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# THE GRANITE STATE PLANNER

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[www.nhplanners.org](http://www.nhplanners.org)

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It's spring and that means the NHPA Annual Conference is fast approaching, Legislature is busy, Town Meeting is finally passing, and the Executive Committee is knee deep in reviewing nominations for the NHPA Planning Awards.

This year's Annual Conference will be held in Lebanon on Thursday June 4<sup>th</sup> with numerous mobile workshops visiting Hanover on June 5<sup>th</sup>. This year's conference is designed to inspire implementation, presenting new tools to help planners with their daily work. Session topics will include presentations from New Hampshire's Eco-Municipalities, how to create community dialogue, new tools for historic preservation, how small town's can be high tech on a budget, along with additional sessions on innovative planning mechanisms. Mobile workshops will tour new and progressive planning efforts in the Lebanon and Hanover area.

Wow! Is all we can say about both the quality and quantity of award nominations received this year. We truly have some amazing planners, citizen's and work happening in New Hampshire. Award nominations are currently being reviewed and decided upon by the full executive committee. Decisions will be complete by the end of April and nominees will be

notified in May. Please join us at the Annual Conference for the presentation of award winners.

As a reminder- visit the NHPA website to learn more about upcoming continuing education events, employment opportunities and for proposals.

I hope to see you in Lebanon and the many upcoming professional development opportunities.

## WHY MUNICIPALITIES NEED LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

*By Robert Clarke, Chair –Granite State Landscape Architects*

In July 2006, Landscape Architects became licensed in New Hampshire. With licensure, the profession is now on equal footing with allied professionals such as civil engineers, architects and surveyors. Up until now, the planning community has largely overlooked the role of Landscape Architects in New Hampshire because there were no State laws supporting Landscape Architectural standards. Communities now have the backing of the legislature and the Governor to adopt land use standards applicable to Landscape Architecture.

I'm sure at this point you may ask why would need licensed landscape architects. Municipalities need licensed landscape architects to help insure that the aesthetic aspects of site design are not overlooked or undervalued, that a project is livable, and the design meets the needs of pedestrians, children, handicapped and the elderly. Landscape architects understand proper scale and relation of buildings to the site and other site features as well as efficient use of space. Proper plantings of the correct zone, exposure, size and location determine the success of the landscape as well as insuring the correct planting for the intended use, for example plantings for privacy, shade,

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## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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## RELEASE OF NH'S CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

*(Reprinted from the Executive Summary)*

Over the course of a year, through a process that engaged over 125 stakeholders and received input from over 200 citizens, the 29 members of Governor John Lynch's Climate Change Policy Task Force developed this Climate Action Plan. It is aimed at achieving the greatest feasible reductions in greenhouse gas emissions while also providing the greatest possible long-term economic benefits to the citizens of New Hampshire. The most significant reductions in both emissions and costs will come from substantially increasing energy efficiency in all sectors of our economy, continuing to increase sources of renewable energy, and designing our communities to reduce our reliance on automobiles for transportation. Our response to climate change and our economic future are inextricably linked and should focus on how we produce our energy and how much energy we use. Future economic growth in New Hampshire as well as mitigation of and adaptation to a

changing climate will depend on how quickly we transition to a new way of living that's based on a far more diversified energy mix, more efficient use of energy and development of our communities in ways that strengthen neighborhoods and urban centers, preserve rural areas, and retain New Hampshire's quality of life.

The final Action Plan can be viewed and downloaded at the NH DES website:

[http://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/air/tsb/tps/climate/action\\_plan/nh\\_climate\\_action\\_plan.htm](http://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/air/tsb/tps/climate/action_plan/nh_climate_action_plan.htm)

Contact Chris Skoglund at 603-271-7624 or [cskoglund@des.state.nh.us](mailto:cskoglund@des.state.nh.us) if you have further questions or comments.

### LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS *(continued from front page)*

wetlands, etc. Landscape architects help insure that the environmental aspects of site design are not overlooked or undervalued and can help planners achieve sound and attractive projects for their communities.

The following three easy steps could help move your community toward more attractive development and sensitive land use:

**1. Encourage Planning Boards to amend site plan and subdivision regulations.** If your community doesn't already have landscape standards think about adopting some. To ensure project quality, a New Hampshire licensed Landscape Architect should stamp all landscape plans.

**2. Propose and support zoning changes to include Landscape Architecture in all large-scale development projects.** It takes a team effort to ensure the best possible design, and landscape architects are trained to see the "big picture" as integrated whole, rather than separate parts.

**3. Include Landscape Architects in RFQ's and RFP's** for urban planning projects, athletic fields, schools, municipal building complexes and parks.

If you are interested in more information about the benefits of adopting new regulations or just to familiarize yourself with some possible options please feel free to contact me at [rclarke@allenmajor.com](mailto:rclarke@allenmajor.com).



## CREATING COMMUNITY DISCOURSE:

### *Moving From Debate to Dialogue*

By Marty Jacobs  
February 13, 2009

- Building a new bandstand that is handicapped accessible
- Locating a new homeless shelter
- Developing plans for rural land use
- Widening a street to allow for more bicycle traffic
- Creating a new governance charter for a municipality
- Constructing a new school and/or renovating an existing one
- Determining whether or not a proposed construction project fits within the architectural character of the neighborhood

What do all these community projects have in common? Each one is undertaken with the intent to create a better future and expanded opportunities for the given community, and each one will face challenges to moving forward successfully. Undoubtedly, there will be someone for each of these projects who will raise questions and concerns about the appropriateness and/or intent of the project. It is at this point that progress is typically stymied.

We often hear that the whole is greater than the sum of the individual parts, so why is it that we struggle so hard in our communities to move forward? Shouldn't we be able to reap the benefit of so many creative minds coming together to solve a problem? What is it that prevents us from moving forward constructively?

For starters, most of us are held hostage to a traditional, linear approach to problem solving – the idea that there is one right solution. Often a well-intentioned board or committee has toiled diligently to come up with such a solution. That “solution” is then presented to the public for feedback, and, more often than not, the public perceives it as a done deal. As a result, they fight back. The whole situation deteriorates into a win-lose debate or sometimes a lose-lose debate. As Meg Wheatley so succinctly put it in *Leadership and the New Science*, “People support what they create.... No one is successful if they merely present a plan in finished form to others. It doesn't matter how brilliant or correct the plan is. It simply doesn't work to ask people to sign on when they haven't been involved in the planning process.”

To be sure, involving community members in the planning process can be both frustrating and intimidating. Most of the people we want at the table often don't show up for a variety of reasons; those who do are often the same faces we see over and over again. I have heard many a board lament the fact that no

one attends board meetings to provide public comment, and yet they continue to engage with the public in the same old way. What we need is to strike a balance between encouraging public participation and taking civic responsibility more seriously, and we need to do it more creatively.

Rather than using approaches that create debate, communities need to focus on fostering dialogue. Techniques such as Café Conversations, Study Circles, Open Space Technology, Future Search Conference, and Appreciative Inquiry are just a few of the methods designed to create space for dialogue in communities. The National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation can provide a comprehensive list of these techniques ([http://www.thataway.org/exchange/categories.php?cid=105&hot\\_topic\\_id=1](http://www.thataway.org/exchange/categories.php?cid=105&hot_topic_id=1)). The technique, however, is less important than the environment. Each of these techniques has the following characteristics in common:

**Using inquiry rather than advocacy:** The most effective method for creating productive and constructive dialogue is to ask about another's perspective before explaining your own. Most of us are accustomed to entering into a discussion with our defenses securely in place. What this means is that we often do not hear what others are saying. By balancing advocacy with inquiry, we take as much time to understand the points of view of others as we do in explaining our own point of view.

**Testing assumptions:** Assumptions about people's intent or what is going on often create reinforcing patterns of behavior that can hinder us from reaching the most effective solutions. In fact, they can be downright destructive. When people engage in dialogue that puts a human face on the issue, it becomes easier to recognize our assumptions and challenge them. In doing so, we begin to shift our thinking. Even the slightest shift opens up new possibilities, avoiding the “one perfect solution” trap.

**Looking for common ground:** Many of the issues communities deal with are highly emotional, so finding areas of agreement are critical to keeping a sense of forward progress. At times when it seems like there is a giant chasm between perspectives, the common ground that can be established becomes a ray of hope and the foundation upon which to build a sustainable solution. As the thinking begins to shift, the size of the common ground grows. It is critical to focus on agreements rather than on disagreements.

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## CREATING COMMUNITY DISCOURSE *(continued from previous page)*

**Focusing on outcomes:** Success in any community dialogue effort means committing the time and resources to developing a sustainable solution, not an easy task in today's climate. It is all too easy to jump to the quick fix without clearly defining long term outcomes. However, communities must resist that sense of urgency and place their emphasis on the integrity of the process.

Is this an easy task? No. Does it take a lot of time and effort? Yes. Is it worth it? The community will have to answer that question. It appears, however, that the current approaches

are taking their toll, so why not try something new? A community's ability to focus on the long-term and to engage their citizens in a constructive, open, and respectful process will enable them to reap benefits for years to come. Now that's a balancing act worth achieving!

*Marty Jacobs is president of Systems In Sync, a consulting firm that focuses in the areas of strategic planning, board governance, and community and civic engagement. She can be reached at [www.systemsinsync.com](http://www.systemsinsync.com) or [marty@systemsinsync.com](mailto:marty@systemsinsync.com).*

## WORKFORCE HOUSING

In an effort to understand how NH communities are adapting to the new *Workforce Housing* statutes the NHPA sent out an informal 3 question email survey to its membership. The following summary details the results from the eighteen responses we received:

*Question 1: Were zoning (or other) changes proposed for the 2009 Town Vote to allow for the expansion of, or to enable workforce housing in your community?* Of the eighteen responses, seven communities proposed or are proposing changes in 2009.

*Question 2: If your community did propose changes could you: a) Provide a short blurb on what changes were proposed? b) Tell us if the changes were approved or denied?* The communities that passed changes had the follow comments:

- The changes were in response to the Workforce Housing Bill and included a strategy to deal with applicants more definitively.
- We added a conditional use permit in our industrial commercial zone to permit increased densities (this is the only area currently served by water and sewer that does not permit housing - all other areas served already permit diverse housing opportunities).
- Changes include amendments to the following sections: Impact Fees, Growth Management, and Residential Development Phasing. New Sections are: Workforce Residential Overlay, Inclusionary Housing, and Retention of Housing Affordability. Planning Board has been receptive.
- The Town's Economic Development Committee worked on this issue to address workforce housing in our zoning. We proposed to allow workforce housing within conservation subdivisions and to allow modest density increases for it. The voters approved the change. It remains to be seen whether or not this approach will result in W.H. coming forward as an element of conservation subdivision plans. We may revisit the issue for next March based on what we learn in the coming months.

- An Overlay District for rental and owner-occupied housing which allows for density bonuses for workforce housing, minimum standards and basic architectural guidelines.
- Added multi-family housing as an allowed use in one district and expanded the allowed density in another district that current allows for it. In addition, we added density bonuses to open space developments for workforce housing.
- A zoning amendment which relaxes Town's Growth Management Ordinance, expands multi-family as an allowed use and sets minimum design standards.

Of the communities are moving forward with changes in 2009; five won approval, one is still pending and one was denied by voters.

*Question 3: If your community did not choose to propose workforce housing changes why not? What were the hurdles?* Here is a sample of responses from the communities that did not choose to make any changes:

- It was on our initial list of potential amendments, but the Planning Board chose other priorities as needing attention sooner. The primary obstacle was board time. We considered various quick and simple fixes, but the Board wanted a sound, comprehensive amendment, and that would have required more Board time than was available. Board members hope that other towns come up with approaches that we can use as a starting point.
- We were in no hurry because we feel pretty good about what we have. Instead, we put it on the agenda to consider updating our present regs next year.
- Need time to develop an assessment process to determine criteria and local need. Also waiting for some help and direction from OEP.

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**WORKFORCE HOUSING** *(continued from previous page)*

- The Town, working with NRPC, found that it did not have sufficient time to properly analyze the statute. In its final form, the Town plans to take action on it (the Workforce Housing Law).
- The City did an analysis of our zoning and determined that our zoned residential area met the requirements of the statute.
- My observations are as follows: I underestimated the time it would take. I had a lot of training on the problem and the law, but maybe not enough help on alternative zoning language other than a full blown inclusionary ordinance. Our Town worked on it, had Ben and the Nashua WFH Coalition speak. They tabled it to 2010 Town Meeting to allow more time to get it right. They had a feeling there would be an extension and the economy made a challenge this year a low risk. We will have something this year to at least address multi-family and 50+ % available for WFH. Hopefully a complete ordinance will be proposed with affordability retention covenants included and incentives provided. Hurdles: It was more difficult to get an ordinance that the board felt would pass (higher densities/bigger schools perception) and Fair Share data came late in the zoning season and didn't allow a benchmark early enough to know whether their existing stock was sufficient.
- The Town does not feel that workforce housing regs are needed as we do not restrict low/moderate housing, single by right and multifamily by special exception, from any zone other than industrial
- Not enough time to draft changes. We don't understand what we need to do or even if we need to do anything.

To date a number of different solutions have been implemented to allow for the expansion of workforce housing in the communities that choose to make amendments to their existing ordinances and regulations. For the communities that responded stating they did not propose changes, it appears some may propose amendments in the future and others are content in their current ordinances.

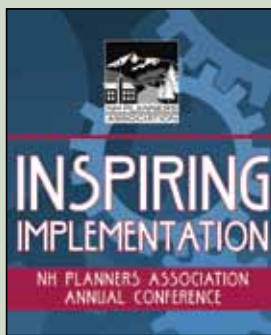
Currently, the legislature is working on a bill to amend the enactment date of the Workforce Housing statutes from July, 2009 to January 1, 2010, to allow time for communities who are working on amendments this year to be prepared for the 2010 Town Meeting schedule. No changes to the text of the statute are pending. For more information on the current Workforce Housing statutes see RSA 674:58-61, or check out <http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/legislation/2009/HB0321.html> for information on the status of the current legislation.

## NHPA SPRING CONFERENCE

### JUNE 4<sup>TH</sup> AND 5<sup>TH</sup> AT A FIRESIDE INN & SUITES, LEBANON, NH

This year's conference was developed with an eye towards Inspiring Implementation this spring as we thaw out from a long cold winter, by learning how communities and planners around the granite state have implemented some great planning initiatives. The conference will offer a variety of sessions, case studies and speakers on a range of topics including: transfer of development rights, transportation demand management, strategic conservation planning, sustainable design, workforce housing implementation, innovative planning tools for small towns, and ecomunicipalities.

Look forward to some thought-provoking sessions, mobile workshops and exploring the great cities of Lebanon and Hanover to see firsthand how the tools and ideas to be discussed have been implemented.



AICP Certificate Maintenance credits are being sought for all of the sessions, including the keynote speaker, Tom Wessels. Mr. Wessels has attended events throughout New Hampshire, offering a critical examination of our reining notions of progress through the lens of complex systems science, prompting us to ask ourselves "Is our current path to progress truly sustainable?" Mr. Wessels is the author of the recently published book, "The Myth of Progress" and we are delighted that he will be joining us to kick-off our conference.

For more information, see the events/programs page at [www.nhplanners.org](http://www.nhplanners.org) or contact one of the Conference Co-chairs:

Sarah Marchant ([smarchant@milford.nh.gov](mailto:smarchant@milford.nh.gov)) and Becky Hebert ([BHebert@onconcord.com](mailto:BHebert@onconcord.com)).

## A ONE-DAY CONFERENCE FOR LOCAL ENERGY COMMITTEES, MUNICIPALITIES AND SCHOOLS.

The Carbon Coalition Local Energy Committee Working group will host the first annual Local Energy Committee state-wide **training and information sharing conference for energy reduction efforts at the local level.**

### Location:

The Grappone Center in Concord.

**Date:** June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2009



### ATTENDEES WILL:

- Learn about the tools available to measure your town and school district energy use.
- Hear from local energy committees
- Receive a copy of the New Hampshire Citizen's Energy Handbook (Part 2)
- Learn first-hand how the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, existing efficiency programs, and the federal stimulus might aid and influence your planning and projects.
- Network with other energy committee members and municipal/school staff working on local energy solutions.

For more information visit [www.carboncoalition.org/Conference](http://www.carboncoalition.org/Conference) or contact

Julia Dundorf ([jdundorf@cleanair-coolplanet.org](mailto:jdundorf@cleanair-coolplanet.org))

Christa Koehler ([ckoehler@cleanair-coolplanet.org](mailto:ckoehler@cleanair-coolplanet.org))

## EXCERPTS FROM MUNICIPALITIES HAVE A CRUCIAL STAKE IN THE STATE WATER PLAN PROCESS

(New Hampshire Town and City, published by the New Hampshire Local Government Center)

By Paul Susca

### The State Water Plan Process

The new report, *New Hampshire Water Resources Primer*, identifies these underlying challenges to effective management of the state's water resources. The *Primer* was developed by DES, with the involvement of various stakeholders, to begin a discussion with legislators, town officials and the public about the future of our state's water resources. It is the first document that covers all of the water related topics of importance to policy makers in New Hampshire. The *Primer* contains pertinent facts and statistics about the state's water resources, water use, water infrastructure and water law. Individual chapters cover rivers and streams; lakes and ponds; groundwater; wetlands; coastal and estuarine waters; water use and conservation; drinking water; wastewater; stormwater; dams; and floods and droughts. Each of these chapters provides information on the topic, discusses issues related to it, and examines current management efforts. More importantly, each chapter also presents some preliminary recommendations formulated by experts and stakeholders.

### The Role of Municipalities

While numerous state and federal programs and nonprofit organizations play important roles in understanding and address-

ing the state's water resources challenges, municipalities also play a crucial role in managing and protecting water resources, primarily through subdivision and site plan review regulations and ordinances related to wetlands, shoreland, stormwater, and groundwater. DES and its partner organizations have published a number of model ordinances and guidance documents over the years to aid municipalities interested in addressing these issues. The most recent of these is *Innovative Land Use Planning Techniques, a Handbook for Sustainable Development* (October 2008), prepared by DES in partnership with the New Hampshire Association of Regional Planning Commissions, the New Hampshire Office of Energy and Planning, and the New Hampshire Local Government Center.

The *Primer* points out again and again the need for improved cooperation between municipalities to protect shared water resources. Although the legal mechanisms exist for watershed-based or other regional approaches to land use regulation and the experts agree that effective management must include this approach, it has not been widely embraced. Municipalities are clearly in the driver's seat in terms of improved water resource protection through coordinated actions.

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## STATE WATER PLAN PROCESS *(continued from previous page)*

### What Do Municipal Officials Think About Water Issues?

DES and its partner organizations conducted a survey of legislators and local officials during October and November of 2008. The purpose of the survey was to gain perspectives in addition to those provided by the DES staff and reviewers involved in preparing the *Water Resources Primer*. Respondents to the survey included 114 state legislators; 175 members of local governing bodies; and 131 municipal planners, chairs of planning boards or conservation commissions, and their designees. The survey, whose results can be viewed and/or downloaded on the State Water Resources Plan Process website (see Resources below), contains a wealth of information about issues of importance, water-related capital investment plans, and opinions regarding policy questions.

### Next Steps and the Municipal Role

Fortunately, New Hampshire has a tradition of constructive involvement by dedicated volunteers—as local officials and as members and directors of regional planning commissions, lake associations, local river advisory committees, volunteer river and lake monitoring groups, sporting groups, and the like. DES solicited the contributions of many of these groups when drafting the *Water Resources Primer* and plans to tap into this vein of citizen involvement as it holds a series of “road show” meetings throughout the state. (See sidebar.) DES’s hope is that between the *Primer*, the survey and the public meetings, the Water Resources Plan process will benefit from a wide range of perspectives and result in an informed public discussion about the challenges New Hampshire faces and what needs to be done to address them.

While the public meetings do not represent the first or the last opportunity for the involvement of municipal officials, the meetings present a great opportunity to begin a discussion that can continue on several levels. First, reviewing the *Primer* and participating in the State Water Resources Plan discussions can help inform local water resources planning. Second, municipalities have a tremendous stake in the outcome of the State Water Resources Plan process. The issues with the most direct impact on municipalities include infrastructure funding needs and the respective roles of state and local governments in various aspects of land use management such as stormwater management and shoreland protection. However, the most important issue for all concerned is how to ensure the protection and enhancement of the high quality environment that makes New Hampshire a desirable and economically vital place to live and work.

### Resources

State Water Resources Plan Process website (view and/or download the Water Resources Primer, reports on the Water Resources Survey, and an up-to-date schedule of public meetings)

<http://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/dwgb/wrpp/index.htm>

Innovative Land Use Planning Techniques Handbook

[http://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wmb/repp/innovative\\_land\\_use.htm](http://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wmb/repp/innovative_land_use.htm)

**STATE WATER RESOURCES PLAN PROCESS**

*Public Meetings in April and May*

April 1 - Manchester	April 28 - Durham
April 2 - Ossipee	May 4 - Bristol
April 6 - Keene	May 27 - Bethlehem
April 14 - Lebanon	

*For more information, please call (603) 271-0657 or visit:*  
<http://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/dwgb/wrpp/sessions.htm>