

The Granite State

P L A N N E R



Volume 2
Issue 3
Summer 2001

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NHPA Celebrates 30th Anniversary at Waterville Valley Conference

By Tim Thompson, NHPA Public Information Officer



The view from Waterville Valley Conference Center, the site of this year's NHPA Spring Conference

"Planning in New Hampshire – Past, Present, and Future" was the theme of the New Hampshire Planners Association's Annual Spring Conference on May 31st and June 1st. Marking a return to the two-day conference format for the first time since 1996, about 60 planners and their spouses attended the conference, held at the beautiful Waterville Valley Conference Center. The premise of the conference was to bring together ideas about lessons learned from the

past, examine the status of planning in the Granite State, look at future directions, and provide an opportunity for "old faces" to meet new planners through networking and recreational opportunities.

Randy Raymond, AICP, Principal of Agora Planners & Associates, opened the conference with "A Half Century of NH Planning: Observations and Opinions." In his presentation, he discussed the landmarks, programs, and people that have shaped



NHPA Conference attendees absorb great knowledge

planning in NH since the 1950s. Ben Frost, Executive Director of the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission, provided his (often humorous) perspective on recent NH Supreme Court decisions. It has been an interesting year for planning and zoning in the courts, and Ben brought us all up to date on the myriad of cases and their implications for planning practice today. Ben concluded with a look at new and pending legislation in the NH House and Senate.

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Bruce Mayberry rounded out the morning session with his presentation titled "Creating an Impact Fee System." Bruce, who has developed many impact fee ordinances in NH and ME, discussed the legislative authorization for impact fees, ordinance basics, and the impact of the *Simonsen* case and its implications for communities.



Plymouth Town Planner June Hammond-Rowan shares her thoughts at the Planner's Roundtable, Steve Stancel of Dover looks on

work accomplished by the Cape Cod Commission, and its unique regulatory standing in Massachusetts.

Closing out day one of the conference was John Lippman of the Cape Cod Commission. Lippman's presentation examined the nature of sprawl in New England, Smart Growth initiatives, and regional approaches to combating sprawl. His slide presentation included many examples of

Day two of the conference began with an open discussion about the future of planning in NH, led by Clay Mitchell of MG Planning. Highlights of the discussion included



Chris Northrop's intrepid hikers pose atop a lofty peak

issues facing the northern part of the state versus the southern tier, state enabling legislation, and legislative priorities. NHPA Vice-President and Salem Planning Director Ross Moldoff then led a roundtable discussion on "What's happening in my Town?" This session gave planners from communities all over the state an opportunity to present and discuss important local projects and concerns.



Kenn Ortmann of Rochester and Tim Thompson of Londonderry enjoy a moment of informal networking



Chris Northrop, Londonderry's Tim Thompson, and Bedford's Nancy Emerson give marching orders for the afternoon's recreational networking trips; Conference MC Dawn Emerson from Laconia looks on

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Legislative Update

by Kerrie Diers, Director of Planning & Economic Development, Town of Pembroke and NHPA Legislative Committee Chair

HB 512, sponsored by Reps. Dokmo and Bruno, would have amended RSA 674:21 V(i) by providing that "a planning board shall, in the course of site plan or subdivision review, have authority to require that a developer be responsible for the payment of the cost of any on-site improvements as well as the developer's proportional share of off-site improvements. Such authority shall not be affected by the adoption of or failure to adopt an impact fee ordinance."

Essentially, HB512 would have put Planning Boards back in the pre-Simonsen mode of operation for exactions from developers for needs occasioned by the development. Quite a number of planners showed up to testify in favor of this bill, however, the bill was re-referred to the Committee, so no vote was taken and no changes will occur this year.

Anyone interested in joining the Legislative Committee for NHPA, please send an email to Kerrie Diers at kdiers@pembroke-nh.com. There will be a meeting later this summer to go over a summary of legislation from this year and to determine what people want to do for next year for tracking and testifying on particular legislation.

The NHPA Newsletter is published in the Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter. Contact the Newsletter Editor for copy deadline. The primary purpose of the newsletter is to foster the exchange of information between planners throughout the Granite State. Anyone wishing to submit an article, editorial, request for information, or anything else of interest to planners is encouraged to do so by contacting the Newsletter Editor. The NHPA welcomes paid business advertising. Rates are \$40 per issue and \$100 per year (four issues) for a business card ad. NHPA membership information can be obtained from the treasurer.

Of Plans and Planners

by Cindy Hayden, Community Development Director, City of Portsmouth

NRPC Executive Director Andrew Singelakis reports that former Senior Transportation Planner Leigh Komornick has left NRPC to become Plaistow's Town Planner.

Julie Cummings at NRPC reports that two new people have joined the Town of Hudson – Community Development Director Sean Sullivan and Town Planner Kathy McKenna. Kathy came to Hudson from New York with an undergraduate degree in urban studies and a Juris Doctor degree in law. Sean has 16 years of experience in Planning and Zoning and previously worked as Director of Planning and Conservation in Tewksbury Massachusetts. Susan Domanico has been hired by Merrimack to be their new Assistant Planner.

Roger Hawk is filling a new position for the City of Nashua as Economic Development Director. He vacated his position as Community Development Director and the city is now advertising to fill that position.

Doug Woodward returned to Concord City Hall in early June to take over the reins as City Planner. Doug began his career as a planner with the City 27 years ago. For the past twelve years he has operated Woodward Planning Consultants, Inc. In recent years he had done a considerable amount of consulting work for Concord on rezoning as well as on the City's 20/20 Vision project. Doug is now looking forward to implementing that planning work.

After a ten-year hiatus, Cecile M. Cormier has returned to the Rochester Planning Department as Staff Planner. During those ten years, Cecile worked in both Massachusetts and New Hampshire in the planning and conservation fields. Since her return to the City of Rochester she has been busy learning GIS and AutoCad, and experiencing many a *deja vu*.

Michael Behrendt reports that Rochester has completed its draft Land Use and Transportation Master Plan Chapters. They plan to hire a consultant to draft a comprehensive rezoning of the City pursuant to the Land Use Chapter.

Phase II of the Visual Resource Inventory and Assessment was recently completed for the Town of Meredith by Tom Kokx of Tom Kokx Associates (TKA), a landscape architecture and planning firm located in Gilford. The work included development of a description and photo

documentation of community character, a critical views maps, and guidelines for hillside/ridgeline development. The Visual Resource Inventory and Assessment will be used to develop Meredith's Wireless Communication Facilities Ordinance as well as an Architectural Design Review Ordinance and related design guidelines.

Somersworth Planner Jamie Steffen reports that the community's residents will experience a transformation of their downtown area this summer. The former Citizens Bank building will be renovated to become the new municipal building and the Somersworth shopping plaza will undergo a major transformation to become a modern urban plaza. Rehab of the plaza will include a new façade designed in New England mill motif with two towers, including one that will enclose a clock. The plaza parking lot will be reconfigured and landscaped and will include a bandstand that is a copy of the one that stood in old Central Park, a Somersworth tourist attraction in the late 1800s and early 1900s. This work is an outgrowth of the City's recent Master Plan which strongly articulated the desire of residents to revitalize the downtown, and it is intended to spur further downtown investment by the private sector.

The NH Office of State Planning announces the recent release of three new technical bulletins: #13 *Tax Increment Financing*, #14 *Planning for Wireless Telecommunication* and #15 *What is a Forested Floodplain?* Bulletins are distributed free of charge to planners, municipal officials and interested persons throughout the state.

E. Ann Poole, Ecologist and Environmental Planner says that she has been retained by the Henniker Conservation Commission for Phase 2 of a Natural Resources Inventory. The information gathered will be used to inform and support an ongoing update to the town Master Plan.

Charles Watson, Hooksett's first town planner, informs us that they enacted an impact fee ordinance in May, and set a fee schedule for school impact fees on all new housing. Hooksett also enacted a TIF district at the I-93 Exit 10 commercial site, which was funded at \$2.6 million for roadway and related improvements.

Pamela Goucher of Manchester reports that two new planners have joined the City – Louise Donington, previously a planner for the Town of Merrimack, and

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NHPA Celebrates 30th Anniversary *(continued)*

Recreation and net-working opportunities followed the formal sessions on both days. Activities included hiking, mountain biking, and the first ever NHPA Golf Tournament.

Day one of the Golf Tournament went to Paul Konieczka, AICP, of CLD Engineers. Paul fired a 39 over the nine holes to take the day-one honors by 2 strokes over Ben Frost of UVLSRPC, and 3 strokes over Jamie Steffen of Somers-worth. Day two of the tournament saw four 2-man teams compete in a 9-hole best ball competition. Al Turner and Eric Twarog (both of Windham) took the victory with a 36. Following close behind were the teams of Ben Frost (UVLSRPC) & Steve Henninger (Concord) and the team of Tim Thompson (Londonderry) & Jamie Steffen (Somersworth); both with scores of 38. Rounding out the day-two field were Andre Garron (Londonderry) and David Schwerd (Goffstown) with a score of 43.



Conference Presenter and UVLSRPC Director Ben Frost takes a big swing at the Golf Tournament

Of Plans and Planners *(continued)*

Stephen MacInnes, a landscape architect who previously worked for the City of Chelsea, MA.

Salem Planning Director Ross Moldoff announced that on April 24, 2001, Salem won a NH Supreme Court case dealing with the expansion of non-conforming uses (See Town of Salem v. Wickson <http://www.state.nh.us/courts/supreme/opinions/0104/wicks081.htm>). The Town originally lost the case in Superior Court and had pursued the matter for 5 years and prevailed. Ross also reports that Salem has hired Bruce Mayberry to update a fiscal impact study with information on local schools, and will soon update their land use regulations.



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