home businesses on a very attractive lot that overlooks and possesses frontage on the Willimantic River. The owners were attracted to bring their businesses and plans for their new home to Coventry, due to the reasonable and flexible nature of the zoning regulations and the assistance of Town Staff.

Planning Staff and the Commission spent a great deal of time and energy working with the various parties involved with the Coventry Regional Farmer's Market special permit application to facilitate a proposal to relocate the Market to a new location on Silver Street. The nature of the proposal required a great deal of attention to parking, traffic and analysis of impacts to the neighborhood. The Commission ultimately approved the application for the new site after many hearings and negotiations with the applicant. However, the Market elected to remain at the Nathan Hale Homestead.

The Commission reviewed and approved a proposal to perform substantial site improvements to the 'On the Run' gas station and convenience store on Route 44. The proposal was the first special permit application to be subject to the new Commercial District Design Guidelines. The Guidelines served as

an important template to create a harmonious and attractive retrofit for the existing site improvements, which included a new canopy, building, landscaping, picnic area and other amenities.

Windham Hospital received special permit approval from the Commission in order to perform a variety of parking and site improvements to their doctor's office on Route 44. Planning and Engineering Staff worked closely with the applicant to create a sensitive design that negotiated the site constraints including abutting residential properties and wetlands.

#### RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS:

Due to the current economic downturn, very few residential subdivisions and developments have been submitted for consideration. It appears that this trend will continue for the foreseeable future. However, 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.

The Commission held a preliminary review with the developer of a proposed subdivision on Riley Mountain Road. The proposal involves the creation of 13 new lots on a 40 acre parcel that is directly adjacent to Maynard Farms. Planning and Engineering Staff began to work with the designer to address the road and drainage improvement needs for the project, which needed to be creative, due to the substandard nature of the road with the existence of a significant historical residence along the frontage of the site. The developer will be seeking approvals from land use commissions in the fall of 2012.

The Commission also held a preliminary review with the owner of Maynard Farms on Riley Mountain Road to review a proposal to develop a portion of the 100 acres into 9 lots. The proposal would include a new emergency vehicle access between Riley Mountain Road and Woodmont Road to address access needs for the substandard nature of the road system in that location. The developer will likely be seeking approvals from land use commissions in the winter of 2012.

#### OTHER PROJECTS:

A series of Staff and Commission initiated zoning and subdivision regulation amendments were approved by the Commission. These changes are simple, yet important revisions that increase the clarity, simplicity and streamlining in a variety of areas of both texts. These changes were noted over time by Land Use Staff and the Commission in an effort to improve the function and reasonableness of the regulations.

In the fall of 2011, the Commission formed a working group of members as well as representatives from the Town Council, Inland Wetlands Agency, Parks and Recreation Department, Conservation Commission, Coventry SOS. The mission of the group is to carefully examine and study the various components of 'open space – protected lands' in Town. The group continues to meet on a monthly basis in an effort to understand the experience the community has had over the past decade and previously with open space matters. Statutes, regulations, developments, studies, reports and other resources have been evaluated by the group. Ultimately, the group will be drafting a report of findings and recommendations that will serve as a basis for a land use consortium meeting, likely during the winter of 2013. Planning Staff serves as the staff support for the working group and prepares meeting minutes.

## PLANNING STAFF HIGHLIGHTS:

In May of 2012, the Zoning Enforcement Officer resigned from the position to accept another employment opportunity. This created a vacancy in the Land Use Office between May and September. In addition, the Land Use Permit Technician resigned from the position to pursue another position within the Town Hall which created a vacancy after the close of the fiscal year. The duties associated with these positions were assumed by the Director of Planning and Development, in addition to those the Director is required to perform. The office was served temporarily by a part-time assistant who was extremely helpful in assisting the office during a very busy time of the year.

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. The Council received \$195,000 of grant funding assistance from the State OPM to prepare a corridor study, which was completed and adopted by the member Towns in early 2011. This report received awards from the American Planning Association and American Society of Landscape Architects due to its creative planning solutions.

A transportation planning grant is also being administered by the Capitol Region Council of Governments through the work of a consultant who is applying the recommendations and goals of the Corridor Plan. This will enable the transportation planning consultant to suggest appropriate solutions that will coincide with the future development suggested in the corridor. The project was nearing completion at the end of the fiscal year.

Land Use Staff continues to improve the GIS platform in the office. A GIS User group consisting of a number of Town Hall Staff has been meeting once a month with the Town's IT consultant to discuss ways of improving and expanding the GIS system. The Land Use Office can use the information to provide more effective and comprehensive research and planning for the community as well as permit administration. The capacity of the office to utilize and expand the GIS system increased with the skills of the new Town Engineer, who is adept in GIS and AUTOCAD. Staff has worked closely with the Regional Planner and a specialized GIS consultant to organize and structure the existing GIS mapping resources and files to improve the overall operation and effectiveness of this resource.

Previously, Planning Staff spearheaded a campaign to create the Coventry Conservation Corps in Town. This group has been formed to allow for the stewardship and oversight of many of the Town's open space properties. The group visits and monitors the properties to ensure no inappropriate or illegal activity is occurring, as well as document the status of the sites. This volunteer service is of great importance to the Town because it allows for the task to be performed on a long-term basis by members of the public who have a vested interest in the preservation of their neighborhoods. Planning Staff continues in the role of Staff support for the Corps and coordinates efforts to address issues that arise as a result of the ongoing inspections by the members. These issues include safety matters, invasive species and open space boundary demarcation.

Planning Staff prepared and submitted and received a \$2,100.00 grant request to the Connecticut Federation of Lakes to conduct an aquatic invasives and fertilizer usage educational campaign for Coventry Lake. The grant involved work with a group of high school students (CLEAN), who have dedicated their efforts to conduct outreach efforts to the community at large on potential threats to Coventry Lake and offer insight into mechanisms that can serve to protect it. Another partner with the

grant was the Consortium of Coventry Lake Associations, an organization that consists of various representatives of the numerous associations around Coventry Lake. The grant funds were ultimately used for the creation of signage identifying the aquatic invasive species in the Lake that will be placed at various access points around the Lake. In addition, last fiscal Town Council created a Lake Monitoring and Education Committee that serve as a subcommittee of the Conservation Commission. Planning Staff serves as support for the Committee and assists them with their projects and efforts.

Planning Staff submitted and was previously awarded a \$190,000.00 DEP Open Space Acquisition Grant in order to obtain a portion of a property that is available off of Pucker Street that possesses significant natural resources (Thornton Brook) and is adjacent to other open space properties owned by the Town. Prior to the submittal of the grant, Staff worked closely with the Conservation Commission to analyze and prioritize several potential sites/areas in Town that could be subject to the grant opportunity. Staff continues to work with the State to facilitate the conveyance of the parcel. The ultimate closing for the conveyance of the property is anticipated in the fall of 2012.

Planning Staff continues to work the State of CT Department of Agriculture on a project that involves the purchase of development rights on a significant 100 acre agricultural property on Flanders Road 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. A closing on the property is expected in the spring of 2013.

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.

Last fiscal year, the Land Use Office worked with an intern from the Three Rivers Community College for fifteen weeks though funding from the CT Clean Energy Fund to work on a project that would serve to address climate related issues. Planning Staff chose to have the intern assist in the development of a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Plan and Grant Funds request to the State DOT. The Plan was completed in a very short timeframe due to the requirements of the grant. A SRTS Committee was formed and comprises representation from various stakeholders who are involved in the numerous aspects of the Plan development – schools, engineering, planning, etc. The diligent efforts of the Planning Staff and committee allowed for the preparation of a great planning resource for years to come that serves to advocate and improve walking and biking opportunities for students in the community. The Town learned that the project is to be funded by the State. Planning and Engineering Staff will be working through the winter of 2012/2013 on design, with a spring 2013 anticipated construction schedule.

In celebration of National Trails Day, the Planning and Zoning Staff and Parks and Recreation Department completed 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 performed site walks to obtain GPS data points for the mapping and site inventories and evaluations have been collected that will serve as a basis for the map narrative. The Town's IT consultant has

been instrumental in assisting with this project due to the GIS needs. Maps are now 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.

Planning Staff spearheaded efforts to prepare a State Office of Policy and Management Regional Performance Incentive Grant in December to seek funds to secure regional economic development services. The Towns of Coventry, Mansfield and Tolland propose to share an economic development staff that would serve each of the municipalities. The staff would work to create a 'brand' for the three Towns that would serve as a positive image and emphasize the unique qualities and resources of each Town. In addition, the staff would focus on collaborating with the new UCONN Technology Park and attract relative services for the Towns. Lastly, efforts would be made to assist the Towns with business retention and the attraction of appropriate development to key target sites that would be marketed by each Town. The Town ultimately learned that the project was not funded in the first round of grant awards, but the application is likely to be submitted for the second round of funding.

Permit Technician Staff worked on various Land Use Office website improvements to improve the amount and nature of available information and resources that are available to the public. These improvements include a new map library, Coventry Lake page and enhanced clarity for better navigation as well as more informational material to assist the web visitor.



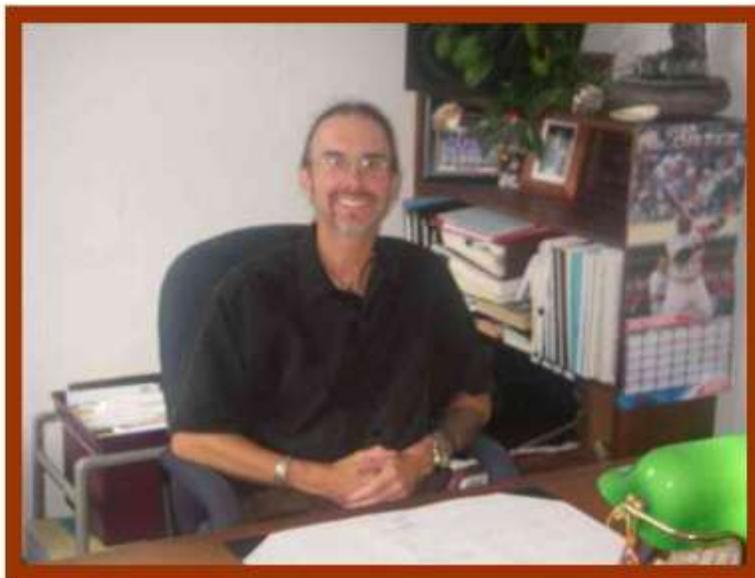
Roman Pond behind Kenyon Falls

## **PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION – ACTIVITY LEVEL**

A comparison between FY 10/11 and 11/12 indicates that the overall number of applications remained relatively the same from the previous fiscal year.

The number of special permits and subdivisions was virtually the same from the previous fiscal year. However, five less special permit amendments were administered compared to the previous fiscal year.

The number zoning text amendments decreased slightly from the previous fiscal year, but the number of subdivision text amendments increased slightly. This is due to the Commission's amendment proposals.



Eric M. Trott ~ Director of Planning and Development

**PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION**

**ACTIVITY LEVELS**

	<u>ACTION</u>	<u>10/11 AMOUNT</u>	<u>11/12 AMOUNT</u>	<u>APPLICATION DIFFERENCE</u>
SPECIAL PERMIT	APPROVED	9	8	-1
	DENIED	0	0	0
	PENDING	0	0	0
SUBDIVISION	APPROVED	3	2	-1
	DENIED	0	0	0
	PENDING	0	1	+1
ZONE CHANGES	APPROVED	1	0	-1
	DENIED	0	0	0
	PENDING	0	0	0
ZONING TEXT CHANGES	APPROVED	5	2	-3
	DENIED	0	0	0
	PENDING	0	0	0
SUBDIVISION TEXT CHANGES	APPROVED	1	1	0
	DENIED	0	0	0
	PENDING	0	0	0
SUBDIVISION AMENDMENTS	APPROVED	0	2	+2
	DENIED	0	0	0
	PENDING	0	0	0
SPECIAL PERMIT AMENDMENTS	APPROVED	5	0	-5
	DENIED	0	0	0
	PENDING	0	0	0
SITE PLAN REVIEW	APPROVED	0	0	0
	DENIED	0	0	0
	PENDING	0	0	0
SCENIC ROAD DESIGNATION	APPROVED	0	0	0
	DENIED	0	0	0
	PENDING	0	0	0

## INLAND WETLANDS AGENCY

**Members: (As of June 30, 2011 end of fiscal year)**

**Darby Pollansky, Lori Mathieu, David Sorich, Raymond Chicoine, Thomas Woolf, Charlie Clapp, Michael Burokas**

**Todd Penney, PE – Town Engineer/Inland Wetlands Agent**

Total number of applications considered by the Inland Wetlands Agency (IWA) for permits: **18**

❖ Outcome of applications:

➤ No jurisdiction	1
➤ Denied	0
➤ Approved	9
➤ Extension	5
➤ Withdrawn	0
➤ Modification	3

Total number of applications considered by the Inland Wetlands Agent: **17**

❖ Outcome of application:

➤ Denied:	0
➤ Approved:	17
➤ Pending:	0
➤ Withdrawn:	0

Nature of activities reviewed/regulated:

- ❖ Residential subdivisions/condominium developments.
- ❖ Drainage improvements
- ❖ Commercial Expansion
- ❖ Other:
  - Utility work.
  - Accessory structures
  - Filling/grading.

### INLAND WETLANDS AGENT

The Wetlands Agent serves as staff support to the 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 slightly decreased to **18** in FY12; down from 19 applications in FY11. The number of Agent permits dropped to **17** in FY12; down from 21 in FY11. The Agent permits applications are administrated in a shorter time frame and simpler process as compared to full Wetlands Agency permits. This has proven to be a valuable option for applicants.

Highlights of the Agency applications involved three commercial properties around town. The first was at Cassidy Hill Vineyards on Cassidy Hill Road. Here, low impact design for water quality was implemented for a parking lot expansion to meet their special events permit. The second was for Windham Hospital's regional office at 1776 Boston Turnpike. Here, the surface flow was directed to underground recharge in the vicinity of Olsen Brook. Lastly was at Lakeview Restaurant, where improvements to the site and converting the existing deck space to a enclosed area were compensated with infiltration. Plus the stone masonry wall along the lake frontage helps with some slightly eroded banks that receive wave action due to some prevailing winds. This year also saw a significant percentage of applicants requesting extension of existing permits for residential development, utility company work and commercial expansion at Bidwell Tavern. Nearly one-third of the applicants, five (5), were for time extensions, which could be indicative of the weak economy to finish projects.

*Todd Penney, PE – Town Engineer/Wetlands Agent*



## **ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS**

**Members: (As of June 30, 2012 end of fiscal year)**

**Erik Williams, William Riordan, Raymond Chicoine, Charles Clapp, John Henry, Stephen Curtiss, Jacques Collard, Joram Echeles.**

**Bonnie Potocki, Zoning Enforcement Officer**

**PETITIONS: 7**

Approved	7
Denied	0
Pending	0
Withdrawn	0
Appeal	0

The overall number of ZBA applications decreased by over half the number considered by the Board over the past two fiscal years. The reason for the decrease is that the zoning regulations have been reviewed and amended properly to avoid the need for frivolous variances. In addition, Staff continues to work closely and carefully with applicants to evaluate options and alternatives with projects that avoid the need for variance requests that may not be legally prudent. The decrease in the overall level of activity of the ZBA is viewed as a success of the zoning regulations and their administration by Staff.

## ZONING ENFORCEMENT

Bonnie Potocki, Zoning Enforcement Officer

### ZONING PERMITS ISSUED (Agent Approved) 177

* Single Family Dwellings	22
* Condominium unit	0
* Accessory Structures	110
* In law units	1
* Clubhouse	1
* Residential Additions/Attached Garages	29
* Home Occupations	10
* Commercial Use/Signage	6
* Interior Renovations	8
* Agricultural Buildings	2
* Other	4
Total	<u>193*</u>

\*Total differs due to more than one item proposed on a zoning permit.

### CERTIFICATES OF USE AND OCCUPANCY 92

(Signed for zoning compliance by ZEO)

* Single Family Dwellings	15
* Condominium/Adult Community	1
* In-law units	2
* Accessory Uses – Building and Structures	56
* Residential Additions/Attached Garages	13
* Commercial Signage	5
* Agriculture Structures	4
* Outdoor Woodburning Furnace	1
* Home Occupation	1
Total	<u>98*</u>

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

### ZONING INSPECTIONS

* Erosion and Sediment Control	141
* Limits of Clearing	2
* Certificates of Occupancy	133
* Pre-Approval Inspection	55
* Seed & Mulch/Grading – Bond Release	11
* Zoning Complaints (See breakdown)	59
* Blight Complaints	28
* Street Number Assignment	8
* Other	10
Total	<u>447**</u>

There has been an increase of pre-construction inspections requested by applicants in response to the current status of the economy. Applicants prefer to meet with the ZEO before submitting permit applications and spending any money to ensure success of the project.

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.

<u>Category</u>	<u># of Complaints Investigated</u>
Erosion and Sediment Control	1
Drainage	1
Permit conditions not met	5
Non-permitted Activity or Structure	4
Unregistered motor vehicles for sale	1
Signs	8
Unlicensed motor vehicle dealer & repair	1
Residential Motor vehicle sales	1
Blight Complaints	<u>12</u>
	Total: 34**

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.

OTHER PROJECTS:

Zoning Regulations

Zoning Staff assisted the Director of Planning and Development with the review and construct of some of the zoning regulation amendments that were approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission. Due to the Zoning Staff's familiarity with the day to day issues that arise with the administration of the regulations it was prudent to understand the current needs of the regulations.

Trail Mapping Project

Zoning Staff worked with the Director of Planning and Development, Conservation Commission and Parks and Recreation Department Staff to create four GIS based trail maps for Town owned open space properties that have walking trails. These maps contain GPS located trails mapping as well as a description of the trail and its environment. The maps are available for download from the Parks and Recreation Department website.

#### Geographic Information System

Zoning Staff serves on the GIS user group that includes other Town Staff and the IT Staff from the Town of South Windsor, who are contracted to perform such services. Since the Zoning Staff is one of the GIS users in the Town Hall, it is important to be involved with ongoing dialogue on such matters, as well as training and instruction opportunities.

#### Stormwater Management Guidance for Homeowners

Zoning Staff created a matrix to maintain information on the location and associated information on the installation of infiltration stormwater structures in Town. This resource provides details on the type of structure, owner, evidence of land records filing as well as comments for status inspections.

#### Zoning/Blight Enforcement

Due to the specific nature of the blight ordinance and the complaints that are submitted by the public, most of the enforcement activities are focused on blight oriented issues. The information above gives an indication on the level of enforcement activity and the type of issues that are addressed. The Zoning Staff serves as a member of the blight 'team' along with the Building Official, Sanitarian, Community Service Officer and Director of Planning and Development who address their particular jurisdiction of the blight ordinance. Sign enforcement is a continued effort to work with the businesses in a cooperative fashion to encourage their compliance instead of simply issuing enforcement orders. The Planning and Zoning Commission has instructed Staff that flexibility and reasonableness can be applied to temporary signs for businesses, so as not to stifle advertising of special events in an effort to support the business community, yet avoid sign proliferation.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

**Members: (As of June 30, 2012 end of fiscal year)**

**Sondra Astor Stave, Bill Jobaggy, Roberta Wilmot, Timothy Liptrap, Barbara Barry, Richard Giggey, Mark Lavitt, Sam Belsito.**

**John Elsesser, Town Manager**

**Eric M. Trott, Director of Planning and Development**

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 and other vital resources.

The Chairman of the EDC is a free-lance writer who prepares articles on restaurant reviews for the Journal Inquirer. Due to her exposure in the restaurant business, she has made several connections with local and regional restaurant owners in order to attract more food services to the community.

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 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.

Staff and the EDC have developed a commercial property target development list that serves as a 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. Additionally, each EDC member has been assigned a property and serves as the 'steward' of the property by acting as a contact person and advocate as interest in the property increases or a development application is considered.

In the fall of 2011, the Town hired a part-time economic development consultant to assist and provide support to Teleflex and their pursuit of a new site for relocating their facility. The consultant worked as an intermediary between the Town, business and State to facilitate a dialogue between all stakeholders and navigate the process that would serve Teleflex best. Although Teleflex did not elect to pursue a full relocation, they continue to pursue plans to expand the facility with a large scale addition. Staff now continues efforts to assist Teleflex in the planning efforts for the project.

The Chairs of the Commission and the Town Council met with the developer of the Colvest property (CVS/Dunkin Donuts site) at the corner of RTES 31/44 to advocate and encourage the development of phase 2 of the project. These plans include an approximately 15,000sf commercial building for retail or office uses. The Chairs recognized that a united front from two Town boards that support the economic development efforts of the community would send a clear and effective message to the developer.

In the spring of 2012, Town Staff met with a representative of ECHN to discuss the potential of a new medical office facility being constructed in the town. Staff strongly advocated the need for such a use and reviewed the specific benefits of a number of potential development sites to encourage interest. Staff and the ECHN representative agreed to meet later in 2012 to further discuss the matter and invite doctors to the meeting to further the interest in such a project.

Staff and Commission members reached to the food service community in town to facilitate a supportive campaign in the spirit of the Town's 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The '1712 historic meals' campaign was introduced to provide an opportunity for the businesses to create special menu deals in the amount of \$17.12 to celebrate the event and encourage patrons to visit the establishment. Bidwell Tavern, Francesca's Italian Bistro, Highland Park Market, Lakeview Restaurant and the Country Snack Bar participated in the effort.

In the summer of 2012, the Commission and Staff held a series of economic development brainstorming and prioritization sessions. The goal was to explore a variety of different but relevant issues pertaining to economic development that can involve specific projects that the Commission can be involved with in an effort to support the business community. For example, the Commission has begun focusing efforts and organizing activities to provide one-on-one business visitation and support to businesses that elect to be involved with such an effort. Since many of the Commission members have a wide experience in different aspects of business and related fields, the business can receive special attention and assistance. This template can then be applied to other businesses as the effort grows.

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.

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; Rob Guliano, Vice Chairman;  
Bob Proctor, Sec./Treas.; Art Hall, Paul Manzone, Roy Shook, Corey Vann members

Date: September 30, 2012

Subject: 2011/2012 Annual Report

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

## Trails Evaluation, Mapping and Brochures

The Coventry Conservation Commission worked with parks and rec., and the Planning office to complete trails maps and Brochures for the following trails, Riverview Trail, Patriot Park Woods, Millbrook Greenway and Creaser Park.

## Site Plan and Town Referrals

1. 11-13 1657 Boston Turnpike, LLC 1657 Boston Turnpike , rte 44/31, 2 lot subdivision, 78.68 acres.
2. 11-15S: 1657 Boston Turnpike, LLC 1657 Boston Turnpike, gas station.
3. 11-16S: Windham Hospital special permit, 1776 Boston Turnpike.
5. 11-19: Francis DeCarli et.al. , 3450 South Street, Re-subdivision 2 lots.
6. 11-20S Coventry Regional Farmers Market, Barbara Barry, 307 Silver Street.
7. Special application Edgemere Drive.

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

## 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.

## Publications at Booth and Dimock Library

Inactive at this time.

## 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. Commission agendas, post meeting minutes, information flyers and postings are available for review on a commission-sponsored bulletin board in the Town Hall.
6. We post our agendas and minutes on the town web site.

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

1. The conservation commission sponsored a Stonewall Clean up Day, members of the conservation commission cleaned up the stone wall at the Nathan Hall Homestead (adj. to the farmers market and parking area). This has become an annual event. (The last weekend in March)
2. The conservation commission walked the Sirianni property for possible open space evaluation.
3. The conservation commission worked on a proposal for updating the 490 Regulations for open space dedication.
4. Reviewed items of interest to the conservation commission from the Plan of Conservation and Development, and made comment.
5. Discuss possible usage for the old public works property, and made a proposal to the town council and the town manager.
6. The conservation commission proposed an Earth Day clean up. This will be a yearly event.
7. Start the review and the establishment of bike routes.
8. The conservation commission met with new town council member Mike Griswold for an open space discussion.

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 there dedication and hard work throughout the year.

Respectfully Submitted

Leroy A. Lowe Jr.  
Chairman

