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New Hampshire Planners Association **Annual Awards 2011**

The New Hampshire Planners Association executive committee solicited applications this spring for its annual awards – Professional and Citizen Planners, Plan, and Project of the Year. The competition was fierce, with many excellent nominations resulting in a statistical tie for Planner of the Year and some very difficult choices for the executive committee. Congratulations to all the winners and the nominees, it is an honor to be able to recognize some of the phenomenal people and projects in our own backyards. The NHPA Award winners were announced at the Annual Conference on June 9th in Keene.

Citizen Planner of the Year ***Paul Goldberg*** ***Bedford, NH***

Paul Goldberg was nominated by an array of his peers who have worked alongside Paul during different parts of his 38 years of service to the Town of Bedford. He first started his service to Bedford in 1973 joining the fledgling Planning Board and soon after became founding member of the Sewer & Water Commission. “Paul is known in Bedford as the father of the municipal sewer system and it was his vision for the system that allowed Bedford to have such vital commercial growth over the last 30+ years.”

Paul’s Background in engineering provided him with the understanding that if Bedford was to grow, especially its commercial tax base, the only way to do so in an environmentally safe manner was to provide a state of the art municipal sewer system. Over the next 35 years Paul provided countless hours to advancement of Bedford’s sewer system by attending meetings, writing letters and pounding the pavement to ensure his vision would be completed.

Paul’s vision for Bedford was more than just the sewer system, his comprehensive insight into how Bedford could and should grow also lead him to spearhead an array projects to further that vision including: insisting on including an Economic Development Chapter to the 1990 Master Plan, Spearheading the first Performance Zoning District as an innovative land use technique, fought for the inclusion of roadway improvements to Route 101 in the 10-year plan, and leading the charge to adopt workforce housing zoning changes. Paul has

served on the Planning Board, Town Council, Water & Sewer Commission, SNRPC and the ZBA in his long tenure of service. The Executive Committee is proud to be able to honor Paul as an individual who has advanced and promoted the cause of planning in the public arena for 38 years.

Professional Planner of the Year

Tim Thompson, Town Planner

Town of Londonderry

Tim Thompson, has worked for the Town of Londonderry for over 10 years starting as an intern and moving up to the position of Town Planner. During his tenure with the Town he has refined his reputation as the “consummate professional” providing fair and equal support to projects of all sizes, developing a detailed and consistent review process which has earned him the professional respect from local boards, developers and his peers in the Planning community.

Tim’s made his first contributions to Londonderry as an intern where he wrote the state’s first Cell Town Ordinance and subsequently won an APA Award of Merit. Once hired by the Town Tim hit the ground running authoring the 2002 Growth Management Ordinance, 2004 Master Plan, a very contentious Wetlands Setback Ordinance, The Northwest Small Area Master Plan of 2009 in conjunction with SNHPC, for the Route 28 and I-93 Exit 5 area utilizing transit oriented development, the Workforce Housing Ordinance, the 2009 Gateway Business District Ordinance and the 2010 Planned Unit Development Ordinance, which will govern the largest diverse development in Londonderry as it evolves over the next 20+ years.

Tim has dedicated much of his time to refining and developing clear and consistent processes for implementing everything from the CIP to walking applications large and small through the Planning Board process, while streamlining submission requirements and starting nearly paperless planning board meetings.

All of these positive changes have benefited from Tim’s patience and commitment to educating not only the Planning Board, but the public and developers on Londonderry’s vision and innovative planning practices. The Executive Committee is proud to be able to honor Tim as the 2011 Professional Planner of the Year for his sustained contribution to the field of planning through distinguished practice, teaching, and writing.

Professional Planner of the Year

Christopher Parker, Director of Planning & Community Development

City of Dover

Chris Parker has worked for the city of Dover since 1997 and currently serves as the Director of Planning & Community Development, where he recently spearheaded the effort for

Dover to be the first city in the region to introduce a Form Based Code in response to the communities desire to protect the historic mill city's downtown.

I would like to read an excerpt from one of Chris's nominating letters:

"When Dover speaks, Chris listens." On a day-to-day basis Chris creates opportunity for community dialogue, encourages public involvement and planning education through a broad range of ground-breaking initiatives such as: An interactive website offering a Google map pinpointing all of the projects under review by local boards, a weekly blog on planning topics of interest to the community, a twitter feed to keep the public informed of all city meetings, community services, public works announcement and emergency-related communications, hosts early morning "Coffee with the Planning Director" to allow citizens not available during business hours the opportunity to get information and share comments directly with the planning department, and weekly "Dover Downloads" videos on the public access channel.

In line with Chris's commitment to education he has created a "Handbook for Developers" and spearheaded efforts to organize planning-related film screenings for the public. Chris has also taken the lead on numerous city wide efforts from the CIP to the award winning McConnell Center, home to numerous human service agencies and the Cities school, welfare and recreation offices.

Chris exemplifies the role of a distinguished Professional Planner though his broad outreach efforts to engage the community in all aspects of planning and the planning process, his ability to use state-of-the-art technology and methods to educate and inform the public, his continued drive to evaluate and improve regulations and his continual interaction with planners statewide to work together to hone best practices.

Project of the Year

LRPC's Winnepesaukee Gateway

The Gateway represents the desire to create a flexible, informative tool that can deliver large amounts of constantly changing information to key audiences, which will educate, and promote awareness and stewardship of the natural resources in the Lake Winnepesaukee watershed among the public and broader community. This project is unique in that it is the first web-based watershed management plan to be approved by the NH Department of Environmental Services.

The Winnepesaukee Gateway represents the combined efforts of many partners to forge a unique, subwatershed approach to create an effective, sustainable, and phased planning and implementation process using state-of-the-art information systems.

The long-term vision is the development of a web-based watershed management plan for the entire Lake Winnepesaukee Watershed that will be continually evolving, with

the ability to provide community officials, residents, schools, and visitors with current and relevant information on the natural resources, water quality data, issues of concern, activities and opportunities for action in the watershed. The management or “master plan” will be a compilation of the individual subwatershed management plans.

Plan of the Year

2010 Master Plan

Bedford, NH

The Bedford 2010 Master Plan was developed through a very successful public outreach program that included a telephone survey conducted by the UNH Survey Center, a Community Immersion Day where community leaders, business owners, citizens and stakeholders were interviewed, an all day Saturday charrette and visioning workshop, and several public presentations and public hearings. Through this outreach, the plan quickly became supported by the entire Planning Board and Town council.

Unique to the completion of the plan is the way multiple resources and plans were integrated into the process. The steering committee and ultimately the final plan, worked closely with, and integrated the work of the Town’s energy commission and economic development commission to ensure that there would be one unified set of goals for the town over the coming years.

The 11 vision statements developed by the committee set the stage for a comprehensive master plan that lays out a vision for a prospering community that remains as a great place to live, own a business and raise a family over the coming decade while pursuing state of the art planning principals such as mixed use development, transit oriented development, smart growth, economic development and energy conservation.

Lifetime Achievement Award

Ken Niemczyk

Ken Niemczyk was presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award after more than 30 years in the Planning profession, the last 22 of which were in Lebanon, NH. Ken guided the City through two master plan updates, including an award winning effort in 1993, formalized a number of policies and procedures from capital improvement planning to development review, and re-established the Planning Office as an important part of City’s administration in spite of being the sole planner for the majority of his tenure.

Ken was a strong advocate of direct citizen involvement in the planning process throughout his career and proponent of workforce housing in Lebanon, the Upper Valley and the state. Ken was eager to share his knowledge, regularly opening the Planning Office to interns and teaching numerous college-level courses on planning-related topics.

For more on Ken's illustrious career please see the related article.

Lifetime Achievement Award

Walter Warren

The last award for 2011 is a Lifetime Achievement Award to recognize the exemplary contributions Walter Warren made to the NH Planning Community before he passed away earlier this year. Walter's commitment to Planning and Economic Development stretches over a 30+ year career, working on all sides of the Professional Planner's gamut from a planner for a private developer, to the Grater Nashua NH Center for Economic Development, to the Town of Windham and most recently as Community Development Director for the town of Merrimack.

He was a charter member of the Northern New England Chapter of American Planning Association, a long time member and President of NHPA, he volunteered on the Nashua Regional Planning Commission and was involved for over 20 years as a volunteer for the City of Nashua and the school district.

The following is a "Letter from the President" article Walter Warren wrote when he became president of NHPA in 1992, a time in many ways quite like today. His foresight, dedication to promoting the role of planning in NH and ability to laugh are clearly evident. His message written almost twenty years ago, still echo's true today.

"It is truly an honor to be writing this message to the Association, whose members and mission I respect very much. I'd like to begin by welcoming the new Executive Committee, and thanking them in advance for their efforts on behalf of the Association. For those of you who are not familiar with the new members, please be sure to check the masthead at right. It is encouraging that more of our members have chosen to get involved. It's also encouraging that we have a good geographic representation of our membership on the Committee than we have had in the past. I believe that this is a critical time for our organization. At last, we have a lull in the action that has, in the past, reduced our membership to 'plan checkers' and 'enforcers'. We now have the opportunity to apply the skills of our profession to myriad of problems which our communities are facing. Unfortunately, this opportunity comes at a time when the competition for the commitment of resources to planning and other critical functions is increasingly fierce. Not only must we deal with the local issues and problems which went unaddressed during the growth spurt of the eighties, but also "new" initiatives which are increasingly global in their scope and multi-disciplinary in their nature-both substantively and procedurally-such as the ADA, ISTE, and economic development initiatives. Coincidentally, there is a growing dissatisfaction with the national association regarding the apparent disparity between the membership's needs and the association's services. These circumstances underscore the need for us, as individuals, to be effective advocates for our profession-within our communities and beyond. Our state-wide association has the opportunity to bolster this advocacy by expanding our communications among our members, local policy makers, legislators, and all public and private sector participants in the community development process. We must also provide meaningful professional support for our members, and fill the 'gap' in services which do not appear to be forthcoming from the national association.

In essence, planning in New Hampshire, and this Association, have "come of age". We must now revisit and refine our "mission", both individually and collectively, and develop the forum in which planning for the future and in the future will be accomplished. Clearly, the diversity of our membership and the "multi-faceted" (some might say schizophrenic) nature of our profession suggests that we all have something to offer in this regard. I urge you all to get involved and take an active part in these necessary efforts to increase awareness of, and support for, planning in the Granite State. Only kidding. Let's go skiing. –WRW"

The executive committee for the first time also awarded Honorable Mentions this year. The 2011 *Honorable Mention* recipients are *Linda Harvey, Salem, NH - Citizen Planner*, *Laconia Stream Daylighting - Project of the Year* and the *Keene Master Plan - Plan of Year*.

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