

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND LAND MANAGEMENT

Marcia Rasmussen, Director of Planning and Land Management

Mission

To guide the development and use of private and public lands within the Town of Concord in a manner that preserves and celebrates the unique character that is Concord.

Organization and Staffing

The Department of Planning & Land Management (DPLM) is comprised of eighteen full-time and 30-34 part-time individuals within five distinct Divisions – Building Inspections, Health, Natural Resources, Planning, and Economic Vitality and Tourism. Four of the five Divisions are responsible for the review, permitting and enforcement of Concord's land use and development regulations; the range and extent of authority exercised by these Divisions is found in State Law and local bylaws. Economic Vitality and Tourism works to reinforce the importance of economic health to the overall quality of life and to demonstrate the Town's strong support of business and economic sustainability. The addition of Economic Vitality and Tourism to DPLM complements the work of the other Divisions to support the overall quality of life in the community, of which economic vitality is a critical component.

DPLM Divisions provide staff support to the Town's regulatory boards and committees that address land use and development activities in the Town: Zoning Board of Appeals, Board of Health, Natural Resources Commission, Planning Board and Historic Districts Commission. DPLM staff also provides support to the Community Preservation Committee, Historical Commission, and Economic Vitality Committee in addition to many other sub-committees and task forces that may be appointed to address specific issues from time to time, such as Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Advisory

Committee, Conservation Restriction Stewardship Committee, West Concord Advisory Committee, and Junction Village Open Space Task Force. Two additional committees supported by Planning staff are focused on the two cultural districts - the West Concord Junction Cultural District Committee and the Concord Center Cultural District Committee. Staff also participates in regional groups such as the 13 communities that make up the MAPC-Minuteman Area Group on Inter-local Coordination (MAGIC), the Battle Road Scenic Byway Committee, the nine towns that participate in the Regional Housing Services Office and participation in the Community Health Network (CHNA) 15 Partnership.

In 2021, two members of the Health Division retired – Assistant Public Health Director Stanley Sosnicki and Public Health Director Susan Rask. Additionally, two part-time Inspectors, Electrical and Plumbing & Gas, retired from working in Concord. Town office were re-opened to the public in the summer for limited hours, as the first-floor meeting room was set up to offer hybrid meetings for in-person and remote participation. E-permitting was implemented for most of the Health and all Building Inspections applications by the end of 2021, with the work continuing for Natural Resources, Public Works, Town Manager's Office, Town Clerk, and Planning.

This year marks the eighth year that the Town has administered the Regional Housing Services Office (RHSO). The RHSO offices are located at 37 Knox Trail, just over the town line in Acton. The RHSO is now staffed by five people: Director Elizabeth Rust, and Housing Specialists Lara Plaskon, Elizabeth Valente, Jody Kablack, and Suzi Solomon. The Regional Housing Services Office now supports affordable housing activity (such as rental housing monitoring, assisting in re-sales, project development, WestMetro HOME activities, etc.) in nine communities including: Acton, Bedford, Concord, Lexington, Lincoln, Maynard, Sudbury, Wayland, and Weston.

Detailed reports on the regulatory activities of the various boards staffed by DPLM and additional information specific to the four Divisions are included elsewhere in this Annual Report.

BUILDING INSPECTIONS

Ray Matte, Building Commissioner/
Zoning Enforcement Officer
Paul Creedon, Local Building Inspector
Gary Smith, Local Building Inspector
Pat Sands, Assistant Local Building Inspector
Tracy LaPierre, Administrative Assistant
Bob Prescott, Electrical/Wiring Inspector
Kenneth McConnell, Plumbing/Gas Inspector

Building and Zoning Activity

The Building Inspections Division issued 1103 building permits in 2021, which is consistent with last year. The overall construction value increased in the year 2021 to \$ 84.4 million compared to \$74.8 million in 2020. This is an increase in the value of construction by 11.4%. Of this total, \$72.2 million was for residential construction with \$12.2 million in commercial work.

The value of “new residential dwelling units” built in Concord went from \$14.2 million last year to \$23.9 million in 2021. This new residential construction value represents thirty-four new detached single-family homes, and 4 duplex dwelling units, a total of 42 new housing units. Of these 34 new homes, eleven, or 33% were the result of “tear downs” (an act of demolishing a building, usually to build a new one on the same site)

In 2021, the issuance of Mechanical permits increased by 16.5%, the number of Electrical Permits increased by 22.8%, and Plumbing/Gas permits increased by 15.3%. Overall, 3104 permits were issued with a 15% increase overall total. The Building Division collected \$1,148,245 total in permit fees in 2021 versus \$976,317 collected in 2020. This is a 14.97% increase from last year.

Staffing/Operations

Our staff is comprised of four full-time and three part-time personnel. The Building Inspections staff is committed to pursuing diligent enforcement of the town’s Zoning and Sign Bylaws, as well as enforcement of the State Building code, which includes but is not limited to handicap accessibility, structural integrity, fire safety, energy codes and many other regulations relative to public safety. Our staff provides technical assistance to property owners, builders, real estate professionals, other Town departments, boards, and committees in town. In addition to issuing building permits and conducting required on-site inspections, the Building Inspections staff spends an increasing amount of time reviewing sub-division proposals, special permits, site plans, variance requests, making zoning determinations, and addressing zoning complaints. Staff also provides review and comment to the Select Board for annual license renewals, which include licensing for alcohol and beverage facilities and livery licenses.

Noteworthy projects completed and under construction, this year includes the following: Millrun Lane, a 14-unit Planned Residential development consisting of 10 new single-family homes and 2 duplexes is under construction; all 14 building permits have been issued and the developer is in the process of applying for the first Certificate of Occupancy. The Citizen’s Bank building at 1134 Main Street was demolished and a new Chase Bank has been constructed on the redeveloped site; the contractor is in the final stages of construction and is anticipating that a Certificate of Occupancy will be issued in late March or April of 2022. The Town House in Monument Square had a major renovation of the first floor completed in 2021. The project consisted of the renovation of the kitchenette, multi-user rooms, HVAC system, fire protection, and the construction of new single-user restrooms. On-line permitting for all types of building permits was implemented and effective January 2, 2021.

Permits Issued	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
New single family homes	38	51	43	39	44	20	26	
Multi-family attached units	75	6	6	4	6	6	0	34
Additions/Alterations	759	866	760	719	748	710	749	8
Commercial	114	115	100	88	86	97	61	945
Total Building Permits:	873	1038	909	850	884	833	836	116
								1103
Electrical	907	751	865	996	945	916	780	
Mechanical	119	122	108	93	141	126	81	1010
Plumbing	546	478	542	524	507	488	397	97
Gas	443	391	428	433	437	422	340	493
Signs	68	62	29	32	31	29	7	377
Total all Permits:	2956	2824	2881	2928	2945	2814	2441	24
Value of Const. (millions)	80.4	80.7	84.7	96.7	72.2	70.9	74.8	3104
Permit Fee Revenue	\$1,015,370	\$991,099	\$927,555	\$1,224,460	\$1,017,932	\$1,017,932	\$976,317	84.4

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

James Smith, Chair
Theo Kindermans, Clerk
Elizabeth Akehurst-Moore
Ravi Faiia, Associate Member
Thomas Swaim, Associate Member

The Zoning Board of Appeals is authorized by Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40A and is responsible for conducting public hearings and meetings for Special Permits and Variances as required pursuant to the Zoning Bylaw of the Town.

In August, James Smith was elected as Chair and Theo Kindermans was elected as Clerk. Thomas Swaim joined the Board as an associate member in June. The Board is currently in need of one additional associate member.

In 2021, the Board held 12 public hearings and conducted 3 official site visits. The Board heard applications for 1 Variance and 35 Special Permits which included 1 Planned Residential Development and 2 renewals for previously granted Special Permits. Of these applications, 31 Special Permits were granted, 3 applications were withdrawn without prejudice at the request of the applicant, 1 was denied, and 1 application is pending. Please note, Some of these applications included multiple activities; therefore, the activity totals below may exceed the number of applications.

Zoning Board of Appeals Application Activities

Two-family Dwelling Unit	2
Additional Dwelling Unit	5
Educational Uses	1
Philanthropic Uses	2
Special Home Occupation	1
Tourist Home or Bed and Breakfast	1
Fairs Bazaars, Antique Shows, Suppers, and Dances	3
Side Yard Setbacks	1
Change, Alteration or Extension of a Non-Conforming Use and/ or Structure	18
Increase Gross Floor Area by more than 50%	6
Work within the Flood Plain Conservancy District	2
Work within the Groundwater Conservancy District	1
Earth Removal	1
Planned Residential Development	1
Special Permit	35
Variance	1
Site Plan Approval (Associated with a Special Permit)	1

BOARD OF HEALTH

Jill Block, MPH, Chair
Ray Considine, MSW
Deborah Greene, MD
Mark Haddad, Esq.
Alma Healey, RN

The Board of Health is responsible for the overall stewardship of the public health of Concord. It promotes, enacts, and enforces health rules and regulations in accordance with local bylaws and state law. As the public health regulatory entity for the Town, the Board continues to endorse measures that can positively impact the public by promoting health and wellness. There are five members of the Board, appointed for three-year terms by the Town Manager.

2021 was a challenging year for local public health as business activity fully resumed while the need to work with the community to address the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic continued. Governor Baker ended the State of Emergency in the spring, eliminating nearly all COVID-19 restrictions. By mid-summer, the number of infections was minimal, due in part to the higher rate of vaccinations in Massachusetts.

The Board of Health, as in 2020, continued to discuss and receive input from staff regarding changing COVID-19 regulations and mandates through the spring, and committed to ongoing reviews of state epidemiological data, along with data provided by the local public health nurse, Tricia McGean. In January and March, Concord held the first of its' vaccination clinics for first responders, with subsequent clinics serving senior citizens, and school children once vaccines were approved for youth. By October, around 95% of eligible Concord residents had been vaccinated. As of this writing, COVID-19 has returned to the forefront of public health as the numbers of infected residents increased due to the Delta and Omicron variants. With high vaccination rates, along with strong recommendations for masking, the Board felt that a mandate would not necessarily change infection rates on a local level and reaffirmed a commitment to watching data closely. However, the Omicron-variant caused many breakthrough

infections, and the Board voted in December to require people to wear a mask when indoors in public buildings.

When business activity resumed in the spring, the Health Division returned to permitting and inspecting septic systems and plans, and business and recreational activities, as required by various regulations. This included a public hearing regarding Polystyrene Waivers which occurs annually, as some institutional providers are unable to source their very specific food service items. Since the Polystyrene Ban was enacted in 2016, the number of waiver requests to the Board of Health has dropped significantly, including those from these institutional settings. With low demand for these specific items, along with heightened infection control protocols due to COVID-19, we anticipate that these waiver requests will continue.

The Board held discussions regarding the beach closings due to Cyanobacteria blooms at White Pond and participated in the monitoring of a National Science Foundation pilot study of a remediation approach using the A-POD Trap and Removal System. We are pleased that the Town will continue use of this system which showed promise during this trial period.

The Board of Health fielded a request from Debra's Natural Gourmet for a variance to Massachusetts Food Code Section 3-304.17 Refilling Returnables which will allow for the use of containers brought from home for the purchase of bulk items. This variance was approved after lengthy discussion as a step towards reducing waste and plastics, in line with Concord's Sustainability goals. This is the first variance of its' type approved in Massachusetts, and we hope that it helps pave the way for greater collaboration on this subject between the MA Department of Environmental Protection and the MA Department of Public Health.

With state funding received in 2020, the Board continued to work with the 4-town tobacco compliance program which had begun in the summer of 2020 but was on hiatus during business shut-downs. The Board continued to receive updates and provide input regarding the inspections and activities of the tobacco control compliance

inspector, with a new inspector hired by the 4 participating towns (Wilmington, Lexington, Bedford and Concord) in fall 2021.

The Town of Concord along with the towns of Carlisle, Lincoln, Sudbury, Bedford and Wayland received a Community Regional Health Services Grant in the amount of \$300,000 for shared environmental, public health inspector and nursing services. The Sudbury Public Health Director is the lead on the grant and will be coordinating efforts. We are appreciative of the additional support as COVID-19 continues to put strains on local health departments everywhere.

In December, Public Health Director Susan Rask retired after a long career serving municipalities, including ten years with Concord. In the fall, Public Health Agent Stan Sosnicki also retired after over 20 years working for the town. Both Susan and Stan will be missed for their institutional knowledge and professionalism. Casey Mellin has joined the department as the Assistant Public Health Director, and in December, the search began for a new Public Health Director.

HEALTH DIVISION

Susan Rask, MS, RS, Public Health Director (retired)
Stanley Sosnicki, CEHT, Assistant Public Health Director (retired)
Casey Mellin, Assistant Public Health Director (joined the staff in October 2021)
Gabrielle White, Public Health Inspector
Karen Byrne, Administrative Assistant

The Health Division enforces State statutes and regulations relative to the protection of public health, the control of disease, the promotion of sanitary living conditions, and the protection of the environment from damage and pollution. Environmental and sanitary codes enforced by the Health Division include: on-site wastewater (septic) systems, food establishments, swimming pools, bathing beaches, recreational camps, indoor ice skating rinks, housing, and lead paint. Administrative staff is responsible for the

administration of the Septic Betterment Loan Program, overseeing, in conjunction with the Finance Department, inter-municipal public health contracts with the Town of Lincoln, Weights and Measures with the Massachusetts Division of Standards, contracted services with Emerson Hospital Home Care (nursing services, influenza clinics), outside vendors for engineering and public health/food service services as well as several public health grants, the issuance of approximately 800 annual licenses/permits and routine office management. During the height of the pandemic, the Health Division transitioned to an online permitting process through the efforts of Public Health Inspector Gabrielle White, who was instrumental in getting this project off the ground and coordinating with the Town's consultant. Most of the Health Division's permits, over 40 different types, are now online and accessible to the public which proved helpful during limited public access to town offices thereby ensuring continuity of services.

COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 Pandemic continued to dominate Health Division staff time and resources throughout 2021.

The Health Division was responsible for relaying and providing guidance and support to residents, schools and many different business types regarding the ever-changing and extremely fluid COVID-19 Mandates issued by the State. Each industry had very specific guidance/mandates and staff spent hours educating the public, town staff, and local businesses to ensure that maximum adherence could be achieved as was possible. Although the mandates were issued by the State and/or Massachusetts Department of Public Health, local Boards of Health and Health Staff provided interpretation, developed guidance material, conducted educational outreach as well as enforcement for non-compliance. The sometimes daily changing guidance put a tremendous strain on both the staff and community as everyone did their collective best to maneuver through the guidelines and restrictions.

The Town has contracted with Emerson Hospital Home Care for nearly thirty years to provide routine nursing services for coordination and staffing of the

annual senior influenza vaccination clinics, telephone and home visits to patients, and investigation of reported cases of communicable diseases. As the COVID-19 Pandemic continued in 2021, it drained public health staff resources on many levels, but it also monopolized the majority of Public Health Nursing services' focus.

Therefore, in February 2021, a second and separate COVID-19 specific contract was drafted by the Health Division's Administrative Assistant and Finance Budget Administrator; this contract was funded with monies through the Federal CARES Act. This contract enabled Public Health Nurse Tricia McGean to utilize her expertise appropriately as the lead in the extensive case management, education, Covid Clinics, weekly coordination meetings with public school nurses and private school nurses to ensure continuity of information sharing and support of these vital members of the first responders during this ongoing pandemic. Ms. McGean provided and continues to provide extraordinary public health nursing services to the community and local (public and private) schools.

The newest COVID-19 variant (omicron) collided with the Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year holidays and the Health Division saw the largest increase in COVID-19 cases in the two years since the pandemic first began. The Board of Health issued a new mask mandate in late December as case numbers doubled from week to week, putting in place a public health measure to assist in reducing the spread in public buildings/venues.

COVID-19 Clinics

In January the Health Division obtained the first roll-out of Covid vaccine and held 4 clinics for First Responders and Emergency "Front Facing" Personnel in collaboration with the Town's Emergency Management Team, Police, Fire and EMT's. These early clinics serviced the communities of Concord, Carlisle, Lincoln, and Bedford in accordance with the State schedule for eligible demographics. In February 2021, additional vaccine slowly became available, and Health Division Staff coordinated 4 additional clinics for immunocompromised and senior populations in collaboration with the Council on Aging. At-home vaccinations were provided on an

as needed basis to those who were unable to attend a public clinic due to complicated health-issues.

Student COVID-19 Clinics

As eligibility factors changed, the Health Division was able to continue to host and coordinate COVID-19 Vaccination Clinics from July – September 2021 for High School students to ensure that students and school personnel could return to in-classroom learning with a higher degree of protection.

In early October through the end of the year, the Health Division Staff and Public Health Nurse Tricia McGean were able to coordinate with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and Yankee Bus Lines mobile vaccination clinics (Purple Health Vaccinators) to hold six additional COVID-19 vaccination clinics serving over 3,200 eligible elementary and middle school students.

Elementary school clinics were held in time for families to gather for the holidays with all eligible persons now having received at least 1 dose of the vaccine. Four additional clinics were then held. The largest clinics to date have served nearly 800 children per clinic. These clinics also offered booster shots to those additional members of the public who were eligible to receive vaccine boosters.

The Health Division in collaboration with Public Health Nurse Tricia McGean, Concord Public Schools, the Police and Fire Departments (EMT's included), the Council on Aging and support staff from other communities (Carlisle, Lincoln, and Bedford) set up and staffed in total 15 COVID-19 Vaccine Clinics in 2021.

Food Protection Program

On June 15 Governor Baker lifted all COVID-19 mandates allowing all businesses, restaurants and other facilities serving food to reopen and employees to return – unfortunately, MDPH and the State provided limited guidance on best practices to do so. The Health Division worked with all local restaurants, businesses, and recreational summer camps in adjusting to the "New Normal". Outdoor dining became a preferred alternative for patrons and many restaurants requested special consideration for this provision. At the end of June

2021 full-time public health inspections commenced for all of the establishments and recreational camps. In 2020 only 3 camps operated under COVID restriction and in 2021 there was 19.

Onsite Sewage Disposal and Building Review Program and Septic Betterment Program

Onsite wastewater construction continued at a steady pace throughout the year. The Assistant Public Health Director, with the assistance of outside engineering services, conducted multiple field inspections for installations of septic systems and reviewed construction plans for new/replacement systems. The Administrative staff assumed responsibility for the Title 5 Building Reviews (applications reviewed for new construction and/or renovations to homes) prior to the issuance of building permits in 2021 for both private and municipal sewer.

In 2021, Health Division Administrative Assistant Karen Byrne worked actively and closely with the Finance Director and Town Accountant to secure the remaining five-hundred fifty thousand dollars from the MWPAT. In 2009 Concord Town Meeting approved a loan/debt authorization for \$2,000,000 so that this program could continue to assist residents. She continues to work closely with local engineers, septic installers, and other Town departments to promote this program and will continue in 2022.

Bathing Beach Program, White Pond and Cyanobacteria

The Health Division continued its contract with G&L Laboratories to provide services for collection and analysis of bathing beach water samples. Four beaches were served by this program in 2021: Town of Concord Beach (White Pond Beach), Dover St. Property Owners Association, Silver Hill Association, and the Annursnac Hill Association. Health Division staff monitored results from Memorial Day to Labor Day and took applicable action for beach closures/no swimming as required. White Pond continued to have public health advisories posted due to visible cyanobacteria (blue-green algae) blooms which were intermittent throughout the summer and caused several closures. Working with the Natural Resources Division, the Town embarked on a pilot program

to remove harmful cyanobacteria blooms from the pond with an open-water, chemical free technology developed by Higgins Environmental Associates. Town departments are actively working to secure funding for specialized expertise/systems that would help treat/remove cyanobacteria from White Pond in 2022.

Staff Changes

After serving as its Assistant Public Health Director for nearly twenty-seven years, Stanley Sosnicki retired from public service. His institutional memory in all matters relating to housing, onsite wastewater and a multitude of other areas will be missed – his calm steady hand in working with hundreds of contractors and businesses over years has served the Town immensely.

And, after nearly ten years serving at the helm, Public Health Director Susan Rask retired in December. Ms. Rask worked with the Town and the Board of Health on a variety of sometimes controversial public health issues such as tobacco control, legalization of medical and recreational marijuana but none more challenging as the past two years when the COVID-19 pandemic hit, and local public health was pushed to the forefront in a way it has never been. Ms. Rask is commended for her efforts above and beyond expectations, and her ability to work cooperatively and collaboratively with the Health Division staff and many other town departments ensuring the continuity of operations provided by the Town and service to Concord residents during very trying times.

Casey Mellin joined the Health Division team in October as the new Assistant Public Health Director. At this writing, the position of Public Health Director is being actively recruited.

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

Edward Nardi, Chair
Sarah Grimwood
Gregory E. Higgins
Gary Kleiman
Nicholas Pappas

The Natural Resources Commission (NRC) and staff are responsible for the overall stewardship of the natural resources of the Town, and the establishment of Town environmental policy in conjunction with the Select Board and Town Meeting. The NRC administers the state Wetlands Protection Act (MGL Chapter 131, Section 40), the Rivers Protection Act (MGL Chapter 258 of the Acts of 1996) and accompanying regulations (310 CMR 10.00), and the Concord Wetlands Bylaw and Regulations. The NRC also plays an important role in open space planning and protection pursuant to its authority under the Conservation Commission Act (MGL Chapter 40 Section 8c).

Wetlands Protection Act

The majority of Commission and staff time is dedicated to administering and enforcing state and local wetland regulations. The NRC held 23 public meetings, which included review of 37 Notices of Intent (including one solely under the Concord Wetlands Bylaw) and 32 Requests for Determinations of Applicability, for a total of 69 new applications. Two Amendments were issued to previously approved projects, and two projects were issued Extension Permits. The NRC closed out many completed projects, issuing 25 Certificates of Compliance and three Partial Certificates of Compliance. Division staff reviewed 26 Administrative Approvals for very minor projects including limited tree and invasive species removal. Five Emergency Certificates were issued, including three for beaver related flooding and associated Sawmill Brook culvert repairs on Monument Street, one for beaver-related flooding at Mill Brook, and one for beaver-related flooding at Meriam's Corner. One Enforcement Order was issued for unpermitted work on Barnes Hill Road. The decision expected from DEP on the MBTA appeal filed last year was not issued.

Projects of interest reviewed by the NRC this year included the limited dredging project at Warner's Pond to improve the ecological health and recreational values of the pond, the Sawmill Brook culvert repair work on Monument Street, an ADA compliant trail and stormwater management improvements project at White Pond Beach, and construction of three new hangars at Massport.

NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISION

Delia R. J. Kaye, Natural Resources Director
Colleen M. Puzas, Natural Resources
Assistant Director
William J. Holden, Land Manager
Karen T. Bockoven, Administrative Assistant

Natural Resource Management

In addition to providing technical and administrative support to the Natural Resources Commission, Division staff are responsible for the stewardship of nearly 1,500 acres of Town conservation and other town-owned land (such as White Pond Reservation), maintaining over 37 miles of trails, and mowing 84 acres to maintain trails and open meadows. This year, we welcomed Will Holden to the newly created Land Manager position, who has hit the ground running in land stewardship, volunteer engagement, and implementation of the Tree Preservation Bylaw. Stewardship of conservation lands is made possible by the dozens of volunteers that participate in volunteer projects and events each year. Over 500 hours of volunteer time were contributed this year through various volunteer initiatives across Town. These initiatives consisted of larger volunteer efforts such as the annual town-wide Garlic Mustard Pull, smaller projects such as invasives vegetation removal, and trail building projects on conservation lands. Natural resources management also includes staff support to three NRC subcommittees, as well as coordinating with other local and regional stewardship initiatives.

Pollinator Meadow Management

The Division worked with community members on four recently established pollinator meadows at

Barretts Mill Farm, Cousins Field, Heywood Meadow, and West Concord Park totaling nearly 4,500 square feet, and established two more meadows at the Baker Avenue boat launch trail and Harrington Park, for an additional 2,000 square feet. Another meadow was seeded at the Department of Planning and Land Management offices, providing another 1,000 square feet of pollinator habitat.



Invasives Removal Project at Heywood Meadow

Old Calf Pasture Restoration

Division staff continued invasive species control oversight at Old Calf Pasture. Spot treatments of previously managed areas were again treated by Native Plant Trust, expanding areas of improved habitat for native flora and fauna, including the rare Britton's violet.

Grant Applications

Together with the Concord Housing Development Corporation and the Planning Division, staff submitted one application to the Community Preservation Committee for \$1,000,000 towards the acquisition cost of the 7 acre Assabet River Bluff land in West Concord. The collaborative effort will protect 6 acres of woodland along the river and provide one acre of land for future community housing which was favorably recommended by the CPC for 2022 Town Meeting approval.

Conservation Crew and Rangers

Kendra Fontannay joined Ranger Bill Brooks, and together they educated multiple visitors on Estabrook Trail, White Pond, Punkatasset, and other lands for compliance with posted rules and regulations. Elizabeth Field and Becca Solomon joined the

Division as the Conservation Crew this summer to perform trail maintenance, remove invasive vegetation, and conduct general maintenance on conservation lands throughout Town. The Crew continued hand pulling efforts to remove water chestnut from Macone Pond, Warner's Pond, and Hutchins Pond, and continued the cooperative effort with the Conservation Land Conservation Trust, Town of Lincoln, and OARS to remove water chestnut from Fairhaven Bay and the Sudbury River. Nearly six miles of trails were maintained through crew mowing, providing public access that otherwise would be difficult to navigate through brush and tall grass. A new sign making protocol was established this year, resulting in the production of 3 new property signs for Barrett's Mill, Old Calf Pasture, and Mattison Field.

Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA)

Division staff continued working with other towns, organizations, and individuals in the Sudbury, Assabet, and Concord Rivers (SuAsCo) watershed to develop strategic regional plans for invasive species management in the watershed, and to promote collaborative approaches to achieve these priorities.

Conservation Restriction Stewardship Committee

The Conservation Restriction Stewardship Committee continued to assist the Division with its land management responsibilities of more than 85 Conservation Restrictions. Committee members conducted site visits and completed eleven monitoring reports and one Baseline Documentation Report. The Committee also adopted a new and more efficient GIS data collection system. Members of the CRSC are Mary Ann Lippert (chair), Annemarie Altman, Richard Higgins, Neil Ryder, Arthur Schwope (secretary), Jane Wells, and Michelle Wiggins.

Heywood Meadow Stewardship Committee

The Heywood Meadow Stewardship Committee continued review of its Mission Statement and Goals and how best to evoke and preserve the Meadow's historic and agrarian past, while also protecting and improving the ecological health of its diverse ecosystems. The Committee also began to take a closer look at our 'other' parcels in addition to the open fields - the Mill Brook and its borders, the



Constructing New Sign for Mattison Field

Walden Street parcel, and Ford Park. Several projects were conducted at Heywood Meadow, including construction of the 75 foot length of dry-laid stone wall along Lexington Road and Heywood Street; invasive removal efforts targeted around Mill Brook to open up views; renovation of the three teak benches installed about 20 years ago, and the removal and replacement of the post and rope fence along Heywood Street. The Committee consists of nine members: Co-chairs Susan Clark and Joanne Gibson, clerk Sandy Smith and members Mary Clarke, Lola Chaisson, Stan Lucks, Bev Miller, Murray Nicolson, and Cris Van Dyke.

Trails Committee

Construction initiatives this year added two trails at the Old Rifle Range. A new trail that loops around high ground above Kennedy's Pond offers seasonal views of the pond, with a bench in a peaceful setting. A second trail along the hillside below Caterina Heights gives walkers an alternative to walking the main trail between Target #1 and the junction beyond Target #3. Both trails add alternatives to the straight out-and-back route previously available. A 10-foot-long gap in a bridge at White Pond was replaced to assure walkers comfortable access from the Sudbury entrance. At the West Concord Park entrance on Conant Street, the problem of plantings being trampled and ruined by bicycle cut through was corrected with installation of a post and rope fence that effectively directs users in from the street.

Being vigilant of trail needs and correcting obstructions to assure walkers' access is a

never-ending task handled by dedicated stewards and the Trail Committee members. The Committee was fortunate this year to welcome five new volunteers to help with the work. Additionally, seven trail stewards were professionally trained as chainsaw trail stewards, helping to ensure trails remain open year-round. Committee members include Spencer Borden, David Clark, Carlene Hempel, Bill Kemeza, Jonathan Keyes, Ken Miller, and Bob White (Chair).

Conservation Land Use Permits

A total of 20 permits were issued to various groups using Town conservation land for research projects, nature programs, and art installations.

Farming and Community Gardens

Agricultural Farming Agreements

The Division continues to work with local farmers to retain land in agriculture, overseeing 19 agreements over more than 220 acres of actively farmed land.

McGrath Farmstead

Barrett's Mill Farm completed their eighth season on the McGrath Farmstead and sixth season on the parcel at 41A Barretts Mill Rd. All crops grown on the farm were certified organic including vegetables, fruits and flowers grown in the fields as well and vegetables grown in their four high tunnels. Barrett's Mill Farm continued to operate a farm stand open to the public 5 days a week and a 245 member CSA. Vegetables were sold from mid-April until late November. Barrett's Mill Farm continued to provide weekly vegetable donations to the Boston Area Gleaners as well as reduced price memberships through the SNAP program. Additionally, two free CSA memberships were donated to Dignity in Asylum as well as one to Minute Man ARC. This season Barrett's Mill Farm installed solar powered automatic ventilation on three of their four high tunnels. The automation of the roll-up sides and gable shutters improved growing conditions inside the tunnels and increased irrigation efficiency. Another infrastructure improvement on the property this year was the addition of a harvest bucket storage shed to protect harvest buckets from contamination and create a more efficient wash station. The 2021 growing season was challenging due to weather extremes which

included a dry spring and very wet July. The high tunnels were particularly important under these challenging growing conditions as they provided protected growing environments for three of the most important crops for the farm stand and CSA: tomatoes, cucumbers, and sweet peppers. A highlight of the season was the increasingly popular pick-your-own flower field which was open to both members and the public for picking by the jar.

Thoreau Birthplace

Gaining Ground, a non-profit farm that grows food for hunger relief with the help of community volunteers, cultivates land at the Thoreau Birthplace and adjacent Massport land. In 2021, its 27th growing season, the farm donated over 98,000 pounds of organic produce and over 1,500 cut flower bouquets to 18 food pantries, shelters, emergency meal programs and schools in Concord, Lowell, Boston, and throughout the MetroWest. Gaining Ground now supports 1,200 food-insecure households each week during the growing season. As of 2021, there are five hoop houses, 10 caterpillar tunnels, and 14 hedgerows on the property in addition to a timber frame barn. Gaining Ground continues to take part in the New England tradition of maple sugaring in February and March, this year harvesting 175 buckets of sap and finishing 45 gallons of syrup to be donated. Typically farm staff work alongside 2,500 volunteers throughout the growing season, educating schools, corporate, religious and community groups, as well as individuals and families, about its hunger relief mission and organic, no-till farming methods.

Community Gardens

The long standing tradition of the organic community gardens continues to thrive under the helpful guidance of volunteer coordinators Terry Marzucco, Rebecca Sheehan Purcell, and Michelle Wiggins at the Hugh Cargill Community Garden, Dale and Sally Clutter, and India Rose at the East Quarter Farm Community Garden, Sabrina Haber at Cousins Community Garden, and Carol Aronson and Mark Del Guidice at Rogers Community Garden. Coordinators assign garden plots, coordinate annual meetings and cleanups, and offer guidance to gardeners to produce beautiful and bountiful harvests. New gardeners are always welcome!



Installing a Pollinator Meadow at Harrington Park

Cousins Field

The summer of 2021 was a successful growing season for Cousins Community Garden. Once again, the gardens provided members with a respite from the worries and restrictions of the ongoing pandemic. The thirty-five plots were all cultivated with several new gardeners welcomed to the garden. In the no-till area several gardeners started a pollinator garden to attract beneficial insects and birds. For the first time Cousins planted a garlic crop, which will hopefully become tradition. The raspberries continue to be incredibly productive, though yearly efforts are needed to control poison ivy in that part of the garden. In late September, the large, unwieldy compost pile was distributed into three large, heaped piles that will be easier to turn and manage. The hope is to be able to harvest organic compost in the coming year(s). In addition to these community efforts, individual gardeners once again grew a marvelous variety of vegetables and flowers, despite the strange and difficult weather this growing season: a dry, scorching May and June, followed by an unusually wet July and August. Despite that, anyone visiting the gardens found a peaceful, beautiful place to wander among a gorgeous mix of vegetables, herbs, flowers, birds, and insects.

East Quarter Farm

East Quarter Farm community garden had a productive 2021 season in spite of gardening challenges. Nine new gardeners joined, with twenty-nine families or individuals tending annual, no-till, and/or perennial plots. July brought abnormally high rainfall levels which made access

to the garden difficult and in general created soggy growing conditions. Deer visits were frequent and routine (in addition to the usual visitors like turkeys and rabbits) feasting on various produce including green bean leaves, beet greens, corn, and sunflower buds. While this phenomenon proved discouraging at first, many gardeners got clever in protecting their crops and shared strategies with each other. Flower beds were resplendent and profuse, and everyone enjoyed a nice harvest in the fall.

Hugh Cargill Community Garden

Concord's largest community garden has been providing local gardeners with plots of land on which to grow food for close to 50 years. It was a challenging growing season with the heavy rains of early July. The high water table is a blessing during droughts, but excess water this year meant many plots had standing water for days. Plants in perennial strips did well, but annuals in lower areas succumbed to the overly wet conditions. Deer pressure increased this year, with a new preference for tomato plants. Despite setbacks, most gardens produced quite a bounty. Nine new gardeners this year were welcomed bringing enthusiasm and great gardening skills. Eastern bluebirds and tree swallows raised young in nest boxes. Local farmer Bill Kenney continues to assist with plowing and harrowing on this land, farmed by his father before the HCCG was established in the 1970s. Photos of the gardens can be found on the HCCG website. <https://sites.google.com/view/hughcargillcommunitygarden/home>

Environmental and Educational Activities

The Division continues to sponsor the longstanding tradition of early morning Conservation Coffees on the first Tuesday morning of most months at 7:30 a.m. These lively and stimulating gatherings of citizens, conservation organization representatives, and federal, state, and local officials provide an interesting and effective forum to exchange information, ideas, and concerns about conservation and the environment.

The NRC continues to support Dr. Bryan Windmiller's research and head-starting efforts on the Blanding's turtle, a threatened species with a population at Great Meadows which he has studied in depth since 2003.

PLANNING BOARD

Burton Flint, Chair
Nathan Bosdet, Vice Chair
Kate McEneaney, Clerk
Kristen Ferguson
Linda Miller
Haley Orvedal
Andrew Boardman

Elizabeth Hughes, Town Planner
Nancy Hausherr, Administrative Assistant

The Planning Board's authority is contained in MGL Ch. 41 "Improved Methods of Municipal Planning" and MGL Ch. 40A "The Zoning Act". The Board is responsible for making rules and regulations relating to subdivision control, initiating Zoning Bylaws, holding public hearings on all Zoning Bylaws submitted to the Select Board, evaluating various developments through Site Plan Review, revising and updating the Comprehensive Long-Range Plan, and from time to time making studies of the resources and needs of the Town. Additional responsibilities are in the Town Bylaws and the Town Charter.

The Board met twenty-six times in 2021. Three of the meetings were hybrid (in-person and virtually), the rest were virtually. Meetings were recorded for broadcast on the Town's Minuteman Media Network MMN's YouTube channel. In addition to their regular meetings, a public hearing was held in May for Zoning Bylaw amendments considered at Annual Town Meeting; two public forums on the Thoreau Depot Business District were held in June and December; in July, members attended an executive session of a Select Board meeting on litigation and in November, members attended the Select Board focused meeting on Envision Concord: Bridge to 2030.

Allen Sayegh's term ended, and the Board welcomed new member, Andrew Boardman.

Residential development

Six "Approval Not Required" (ANR) plans were submitted to the Board for endorsement. Three plans approved changes of lot lines that did not

create additional lots. Three endorsed plans created a total of five new lots.

A review of the Definitive Subdivision Plan submitted by Quarry North Road LLC to allow the creation of six new lots on property in Concord at 48Y Fitchburg Turnpike but would be accessed from Sudbury was still ongoing at the end of 2021. The Applicant requested a continuance to April 2022.

In August, the Board held a public hearing and amended the Definitive Subdivision Plan Decision consistent with the Land Court's remand order of June 23, 2021, in Symes Development & Permitting LLC v. Concord Planning Board et al., 21MISC 000021 (HPS) for a sixteen-lot subdivision of land at 11B, 146B, 1442 Main Street, and 110 Highland Street. The Board also approved the modification of the Hosmer Meadow Definitive Subdivision Plan to allow a fifth lot (Lot 2A) to be added to McCall Lane.

Commercial, institutional, and other development
The Board granted Site Plan Approval to Concord Children's Center for a childcare center at 250 Old Bedford Road and to VOA Concord Assisted Living Inc., to increase exterior lighting fixtures on-site at 68 Commonwealth Ave. The Site Plan Review application filed by the Middlesex School, 1400 Lowell Road, in December for faculty housing will be reviewed in early 2022.

The Board made affirmative recommendations to the Zoning Board of Appeals for Special Permits for work within the floodplain at 245 Park Lane and a two-unit PRD at 365 Commonwealth Avenue and recommended that the Zoning Board of Appeals deny a Special Permit for an addition to a dwelling in the Groundwater Conservancy District at 5B Seymour Street.

The Board granted a Formula Business Special Permit to Eastern Insurance Group, LLC for a retail insurance agency at 1150 Main Street.

Zoning amendments and Town Meeting actions

The Board reviewed draft language for potential Zoning Bylaw amendments at several meetings throughout the year for 2021 and 2022 Annual Town Meetings. The Board submitted four Zoning

Bylaw Amendment warrant articles and an article to amend the Tree Preservation Bylaw (a general bylaw) that were passed at the 2021 Annual Town Meeting. These were Article 35 (Tree Preservation Bylaw Amendment), Article 36 (Floodplain Conservancy District); Article 37 (Table IV Minimum Parking – Seasonal Outdoor Seating Requirements); Article 38 (Two-family or Additional Dwelling Unit); and Article 39 (Earth Removal).

Thoreau Depot Business District Potential Zoning Bylaw Amendments

Since early 2020 and through 2021, the Board has worked with the Town Planner and Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) staff towards one of the Town's goals that emerged from Envision Concord: Bridge to 2030 to promote smart growth development in the Thoreau Depot Business District area by amending the Zoning Bylaw. Additionally, the Board drafted Design Guidelines for the TDB District. Two well-attended public forums were held, one in June and one in December. The Board received numerous public comments by those in attendance at the forums, as well as numerous emails and letters throughout the year. As 2021 ended, potential Zoning Bylaw amendments were being developed and refined for submission for the 2022 Annual Town Meeting Warrant.

Other Actions

Throughout the year, the Board:

- Developed goals and objectives for 2021-2022
- Elected officers and assigned liaisons for various Boards and Committees
- Discussed Green Zoning with the Sustainability Director
- Hosted an Affordable Housing Discussion with the Concord Housing Authority, Concord Housing Foundation, Concord Housing Development Corporation and Regional Housing Services Office staff.
- Gave input for NMI/Starmet Reuse Planning Committee Draft Report
- Approved the renaming of a portion of Keuka Road
- Made a recommendation to the Select Board re: M.G.L. 61A Notice of Intent to sell Parcel 2314, on Monument Street
- Adopted the West Concord Design Guideline

Preamble prepared by the West Concord Advisory Committee and the West Concord Junction Cultural District Committee

- Authorized the release of Lot 1 (24 McCall Lane)
- Discussed Neighborhood Conservation Districts Bylaws and the potential for an amendment to the Floor Area Ratio Bylaw
- Supported a potential Scenic Road Bylaw initiative by the Historical Commission for 2022 ATM

In addition, the Board recommends members to the West Concord Advisory Committee for nomination by the Select Board and nominates a member for the Community Preservation Committee and the Historic Districts Commission. Members of the Planning Board serve on the following regional committees: MAGIC (Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination) and HATS (Hanscom Area TownS) and participate on other Town Committees by providing liaisons to the Comprehensive Sustainable Energy Committee, West Concord Advisory Committee, Community Preservation Committee, and Climate Action Advisory Board.

developers and property owners as well as the Board when plans and concepts are proposed for development, renovation, circulation, etc. in West Concord. Village business owners and residents in and around the West Concord Village use the WCAC as a sounding board for ideas to communicate to Town administration as well as to pose questions they have. All members of the WCAC also have liaison responsibilities with other Town boards and committees and report back about issues related to the Village and its surrounding neighborhoods. This year WCAC collaborated with the West Concord Junction Cultural District to prepare a preamble for the West Concord Design Guidelines intended to better communicate the hopes for the West Concord Village. Additionally, committee members reviewed street improvement plans for Commonwealth Ave. prepared for Concord Public Works and conducted a “walk-about” West Concord to identify potential locations for pedestrian and bicyclist improvements, which has been compiled and posted on the WCAC web page. Discussions with Concord Public Works about these potential improvements are planned for spring 2022.

WEST CONCORD ADVISORY COMMITTEE (WCAC)

Amy Kaiser, Chair
John Cooley
Geoffrey Walton
Susan Mlodozeniec
Amy Robinson
Ann Sussman

Vacant: 1 full member and 2 Associate members

The West Concord Advisory Committee (WCAC), a subcommittee of the Planning Board comprised of seven regular and two associate members appointed by the Select Board, serves as a resource for the Planning Board by providing input to

WEST CONCORD JUNCTION CULTURAL DISTRICT COMMITTEE (WCJCDC)

Carolyn Bottum
Lisa Evans
Ed Feathers
Jennifer Hurley-Wales
Margot Kimball
Jennifer Montbach
Kate Yoder, Chair

The West Concord Junction Cultural District Committee (WCJCDC), appointed by the Select Board with seven regular members, serves as a planning group to provide more robust support for and recognition of the West Concord Junction Cultural District. The WCJCDC also seeks to illuminate the notion that art is an important economic engine that can strengthen West Concord businesses and serve as a magnet for visitors who want to shop and recreate here.

As more people were vaccinated in the Spring, people began to emerge from their homes to participate in physically distanced, reduced-risk activities. Members of the WCJCDC collaborated with local businesses and other groups such as the Green Thumbs, to create a Scavenger Hunt in local businesses advertised as “Spring into West Concord.” With activities for all ages available, families had the opportunity to explore businesses and the art scene in West Concord Junction over the weeklong event, which culminated in the unveiling of the 2nd ArtScramble mural.

While the second ArtScramble mural project had been delayed, the Village Art Room pivoted by creating at-home art kits that allowed residents/families in lockdown to continue painting tiles over the winter 2021 for the mural which celebrates local farms from the past and present and the Farm-to-Table restaurant movement in West Concord. The installation of the mural on the side of Saltbox Kitchen at the corner of Beharrell Street and Commonwealth Ave was celebrated in May. Information about the various farmers represented in the mural is found here: <https://villageartroom.com/local-farms-mural>.

The WCJCDC also worked with the West Concord Advisory Committee to prepare a preamble for the West Concord Design Guidelines that highlights the significance of West Concord Junction’s past in influencing its future. This document was presented to the Planning Board for adoption in September. After receiving grant funding from the Massachusetts Cultural Council to implement a marketing campaign that celebrates the creative, culinary, and commercial enterprises in West Concord, the WCJCDC produced and distributed a visually engaging brochure and map for West Concord Junction. The Committee also updated its logo for the West Concord Junction Cultural District that features the Depot and railroad junction found in Junction Park.

On September 25th, Porchfest 2021 was held on porches and front yards in West Concord and at the Harvey Wheeler Community Center parking lot. The day was gloriously sunny, and music filled the air!

PLANNING DIVISION

Marcia Rasmussen, Director of Planning
& Land Management
Elizabeth Hughes, Town Planner
Heather Gill, Senior Planner
Nancy Hausherr, Administrative Assistant
Heather Carey, Administrative Assistant

The Planning Division provides professional and administrative staff support to multiple standing boards and committees including: the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA), Planning Board, Historic Districts Commission (HDC), Historical Commission and Community Preservation Committee (CPC). Planning Division staff coordinated the town staff review of all development proposals submitted for regulatory approval to the HDC, ZBA and the Planning Board. Planning Division staff assisted the Community Preservation Committee with the required Community Preservation Act (CPA) Plan update and the CPA application and funding distribution processes. This year the Division continued to provide staff support to the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Advisory Committee (BFRTAC), the West Concord Advisory Committee (WCAC), a subcommittee of the Planning Board, as well as the Concord Center Cultural District Committee and West Concord Junction Cultural District Committee. Planning staff participated in the Battle Road Scenic Byway Task Force, the HOME Consortium and Regional Housing Services Office. The Division's agenda includes initiatives in open space protection, affordable housing production, traffic and transportation planning, economic development guidance, historic resources protection, public facilities planning, development regulation creation and sustainable practices.

Director Marcia Rasmussen continued to provide project oversight of the final construction of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Phase 2B, the bridge over Route 2, which is the final connection needed to go from Concord to Lowell and the design for the last ½ mile in Concord (from Powder Mill Road south to the Sudbury town line) that will be constructed as part of the Sudbury portion of the trail. She also attended meetings of the Transportation Advisory Committee, the Economic Vitality Committee, and

the Junction Village Open Space Task Force. She assumed management of the newly formed Economic Vitality and Tourism Division as a part of Planning & Land Management. Ms. Rasmussen worked closely with other town staff in preparing applications for funding from the MDOT Community Connections grant (for bicycle shelters and racks in West Concord) and the Shared Streets and Spaces grant programs (for traffic safety signals on Old Marlboro Road and a bike-share program), as well as overseeing six grant applications to the Community Preservation Committee.

Town Planner Elizabeth Hughes provided professional support to the Planning Board and the ZBA in addition to shepherding the plan review process for all development proposals submitted to these boards. Ms. Hughes worked closely with the Planning Board on the presentation of Zoning Bylaw amendments at the 2021 Annual Town Meeting and the development of three warrant articles for the 2022 Annual Town meeting. She continued to support the Planning Board and the consultant from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council in development of Zoning Bylaw amendments for encouraging mixed-use development in the Thoreau Depot Business District as identified in the 2018 Envision Concord Plan. Ms. Hughes continued her role as project manager, working with a consultant from the UMass Edward J. Collins, Jr. Center for Public Management, multiple Town departments and the selected vendor on the implementation of online permitting software, which was implemented by various Town departments throughout 2021 and will continue in 2022. She also continued to oversee the progress on the engineering and design of the Assabet River Bridge and Trail in West Concord.

Senior Planner Heather Gill provides professional support to the Historic Districts Commission (HDC), Community Preservation Committee (CPC) and Historical Commission. Ms. Gill supported the Historical Commission's review of 22 applications under the Demolition Review Bylaw; administration of the historic house marker program; and review of the proposed plans for Rt. 2A under the Section 106 federal review process. She coordinated the acceptance and review of 13 applications to the Community Preservation



The Junction Village Task Force on a site walk with the consulting designer

dealing with a range of questions and issues, as well as the boards and committees served by Division staff. As the COVID pandemic continued, Ms. Hausherr and Ms. Carey continued to post as much information as possible on current applications before the Planning Board, ZBA, and HDC and update the information and materials on the BFRTAC, CPC and WCAC pages. This allowed residents to stay engaged and was invaluable to citizens as well as board and committee members. Ms. Hausherr also provided initial administrative support to the newly created Economic Vitality & Tourism Division as it transitioned from the Recreation Department. Ms. Carey assisted with the graphic design of a new interpretive panel for Phase 2B of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, including the details needed for fabrication. With the help from a graphic designer, the Planning Division was excited to release a reformatted Zoning Bylaw.

Committee for CPA funding and conducted the annual CPA project status updates for all open/ongoing projects. Ms. Gill supported the Historic Districts Commission’s review of 82 new applications for Certificates of Appropriateness for alterations to buildings located within Concord’s six local historic districts. Ms. Gill assisted the Historical Commission in successfully amending the Demolition Review Bylaw to revise the definition of “historically significant building or structure”; change the date on which a property becomes subject to the bylaw to 50 years or older to better align with national and state criteria; and change the timeframe in which a demolition delay begins following a determination by the commission.

Administrative Assistants Nancy Hausherr and Heather Carey continued to provide exceptional support to the numerous residents and applicants

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

2020/2021 Town Meeting Funding Cycle – CPC Members

Tom Kearns, Chair [Select Board Appointee]
Peter Ward, Vice Chair [Select Board Appointee]
Burton Flint, Secretary [Planning Board Appointee]
Judy Zaunbrecher, Treasurer [Natural Resources Commission Appointee]
Hester Schnipper [Concord Housing Authority Appointee]
Paul Grasso [Recreation Commission Appointee]
Nancy Nelson [Historical Commission Appointee]
Diane Proctor [Select Board Appointee]
John Cratsley [Select Board Appointee]

The Community Preservation Committee (CPC) had a busy year in 2020/2021 with an increasingly competitive application process. The CPC recommended that \$1,769,891 in Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds be appropriated for projects involving community housing, historic preservation, open space, and recreation to the 2021 Annual Town Meeting. These funding recommendations were approved without alteration as noted below:

2021 Annual Town Meeting – Recommendations Approved

The CPC held informational meetings with potential applicants in August and September of 2020. The Committee received [15] new applications in October, requesting funds in excess of the funding available. On January 19, 2021, the CPC voted to recommend an allocation of \$1,769,891 in CPA funds to [15] projects, which were approved at the June 2021 Annual Town Meeting without alteration, as noted below:

Community Housing Projects:

- Town of Concord – Housing Production Plan Update - \$30,000 to update the 2015 Housing Production Plan.
- Town of Concord – Regional Housing Services Program - \$25,000 toward the Town's participation in the Regional Housing Services Office.
- Concord Housing Development Corporation – Affordable Housing Buydown - \$233,880 for

a Buydown Program to create or preserve at least one unit of affordable housing through the buy-down or conversion of existing market rate unrestricted housing, to restricted affordable housing.

Historic Preservation Projects:

- Saalfeld and Town of Concord – Emerson Field Flagpole - \$14,250 for the rehabilitation of the flagpole at Emerson Field.
- Concord Home for the Aged - 110 Walden Preservation Project Phase III - \$185,000 for roof replacement, fascia and gutter replacement, structural and masonry repairs and the repair and painting of all 62 windows.
- Concord Masonic Corporation – 58 Monument Square Roof Replacement and Historic Structures Report - \$107,261 for the removal of the existing slate roof, repairs, and replacement with a faux slate roof; as well as funding to complete a comprehensive Historic Structures Report on the building.
- Trustees of Parish Donations, First Parish Church – Repair, Stabilize, and Renovate Wright Tavern - \$260,000 for consultation services from preservation and engineering professionals; structural repairs in the basement; reinforcement of attic rafters and floor joists; support ridge beams in annex; repairs to chimney, removal of spalling brick, and repointing of foundation.

Open Space and Recreation Projects:

- Town of Concord NRC – Chamberlin Park Bridge Survey and Permitting - \$35,000 to conduct a survey around the bridge and walkway and obtain approval from the Natural Resources Commission to replace the structure, which is over 40 years old and nearing the end of its functional lifespan.
- Town of Concord NRC – Emerson Conservation Restriction - \$210,000 to purchase a conservation restriction on 0.68-acres of woods between the R.W. Emerson House and Heywood Meadow.
- Town of Concord – Wheeler-Harrington House and Land - \$20,000 to hire a professional facilitator to assist with public outreach in determining the future use and plans related to

the Wheeler-Harrington House and Harrington Park.

- Town of Concord – White Pond Beach Improvements - \$300,000 for modifications to the property including a new accessible pedestrian pathway from the parking lot to the beach; new steps; accessible parking; wood decking and a wheelchair mat to improve waterfront and restroom access; infiltration basins; drainage improvements and other stormwater improvements to the site.
- Town of Concord – Bruce Freeman Rail Trail - \$25,000 to provide additional landscaping, fencing, paving, and other amenities to enrich and enhance the visitor experience along the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail.
- Town of Concord – Warner’s Pond Dredging Project - \$250,000 towards the Warner’s Pond Dredging Project, which seeks to improve the ecological health and recreational opportunities at Warner’s Pond through a limited dredging operation.
- Town of Concord – Old Rifle Range Survey and Permitting - \$34,500 for survey, design and permitting services to improve a 0.25 mile section of the main trail through the Old Rifle Range that is seasonally impassable due to its very narrow width at the edge of a steep hill.

Administration:

- Staff and Technical Support - \$40,000 for administration of the CPA. Funding provides staff support, signage, legal and consulting services, public notices, copying, and other administrative expenses.

2021/2022 Town Meeting Funding Cycle – CPC

Members

- Diane Proctor, Chair [Select Board Appointee]
- Peter Ward, Vice Chair [Select Board Appointee]
- Burton Flint, Secretary [Planning Board Appointee]
- Nancy Nelson, Treasurer [Historical Commission Appointee]
- Sarah Grimwood [Natural Resources Commission Appointee]
- Charles Phillips [Concord Housing Authority Appointee]
- Paul Boehm [Recreation Commission Appointee]
- Tom Kearns [Select Board Appointee]
- John Cratsley [Select Board Appointee]

2022 Annual Town Meeting Recommendations - Pending

The CPC held informational meetings in June and August for potential applicants, receiving 13 new applications for the Committee’s consideration in September. As in previous years, the nearly \$2.6 million in CPA funds requested exceeded the funds available for distribution. The Committee met [10] times between September and January 2022, to meet with applicants and evaluate projects. On January 18, 2022, the CPC voted to recommend that \$2,153,741 in CPA funds be appropriated for 11 of 13 applications, which will be included in a warrant article for the upcoming 2022 Annual Town Meeting.

HISTORIC DISTRICTS COMMISSION

Commission Members:

Peter Nobile, Chair
Luis Berrizbeitia, Vice Chair
Nea Glenn, Secretary
Melinda Shumway
Paul Ware

Associate Commission Members:

Kate Chartener
Abigail Flanagan
Katharine Mast
Dennis Fiori

The HDC sponsored a warrant article to expand the Main Street Historic District to include 21 Thoreau Street and 18-31 Thoreau Street for consideration at the 2021 Annual Town Meeting, which was approved by a two-thirds majority vote.

Commission Member Peter Nobile served as Chair over the last year with Luis Berrizbeitia serving as Vice-Chair and Nea Glenn as Secretary. The Commission bid farewell to Nea Glenn, whose eight years of hard work, expertise, and contributions to the HDC were greatly appreciated. The Commission will be continuing its work to fill two vacant positions in 2022.

The following is a list of applications by category (a single application may involve several categories):

The Historic Districts Commission (HDC) is charged with “the preservation and protection of buildings, places and districts of historic or literary significance” within Concord’s six local historic districts - the American Mile, Barrett Farm, Church Street, Hubbardville, Main Street, and Monument Square/North Bridge. Concord’s Historic Districts Act (Chapter 345) was one of the first such Special Acts in Massachusetts when it was passed by the State Legislature in 1960, and over the intervening years the HDC has worked diligently to preserve the Town’s unique historical and architectural character by encouraging the retention of original building materials and the advancement of new elements that are in keeping with the character of each District.

As part of its mandate under the Historic Districts Act, the HDC regularly reviews applications for changes to exterior features which are visible from a public way or place and issues Certificates of Appropriateness for approval. In 2021, the HDC held 23 regularly scheduled public meetings at which 82 applications for Certificates of Appropriateness were reviewed. The Commission approved 76 Certificates. Two applications were denied, 4 were withdrawn, 2 were for extensions of existing Certificates, and 11 were for major modifications to previous approvals. The Commission also conducted 17 official site visits during the year.

Addition	6
Deck/Porch	13
Demolition	3
Doors	7
Dormers	2
Fencing	8
Garage	4
Garage Doors	5
Lighting	8
Mailbox	1
Materials Change	4
Modern Equipment	10
Paint Colors	12
Paving and Hardscaping	10
Pools	2
Reconstruction	10
Roofs/Gutters/ Chimneys/Vents	13
Sheds	1
Signage	14
Temporary Parking	1
Windows	19

HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Members:

Melissa Saalfield, Chair

Thomas Beardsley

Michael Capizzi

Robert Gross

Nancy Nelson

Associate Members:

Alan Bogosian

Rebecca Lemaitre

2021 was a productive year for the Concord Historical Commission (CHC). This year's projects include the following:

Demolition Review Permits

The CHC received twenty-two applications for Demolition Review in 2021. Seven of these structures were found to be Historically Significant and required a public hearing. At the public hearings, four structures were determined to be "Preferably Preserved." Demolition was delayed one year from the date of application for the garages at 325 Nashawtuc Road and the house at 111 Cottage Street. After further discussions with the applicant, the Commission agreed to waive the remainder of the delay period for 111 Cottage upon receipt of historic documentation. The delay period for the other two properties – 63 Davis Court and 1053 Main Street – will be delayed one year from the date of their hearing, reflecting the change in the demo delay bylaw adopted at the 2021 Town Meeting.

Demolition Review Bylaw Amendments

The 2021 Annual Town Meeting approved amendments to the Demolition Review Bylaw as proposed by the CHC, which included revising the definition of "historically significant building or structure"; changing the date on which a property becomes subject to the bylaw to 50 years or older to better align with national and state criteria; and, changing the timeframe in which a demolition delay begins following a determination by the Commission. The Attorney General's office approved the bylaw amendments and the new bylaw took effect on October 6, 2021. The Commission has

observed a significant increase in applications since the new bylaw took effect.

House Marker Program

The CHC reviewed and approved two historic house markers for buildings located at 70 Elm Street and 295 Barretts Mill Road. The Commission encourages homeowners who believe their home may qualify to inquire at the CHC webpage or seek help from Special Collections at the Concord Free Public Library.

State and National Register Program Reviews

The CHC reviewed MassDOT's plans to "resurface" Rt. 2A as part of its wider responsibilities concerning Section 106 Federal funding and other government-mandated reviews of proposed projects with potential impacts on local historic sites and structures. The Commission expressed strong concerns about the project objecting to the apparent lack of recognition for the historic nature of Route 2A which overlays a significant portion of the original Battle Road. Down this road, the British marched to Concord and returned to Boston, an action that led, ultimately, to the start of the Revolutionary War. At year's end the Commission remained frustrated with the lack of information provided and continued to request further communication with MassDOT about the project.

Scenic Roads Bylaw

In the fall, the Commission began consideration of the Scenic Roads Bylaw in Concord. This bylaw provides the town an additional opportunity to review those projects involving the repair, maintenance, reconstruction, or paving where stone walls are impacted or trees removed in the public right-of-way. The Commission hopes to submit a warrant article for the 2022 Annual Town Meeting.

BRUCE FREEMAN RAIL TRAIL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Richard Fahlander, Co-Chair
Nat Welch, Co-Chair
Deborah Adleman
Marybeth Barker
Adrienne Boardman
Tracy Hansen
Dorcas Miller
John Soden
Sam Stearns



Construction of Phase 2B bridge over Route 2 on the BFRT

The Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Advisory Committee advises the Select Board and Town Manager on the design, development, and long-term maintenance of the rail trail in Concord. The Committee works with other town committees and community organizations to ensure safe access for all users. Since its opening in September 2019, the rail trail has become a valued community asset. Users of all ages and abilities experience the natural beauty and historic nature of the West Concord route. Where trains once huffed and puffed, people now pedal, jog, walk, and wheel.

Construction highlights from 2021 include:

- The Route 2 bridge has been installed and trail construction continues with completion and opening scheduled for July 2022 at which time the Committee plans to acknowledge this milestone with a community celebration.
- The Town received a grant to install bike shelters and bike racks along the trail near the commuter rail station. Shelters and will be

installed in spring 2022.

- Pedestrian and bicyclist activated crossing signals were installed at Old Marlboro and Williams Road through the State's "Shared Streets and Spaces" program. This project also includes a bicycle-share program that will be implemented in April 2022.
- Community Preservation Act funding supported some limited trail improvements including plantings, signs, and design for a viewing location at the Prison Cemetery.
- Preparation of final construction plans for the last half-mile of the trail in Concord is underway, from Powder Mill Road to the Sudbury town line
- Construction of the last half-mile section of the BFRT in Concord will be combined with the Sudbury section as that project moves forward toward construction and is expected to begin in spring 2023.

Junction Park Safety

In November, the Select Board requested the Committee address potential conflicts among users (trail walkers/riders, park users, commuters) in Junction Park that have been elevated by residents. Of particular concern is the anticipated increase in trail volume resulting with the opening of the Route 2 bridge in summer 2022. The BFRTAC will conduct a community wide stakeholder process in the spring of 2022 then will make both short-term and long-term recommendations that ensure safety while maintaining the park's character.

Fencing Along the Last Half-Mile

Over several years, the Committee worked closely with abutters and the White Pond Advisory Committee to recommend installation of a decorative six-foot tall fence along the trail at the White Pond and a wood rail fence installed along the westerly side of the paved path. After reviewing the Town's plans for this last half-mile, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MDOT) determined that fencing along the trail "can only be installed for the safety of the trail users", and, that MDOT is "not in a position to allow fences and gates in areas that are not a safety concern and allow for the desegregation of public lands for private benefit". To continue to move the project forward in coordination with Sudbury, these

elements were removed from the plan. At the same time, residents and the White Pond Advisory Committee have contacted the Select Board with their concerns and the need to protect the fragile White Pond ecology.

Trail Count

In May the Committee conducted the first official trail count of users. At three locations in Concord (and two in Acton), 28 volunteers collected data for a total of 72 hours over four days. The data show that usage by walkers/runners and cyclists was almost evenly split. Using national models for rail trail usage that take a variety of factors into account, the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization estimated average annual usage of the trail at 143,000 trips per year. The Committee will be doing a second census benchmark in May 2022 before the Route 2 bridge opens and another in the Fall to assess the impact of this new connection.

Prison Cemetery

After a site walk in October with representatives from the State Department of Corrections, the Concord Historical Commission, Concord Prison Outreach, and BFRTAC Committee co-chairs, there is support for construction of a commemorative site at the Concord Reformatory cemetery. Included will be an accessible trail, informational panel, and seating. This effort builds upon the well-received historic and interpretive panels that have already been installed along the trail and recognizes a unique chapter in the history of the prison.

Committee Membership

This year also saw changes in the Committee membership. Carole Steele retired from the committee after many years of valuable service. The committee welcomed new members Deborah Adleman, Marybeth Barker, Tracy Hansen, and Sam Stearns and appreciates their commitment to community service.

Trail Construction History/Timetable

The Bruce Freeman Rail Trail is expected to become a 25-mile-long rail trail through the communities of Lowell, Chelmsford, Westford, Carlisle, Acton, Concord, Sudbury, and Framingham. The accessible trail is open to non-motorized uses such as cycling, jogging, walking, rollerblading, and skiing. The trail

honors the memory of Bruce N. Freeman, a State Representative from Chelmsford and early advocate for the development of the rail trail.

Phase 1 - Lowell, Chelmsford, Westford - 6.9 miles. Opened in 2009.

Phase 2A – Westford, Carlisle, Acton - 4.9 miles. Opened in April 2018.

Phase 2B – Route 2 Bridge. Construction began June 2020. Expected completion in July 2022.

Phase 2C – Concord (Commonwealth Avenue to Powdermill Road) – 2.5 miles and formally opened on September 27, 2019.

Phase 2D - Powder Mill Road to Route 20 in Sudbury - 0.5 mile in Concord/4.4 miles in Sudbury. Plans for this portion of the trail are near completion with construction expected to begin in spring 2023.

Phase 3 - Sudbury finalized the purchase of 1.4 miles of CSX rail corridor from just north of Route 20 to the Framingham line. This will ensure the Town's control of the corridor. Framingham is negotiating for the purchase of the remaining 3.2 miles of the CSX corridor in that municipality.

CONCORD LAND CONSERVATION TRUST

Concord Land Conservation Trust Trustees:

Polly Reeve, Chair
John M. Stevens, Jr.
Jeff Wieand, Treasurer
Joan D. Ferguson
Lynn G. Huggins, Secretary
Frederic H. Mulligan
Jonathan M. Keyes
Gordon H. Shaw, Trustee Emeritus

Concord Open Land Foundation Directors:

Thomas C. Tremblay, President
F. Robert Parker, Treasurer
Lynn G. Huggins, Secretary
John G. Bemis
Nancy A. Nelson

The Concord Land Conservation Trust is a tax exempt, 501(c)(3) charitable organization established in 1959. Membership and the properties owned by the Land Trust are open to all. The Land Trust's mission is to conserve the natural resources of Concord and the town's traditional landscape of woods, meadows and fields. Its programs complement other conservation efforts of the town, state and national governments as well as other nonprofit organizations. The Land Trust works closely with its affiliate, the Concord Open Land Foundation.

A major accomplishment of the year was hiring our new executive director, Jane Gruba-Chevalier, who joined us in July. As the Land Trust's only employee, Jane is critical to our successful operations and we are delighted to have her on board. Jane brings with her more than twenty-five years of experience in the nonprofit sector. Most recently, she was director of outreach for the Lincoln Land Conservation Trust. She is a member of the Native Pollination Systems Task Force of the MetroWest Conservation Alliance, and has already put her expertise in this area to work for the Land Trust as we plan how to manage our fields to support at-risk pollinator populations. Her deep experience in managing volunteers, overseeing day-to-day business operations, and engaging members and residents is a tremendous asset for the Land Trust.

The Land Trust continued its active stewardship of the more than 1000 acres of protected land in our care. In the Wright Woods at the Fairhaven Overlook, with assistance from Parterre Ecological and volunteers, we planted 123 native trees and shrubs this past fall in a previously cleared area. The new plantings are adapted to drier soils and a changing climate, and they include white and black oaks, pignut hickories, hazelnuts and witch-hazels. This reforestation effort is part of the Land Trust's work to return the former house site of Helen Robinson Wright, the principal donor of the Wright Woods property, to a more natural state. Controlling invasive plants is an ongoing challenge on Land Trust properties and throughout Concord. The Land Trust prioritizes these efforts according to the ecologic value of the property being threatened; to this end, licensed contractors were retained to continue removing glossy buckthorn (*Frangula alnus*) along the wet edges of Well Meadow in Wright Woods. We also worked to control invasive plants in the Brooks-Hudson Meadow and the Ferguson Land this past summer, and in the fall hired contractors to remove common reed (*Phragmites australis*) from the Bigelow Woods along Route 2. The Land Trust also continued our efforts to manage black swallowwort (*Cynanchum louiseae*) and porcelain-berry (*Ampelopsis brevipedunculata*) at Corey Meadow and Thornton Woods respectively, and volunteers hand-pulled water chestnut from the Sudbury River as part of our ongoing campaign to prevent this aggressive aquatic plant from taking over Fairhaven Bay and the river. Finally, the view of Corey Meadow was opened up by removing trees, shrubs and invasive plants at the front of the agricultural field. The Land Trust's growing corps of Trail Stewards is essential to our ability to monitor and care for our land. Now numbering more than a dozen, these wonderful volunteers are our "eyes and ears," letting us know when a tree has fallen across a trail, when beaver activity is flooding an area, or about the general condition of the property and trail system. Trail Stewards reflect a diverse range of age, experience and geographic location within Concord; they are invaluable in helping us protect the conservation values of our lands and maintain the recreational benefits to trail users.

During the year, a number of local partner

organizations continued to host their outdoor programs on Land Trust properties. These included afterschool programming and art installations through Umbrella Arts, outings by Scout troops, and a historical walking tour led by the Concord Museum.

The Land Trust supports agricultural production on more than 100 acres of land. It was a difficult year for farming; record rainfall and wet field conditions sullied the sweet corn crops at the Kazmaier Land, Miller Farm and across the state. Hay production at Hartwell Meadow still proceeded. The Corey-Bourquin Field, which is also typically hayed, was planted with a bean crop this summer to help fix the nitrogen in the soils and the yield was successful. The field has been re-seeded for hay production to continue in 2022.

The Land Trust is governed by a volunteer board and our operations are supported almost exclusively by annual membership donations. The Land Trust extends immense gratitude to the many residents of Concord who have been so generous in donating land, conservation restrictions on land, and the funds necessary to acquire and maintain conservation land. As one of the oldest local land trusts in the country, we are proud and grateful that for so long Concord has placed such a high value on maintaining a balance of land uses characteristic of the traditions of a New England town. The COVID pandemic has made many of us newly and deeply appreciative of the legacy of natural, open lands within our town that have been preserved over the years. The Land Trust is committed to continuing this tradition by protecting and stewarding these special places, for Concord residents and all to enjoy now and for many years to come.

Concord Land Conservation Trust
Statements of Financial Position
September 30, 2021 and 2020

	2021	2020
Assets		
Current assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 98,512	\$ 154,469
Investments	3,823,890	3,061,314
Promises to give - net - current	-	11,500
Prepaid expenses	4,134	4,383
Total current assets	3,926,536	3,231,666
Non-current assets		
Land - held as open space	30,644,903	29,370,475
Website costs	7,778	17,111
Deposits	600	600
Total non-current assets	30,653,281	29,388,186
Total assets	\$ 34,579,817	\$ 32,619,852
Liabilities and Net Assets		
Current liabilities		
Accrued expenses	\$ 33,116	\$ 15,104
Accrued payroll	1,207	1,070
Total current liabilities	34,323	16,174
Net assets		
Without donor restrictions		
Undesignated net assets	4,606,600	2,667,079
Board-designated net assets	10,000	10,000
Total net assets without donor restrictions	4,616,600	2,677,079
With donor restrictions	29,928,894	29,926,599
Total net assets	34,545,494	32,603,678
Total liabilities and net assets	\$ 34,579,817	\$ 32,619,852

Concord Land Conservation Trust
Statements of Activities
For the Years Ended September 30, 2021 and 2020

	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>
Revenue and Support		
Land contributions	\$1,257,000	\$ -
Cash contributions	127,207	71,211
Investment income	572,498	170,755
Membership dues	171,878	144,595
Rental income	10,061	10,061
Trail guide fees	-	10
Total revenue and support	<u>2,138,644</u>	<u>403,632</u>
Expenses		
<u>Program Services</u>		
Salaries and wages	21,366	35,238
Property maintenance	59,078	33,510
Office rent and utilities	2,595	5,070
Insurance	-	6,033
Printing and postage	8,732	2,387
Office supplies and services	649	639
Payroll taxes	1,812	2,747
Professional fees	9,995	3,830
Donations	-	2,500
Telephone	-	962
Education studies	1,000	1,200
State filing fees, permits and other taxes	515	1,015
Organizational dues	600	600
Annual meeting and events	-	230
Conference fees and training	375	-
<u>Supporting Services</u>		
Salaries and wages	16,395	21,000
Property maintenance	-	50
Accounting and payroll services	16,756	19,520
Office rent and utilities	5,190	3,803
Amortization	9,333	9,333
Real estate taxes and other taxes	8,723	8,239
Insurance	7,048	1,203
Printing and postage	370	1,243
Office supplies and services	2,368	2,178
Payroll taxes	1,391	1,637

Telephone	2,270	721
State filing fees, permits and other taxes	250	151
Bank and credit card interest and fees	761	522
Annual meeting and events	150	-
Fundraising		
Salaries and wages	8,775	7,000
Office rent and utilities	2,595	1,268
Printing and postage	4,827	2,314
Office supplies and services	1,647	2,600
Payroll taxes	748	546
Professional fees	413	-
Telephone	-	240
Bank and credit card interest and fees	101	-
Total expenses	196,828	179,529
Change in net assets	1,941,816	224,103
Net assets at beginning of year	32,603,678	32,379,575
Net assets at end of year	\$ 34,545,494	\$ 32,603,678

AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

The Agriculture (Ag) Committee provides a forum for matters of interest to farmers in Concord and reports to the Select Board on how best to support farming in Concord. The Ag Committee is comprised of 5 members, 3 of whom are actively engaged in the business of farming and 2 community members who have an active interest in farming referred to as “friends of farming”. The committee also has 2 associate members. Lise Holdorf chaired the Committee in 2021 until Liza Bemis and Melissa Maxwell were elected as co-chairs in July.

Weather extremes created challenging growing conditions for Concord farmers in 2021. There was a very dry spring requiring irrigation, followed by unseasonably wet and cool conditions in July. The wet summer slowed crop growth and provided optimal conditions for disease and rot.

2021 continued to challenge Concord farmers with supply chain disruptions, from building and machinery materials to seeds, but after a full year of

practice, pivoting and revising plans has become the norm. High demand for local produce and seedlings continued with Concord farms still reporting record level interest for their products throughout the season. The past two years of supply chain disruptions has shown how critical a robust local food system is to the health and vitality of the community.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic in 2021 the Ag Committee created a video in place of the usual Spring Forum event, with similar goals of outreach and education on behalf of Concord farms. The video was produced by Minuteman Media and entitled “Concord’s Farms: Open for the Season” featuring 4 Concord farms and their spring preparations. The video is available on Minuteman Media’s YouTube site.

The Ag Committee was able to return to an in-person Ag Day Farmer’s Market in September of 2021. Attendance and spirits were high during the four-hour market on Main Street which operated smoothly thanks to the Concord Police and Town offices coordination. Eight farms and 13 non-profits



were in attendance and the Ag Committee veggie car race and veggie decoration activities were very popular. Farms reported selling more produce than ever despite a more difficult growing season and the nonprofit organizations with tables reported a high level of engagement at the event.

Planning for a spring forum event for 2022 is underway!

CONCORD HOUSING AUTHORITY

Board of Commissioners
Richard Eifler, Chair
Stephanie Chrobak, Vice-Chair
Stephan Bader, Treasurer
Edward Larner, Vice-Chair
Charles Phillips, Member

The primary mission of the Concord Housing Authority (CHA) is to develop and administer an adequate supply of rental housing for the elderly, disabled, and families of low and moderate income in Concord. Our goal is to provide decent, safe and sanitary housing opportunities to improve the quality of life for these individuals and families as well as promote economic self-sufficiency and long term stability. The goals of the CHA are consistent with the Town's historical commitment to foster a heterogeneous and integrated community.

The CHA was established in 1961 under M.G.L. Section 121.B as a local municipal agency for

providing low income housing and is subject to state, federal and local regulations. The CHA is governed by a Board of Commissioners, four of whom are locally elected and one of whom is a state Appointee. All programs are dependent on state, federal, and vital local sources of funding and support.

The CHA operates 228 subsidized units in both Public Housing and Section 8 programs and currently serves more than 375 people. Our State/Federal family and elderly units are scattered throughout the Town in over 20 locations. Tenant turnover rates for CHA units remain low and waiting lists for available units remains high, translating into lengthy times for the next unit availability.

In June 2021, the CHA hired Jennifer Polito as their new Executive Director to replace Marianne Nelson who retired after many years of service.

In September 2021, the CHA was approved for the disposition of our 18 federal public housing dwelling units. By repositioning, our residents will share the same tenant eligibility requirements, protections, and computations but we will be moving into a more stable financial platform, and because of this stability, will provide a more reliable income stream for operations and maintenance.

In September 2021 a large bathroom project began at Everett Gardens Expansion. The CHA also has plans to complete siding work at a few locations as well as rehab a family handicapped unit on Thoreau St.

Capital Improvements this year have included:

- Storm Doors at Bedford Ct.
- Bathroom Renovation at Everett Gardens Expansion

The CHA is also still moving forward looking for viable options to build a 2 bedroom unit on Commonwealth Ave.

CONCORD HOUSING FOUNDATION

Frank (Rich) Feeley, President
Nancy McJennett, Treasurer
Barbara Powell, Clerk
Steve Carr
Holly Darzen
Lise Holdorf
Terry Rothermel
Win Wilbur

The Concord Housing Foundation (CHF) is a private, non-profit volunteer organization dedicated to making Concord an affordable place to live for citizens with a variety of incomes. To this end, CHF raises money to build, purchase or upgrade affordable homes, and urges actions at the local and State level which can improve the availability of affordable homes in Concord.

Most recently, funds raised by the Foundation were used in 2020 to supplement Town funding and purchase a home at 930 Main Street that is being turned into two owner-occupied affordable homes by Habitat for Humanity. To increase the supply of funds for affordable housing, CHF developed a proposal to increase the building permit fee and supported a small transfer fee on high end real estate sales. These initiatives have now been passed by Town Meeting. Similar transfer fees have been passed in several other Massachusetts municipalities, but implementation requires action by the State legislature. In October, two CHF Board members spoke at a Legislative hearing in favor of a bill permitting municipalities to implement such a transfer fee.

At the local level, the Foundation encourages planning and zoning actions that will facilitate affordable housing. This includes support for appropriations from the Community Preservation Act account and the Town's free cash. CHF members have supported zoning amendments making it easier to build auxiliary dwelling units, and to build two family homes near the centers of Concord and West Concord, both new enacted by the Town. Proposed changes in zoning regulations for the Thoreau Depot district would also encourage the construction of smaller and more

affordable units as part of any future redevelopment in this business district.

CHF tracks plans for the use of sites which the Town owns or may acquire so that affordable housing is considered in planning for the use of this land. Most recently, the Foundation supported the proposed purchase of land on the Assabet Bluffs in West Concord for both conservation and affordable housing.

The Foundation maintains a web site that provides information on affordable housing initiatives (<https://concordhousingfoundation.org/>), and twice yearly publishes a Newsletter reporting activities by the Foundation, the Concord Housing Development Corporation and the Concord Housing Authority. Future editions will also include an update from the new Affordable Housing Trust.

CONCORD HOUSING DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Lee Smith, President
Peter Lowitt, Vice President
James Burns, Treasurer
Douglas Bacon
Yannis Tsitsas

The Concord Housing Development Corporation (CHDC) is a non-profit corporation established by a special act of the Massachusetts Legislature in August, 2006, as a successor entity to the Concord Housing Trust, and the Concord Affordable Housing Committee before that.

All Board members are appointed by the Select Board, and are volunteers and Concord residents. The CHDC works under the charge developed by the Concord Select Board to investigate and implement alternatives for the provision of affordable housing for persons of low, moderate and middle income and others whose needs may be identified from time to time in the Town. The

corporation works closely with all Town boards, Committees and Departments to support the Town's goal of housing diversity.

Over the last 15 years, the CHDC has made great strides in the pursuit of its mission. The CHDC has constructed and sold eight income-restricted units in the Lalli Woods mixed income housing development, contributed funds to create a lower level of affordability for several new housing units, allowing them to be counted on the town's subsidized housing inventory (SHI), and preserved the affordable housing restrictions on several units at Emerson Annex by purchasing, renovating and reselling the units.

In 2019, the CHDC, in partnership with the Town and Concord Housing Foundation, purchased a single family home in Concord for conversion to a duplex of affordable housing as a Habitat for Humanity project. Despite the pandemic, the project moved forward in 2020 and 2021, with a permit issued by the Planning Board for a duplex, DHCD approval and completion of the marketing and lottery, and recording of the affordable housing restriction through a regulatory agreement. The homes are currently well into construction, with the help of many volunteers and the two families purchasing the homes contributing their own sweat equity. This duplex home will be Habitat for Humanity of Greater Lowell's 50th and 51st homes and occupancy is expected in 2022. One family currently rents in Concord and are thrilled to have been chosen as homeowners for the upstairs, 3-bedroom unit of this duplex home, allowing them to remain in Concord near their community of family and friends. The other family selected to purchase the downstairs, 2-bedroom unit, currently lives in Bedford and are looking forward to joining the Concord community.

The CHDC has also continued its Small Grants Program in 2021, which helps low to moderate-income residents of Concord make repairs to their homes to improve health and safety. The Small Grant Program has two grant cycles annually, with a maximum grant amount of \$4,000. The grants are awarded based on the health and safety justifications of the requests, subject to availability of funds which has become an increasing challenge.

Over the life of the program, the CHDC has awarded 57 grants for \$173,850, 44% to senior residents. Further information regarding the CHDC Small Grant Program is available on the Town website or from the Town Planning Office. The Small Grant Program has no current funding source, and is in jeopardy of having to pause until additional funds become available to CHDC.

The CHDC continues on with its Junction Village development initiative, the 12-acre property on Winthrop Street, known as Christopher Heights of Concord at Junction Village. The Commonwealth gave the property to the CHDC specifically for affordable housing and open space purposes. The project is a residential development of 83 units of permanently restricted, affordable, assisted living, developed and managed by the Grantham Group, and an open space passive recreation area to be protected by a conservation restriction. The Commonwealth awarded low income housing tax credits and subsidies to the developer in April, 2020. In 2021, the Junction Village Open Space Task Force prepared conceptual designs for the park area – both the Conservation Restriction area adjacent to the Assabet River, and the 'triangle' on the south side of the property towards Route 2. This design effort was performed by Places, Inc., and funded by the CHDC with previously appropriated Community Preservation Act Funds. The residential portion of the development is pending, awaiting confirmation of all financing sources, and additional funding required as the result of the pandemic-induced significant spike in construction costs.

In late 2021, the CHDC was approached by the Town and the open space organizations of Sudbury Valley Trustees and the Concord Land Conservation Trust to evaluate a 7+ acre property on Upland and Old Marlboro Road adjacent to the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail as a rare opportunity to purchase the land for both housing and open space purposes, known as Assabet River Bluff. As of this writing, this is a significant and very active project having strong momentum and optimistic chances of success. The current plan is to divide the land into 2 parcels: a one-acre parcel for 5 units of affordable housing, 3 new units and an improvement of an existing 2 family house and the remaining 6+ acres to be

CONCORD MUNICIPAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST

Keith Bergman, Chair
Linda Escobedo, Vice-Chair
Michael Lawson, Clerk
Frank “Rich” Feeley
Stephen Crane

protected for open space and conservation purposes. A Memorandum of Understanding has been executed by the Concord Municipal Affordable Housing Trust, the Concord Housing Development Corporation, the Concord Land Conservation Trust, Sudbury Valley Trustees and the Concord Housing Foundation which outlines the agreement between the stakeholders. Community Preservation Funds have been requested and will be presented at the 2022 Annual Town Meeting for approval. This project demonstrates how property can successfully be acquired and used for both housing and protection of valuable open space in cooperation between stakeholders and the residents.

The CHDC is an important part of Concord’s housing “family”, collaborating with the Concord Housing Authority, the Concord Housing Foundation and the newly constituted Concord Municipal Affordable Housing Trust to promote affordable housing in Concord and increase housing diversity. Concord remains an increasingly expensive town in which to live, and the need for affordable housing remains constant. We will continue to seek out and support responsible additions to the Town’s affordable housing inventory to help maintain and increase our housing choice diversity.

The CHDC is well positioned to advance Concord’s housing agenda, and looks forward to new initiatives and activities.

The Board typically meets monthly with meeting agendas and minutes posted on the Town’s website. Interested residents are welcome to attend meetings and get a sense of how the Board operates. The Board is also currently seeking at least two new members.

The Concord Municipal Affordable Housing Trust, established by town meeting’s acceptance of an enabling state statute in 2019 and adoption of a bylaw in 2020, began its work in 2021. The Trust complements the Town’s existing affordable housing efforts, entities and programs, and-- with sustained funding sources-- can act quickly when affordable housing opportunities arise, without having to wait for votes of town meeting to fund particular projects or (with the Select Board’s approval) to acquire property.

Pursuant to the Town Bylaw, the Trust’s purpose is to “provide for the preservation and creation of affordable housing in the Town of Concord for the benefit of low and moderate income households and for the funding of community housing” as defined in the Community Preservation Act. The Trustees are authorized to develop policy goals and statements, consistent with the Town’s adopted housing goals, and subject to approval by the Select Board, to serve as guidelines for the Trust. Select Board approval is also needed for the Trust to borrow money; mortgage or pledge trust assets; purchase, accept, sell, lease, exchange, transfer, abandon, or convey interest in real, personal, or mixed property; or to amend the Trust document.

Appointments and Organization. The Select Board made initial appointments to the Concord Municipal Affordable Housing Trust Board of Trustees on May 2, 2021, including one member of the Select Board and the Town Manager. The Town called a first meeting of the Trustees for September 16, 2021, at which Keith Bergman was elected as chair, Linda Escobedo as vice chair, and Michael Lawson as clerk. On October 4, 2021, the Select Board voted to establish the number of Trustees at five.

Declaration of Trust

On November 8, 2021, the Trustees approved the form of a Declaration of Trust document prepared by Town Counsel, which was recorded on November 19, 2021 at the Middlesex South Registry of Deeds at Book 79188, Page 390.

Transfer of Funds to the Trust. A gift of \$25,000 from Eric Green and Carmin Reiss, which the Select Board voted to accept on January 4, 2021, has been transferred to the Trust, and the Trustees are thankful for this donation.

On December 6, 2021, the Select Board voted to transfer to the Trust oversight of the 2019, 2020, and 2021 annual town meeting articles for affordable housing totaling \$1.5 million, “subject to any funding commitments that may have been made by the Select Board or Town Manager prior to this vote.” Those prior commitments, all approved by the Select Board, were:

- \$150,000 to the Concord Housing Development Corporation, Concord Housing Foundation and Habitat for Humanity to assist in the purchase of 2 affordable units at 930 Main Street, approved on July 1, 2019;
- \$50,000 to the Concord Housing Authority for design feasibility for 1 additional affordable unit at 369 Commonwealth Avenue (Gerow property), approved on July 29, 2019;
- \$95,000 to the Town of Concord/ Regional Housing Services Office to preserve 1 affordable unit at Emerson Annex on Stow Street, approved on February 22, 2021; and
- \$570,000 to the Concord Housing Development Corporation to buydown and create 1 affordable unit at 100 Elm Brook, approved on June 1, 2021 but decommitted by vote of the Select Board on January 3, 2022 at the request of CHDC and the property owner.

Trust approves \$650,000 towards Assabet River Bluff Land Acquisition. On December 16, 2021 and January 6, 2022, the Trust committed a total of \$650,000 requested by the Concord Housing Development Corporation as part of the 6.7 acre Assabet River Bluff land acquisition project totaling \$2.9 million. One million is needed for 0.9 acres for affordable housing and \$1.9 million for 5.8 acres of open space. The affordable housing component

includes an existing two-family structure and vacant land on which three more units could be built, for a total of 5 affordable units. The Trust’s funding includes \$50,000 towards a refundable deposit paid to the seller in January 2022 to preserve the ability to purchase the property. If this project proceeds, additional funding would be needed for construction.

Additional Funds for the Trust

At the Trust’s request, the Select Board has inserted a placeholder article for annual funding for the Trust on the warrant for the 2022 Town Meeting, understanding that free cash may not be a source the Trust can rely on year in and year out. Further, since the Town’s two home rule petitions to fund the Trust long term—S.2437 for a real estate transfer fee and S.2439 for a building permit surcharge-- have not been approved by the state legislature, the Trustees are exploring other potential alternative funding sources. Those might include an annual town meeting appropriation, mitigation funds from housing developers, donations to the Trust, and/or use of funds from the state and federal government, including ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act of 2021) funding. Any reuse of surplus Town property for affordable housing purposes would also help reduce the cost of development in Concord.

Developing Proposed Guidelines for the Trust

To develop an initial set of proposed guidelines for the Trust for approval by the Select Board, the Trustees are reviewing the Town’s adopted housing goals, from the 2018 Envision Concord housing plan element, 2015 Housing Production Plan and the Community Preservation Committee’s 2021 specific use criteria for community housing projects, and have met jointly with Concord Housing Authority, Concord Housing Foundation, and Concord Housing Development Corporation for input on which of the Town housing goals it should prioritize in the near term, at the current annual funding level. For the longer term, the Trust looks forward to participating in the process of updating the Housing Production Plan data based on new data from 2020 U.S. Census, and will continue to advocate for reliable funding sources to be put into place to address Concord’s housing goals.

The Trustees appreciate the work done by our

predecessors, the Affordable Housing Funding Committee (from 2017 to 2019) and Affordable Housing Trust Study Committee (from 2019 to 2020); and are grateful for the continuing support of the Select Board and Town staff, our fellow housing advocates and stakeholders, and the Concord community as a whole.

JUNCTION VILLAGE OPEN SPACE TASK FORCE

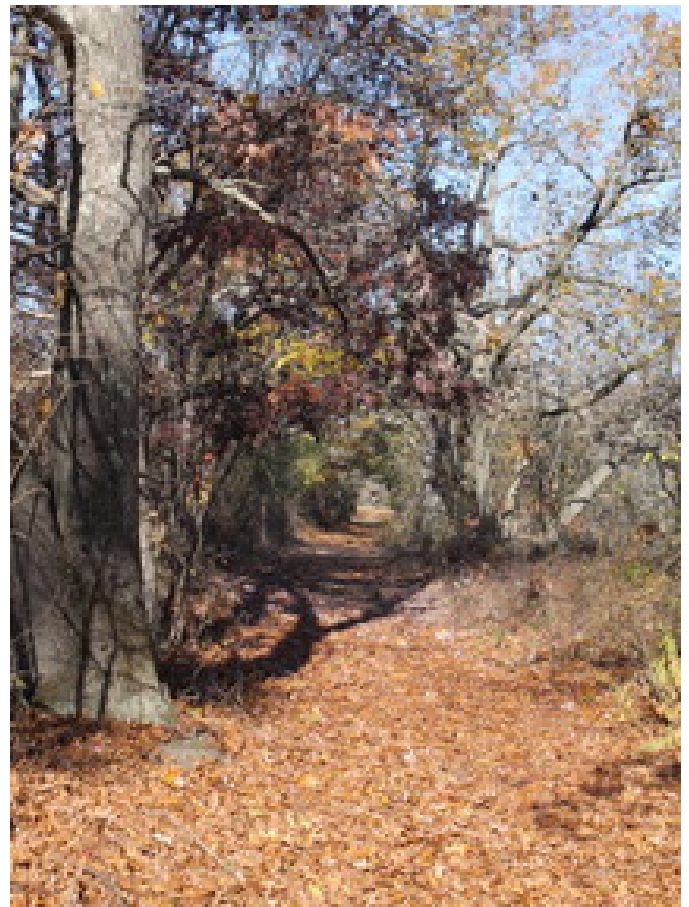
Harry Bartlett
Christa Collins
Susan Felshin (clerk)
Carlene Hempel (chair)
Steve Irza

In early 2021, Concord's Select Board seated the five-member Junction Village Open Space Task Force (JVOSTF) to develop a master plan for 8.11 acres of open space along the Assabet River as it stretches behind the MCI property and perpendicular to the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail. The space is a gem, with many well-established specimen trees, several natural overlook spots along the river, and the potential to serve as a gathering and reflection place for numerous constituencies including the patrons of an adjacent 83-unit affordable assisted-living complex that will be located on an additional 4 acres on site. The JVOSTF's charge is to establish a plan that includes passive recreation on the property, but that also takes advantage of its central location, natural landscape, and historical significance. Since February 2021, when the task force started to meet, members have made significant headway into planning for the parkland including:

- Held a public forum during which local historians explained the extraordinary history of the site as the Great Encampment, which was a mustering event for numerous nearby towns at the dawn of the Civil War, and as the site of a progressive reformatory and then prison that for more than 200 years has served as an economic engine for West Concord.
- Held a public forum to educate the public about

the natural amenities of the site and introduce two concept plans for review and comment.

The JVOSTF has since adapted the concept plan to one design that features a 1.43-acre parcel that we hope will serve as a pollinator meadow and reflection spot, as well as an outdoor gallery for local artists and a site for interpretive panels about the mustering site and reformatory. Additionally, the JVOSTF hopes to include a 6.68-acre open space with a trail along the riverbank that includes interpretive panels about the nearby the Assabet River and a seat wall and picnic area at which users can sit and reflect. During this process, the task force, through presentations, successfully earned the approval of several important Concord organizations including the Natural Resources Commission, the Concord Historical Commission, the West Concord Advisory Committee, the River Stewardship Council, and the Pollinator Committee.



Still a tangle of invasives, this path will be the future location of a quiet trail that will allow users to appreciate the exquisite beauty of the Assabet River and the mature specimen trees that line the bluff.

2229 MAIN STREET OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Ray Bruttomesso
Board of Health representative Deborah Farnsworth
NRC representative Nick Pappas
Len Rappoli
Pam Rockwell
Fred Seward

The 2229 Main Street Oversight Committee was formed to monitor the cleanup at the site previously occupied by defense contractor Starmet, formerly Nuclear Metals, Inc. (NMI). This site was put on the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) national priorities list in 2001 and is now a Superfund site. EPA has completed the building removal action, so at this point, the covered building slabs, construction trailers, sampling well-heads, and fences are the only structures that remain at the site. In 2021 the contractor began testing the materials and methods that will be used in the remediation at the site, as part of the remediation design process.

In 2021 the committee reviewed data collected from a pump and treat system that was brought on-line in 2019. This system is working effectively to protect drinking water in Acton. There are plans to add another treatment well on the Concord side of the Assabet River to expedite removal of organics from groundwater at the site. The contractor at the site met with the committee and other community members in November to share additional water sampling data, particularly to address new PFAS drinking water limits that have been imposed in Massachusetts. The data showed that PFAS (fluoroalkyl substances that are known as “forever chemicals”) is not spreading through groundwater at the site.

In April 2018, Concord Town meeting voted to encourage taking ownership of the property and to allocate funds for a redevelopment plan. In 2021, the NMI/Starmet Reuse Planning Committee presented its final reuse report to the Town. The 2229 Main Street Oversight Committee supports the conclusions of the reuse report, and would like to emphasize that the best way for the Town to ensure that the most complete cleanup is implemented and maintained at the site is for the Town to take

ownership of this site and redevelop it.

During meetings of the 2229 Main Street Oversight Committee, the committee heard concerns from the public that ownership of the site could lead to unforeseen liability insurance costs in the future, even though the actual liability will always remain with the principal responsible parties at the site, and not with Concord. The committee pointed out that if the Town owns the site it will have a better chance to protect the underground containment structure and wells from being disturbed. Ownership puts the Town in a better position to demand further testing or evaluate when an emerging contaminant is present at the site. For instance, last year, as PFAS became recognized across the country as a threat to drinking water, EPA asked the contractor at the site to test the water to determine if PFAS was a chemical of concern. Technology to do this kind of testing was not available when the remedial investigation at the site was done, but diligence has led to this new evaluation, and the 2229 Main Street Oversight Committee had quick access to the data this year. If the site becomes privately owned in the future, like the nearby Grace Superfund site in Acton, the Town risks losing the access it has to demand early action on newly emerging contaminants, or to demand that new technological developments be incorporated into the site monitoring. Ownership puts the Town in the best position to make sure that any development at the site protects the remediation structures and that any new concerns are addressed quickly, using the best technology. The committee feels strongly that the additional control and access provided by ownership overwhelmingly outweighs the uncertainty of the costs of an insurance policy.

In the November 2021 meeting, the contractor at the site updated the timetable for the remediation design, and estimated that some soil removal and staging could start next year, before the final remediation design is complete. Once the remediation design is complete, the public will get a chance to comment on it, and the work to clean up the rest of the site can begin. Solvents are already being addressed by the pump and treat system. Currently depleted uranium in surface soils near building slabs, and in groundwater deep below the surface is confined to the 2229 Main Street property.

Depleted uranium in groundwater moves slowly, so EPA has ample time to ensure that the uranium never moves off the site. Contaminated soils up to a 10 foot depth will be dug up and removed from the site so that a person living, working, and growing their own food at the site for 70 years will have less than an increased cancer rate of one in a million because of their exposure. Groundwater at the site will be protected by chemically sequestering the large mass of depleted uranium deep below the old holding basin, surrounding it with a waterproof barrier like concrete or bentonite, and capping it. Contaminated soils will be shipped to a proper mixed waste disposal area and not buried at the site.

More information about the 2229 Main Street cleanup can be found at the following websites. The committee does not have control over the content of these sites:

www.nmisite.org is the website created by the contractor de maximis inc. It includes a list of the current activities at the site, including data and maps from the sampling that has been completed and pictures of the building removal. There are also links to the EPA Record of Decision and feasibility study.

More information from the EPA about the 2229 Main Street Superfund site can be found online at <http://www.epa.gov/superfund/nmi>

ECONOMIC VITALITY AND TOURISM

Beth Williams, Economic Vitality &
Tourism Manager

Overall staffing numbers at the Visitor Center remained steady at 15 part-time individuals that serve in attendant, tour guide, and/or clerk positions. Our staff bring invaluable background knowledge and excitement making Concord's history come alive for visitors.

Sales

2021 sales and attendance exceeded the Visitor Center's pre-pandemic numbers! Attendance was

over 11,000 and revenue was \$46,000, far exceeding the \$18,000 from 2020. Daily tours ran over 90% of the time and both bus and private tours were very popular exceeding past years bookings. Advanced bookings for bus tours in 2022 is already ahead of any past years with over 15 reservations at the end of December.

MOTT grant

In collaboration with the Town of Lexington Visitor Center, Concord applied, received, and completed a Tourism Recovery Grant from the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism (MOTT). Over \$35,000, the grant was used to produce a television commercial that ran on WGBH, a digital campaign that ran on the Travel site Yankeemagazine.com as well as a dedicated email newsletters to tourists specifically searching for Concord and Lexington. This campaign represents the first time in known memory that the two communities have come together to promote what most outsiders see is one destination. The headline, "Two Historic Towns, One Memorable Visit", was coined and remains in use. Results were tracked for all digital media and show a response rate well above the national average.

Partnerships in 2021

The Division of Economic Vitality and Tourism was thrilled to extend tour offerings with new topics and more partners.

The "Women of Concord" tour with Robbins House, Concord Museum and Colonial Inn allowed us to tell the stories of some of Concord's most famous women. The tour began at the North Bridge area and included Lady Emerson, Sofia Hawthorne, and Ellen Garrison. The tour also included visits to Sleepy Hollow to give respects to the Alcott women and Ann Chester French, the first women to have a driver's license in the US. Everyone attending received a ticket to visit the Concord Museum's Every Path Laid Open exhibit.

The "Concord History with a Chocolate Twist" ran during the month of February. The Visitor Center partnered with Graem Nuts, Concord Cheese Shop and Colonial Inn to offer our Historical Walking tour while stopping for sweets along the way and ending the tour at the Colonial Inn for Martha

Washington's favorite chocolate tea and cake. A new tour in West Concord was developed and offered for six weeks with the opening of the Concord Sign Museum at the Bradford Mill. Debra's Natural Gourmet and Joy Street Gifts partnered with the Visitor Center to provide residents and visitors with stories and insights of West Concord's manufacturing and commercial past.

In the Spring of 2021, the Town of Concord was approached by the leadership of Minute Man National Historical Park (MMNHP) to request assistance at the North Bridge Visitor Center because they were not able to staff the Center the customary 7 days a week from April to November. The Town and National Park Service (NPS) entered into an agreement to train Concord Visitor Center (CVC) staff to fill in the gaps so the Visitor Center at the North Bridge could maintain operations. Three staff were trained and assigned to 2 days a week April-October to serve as Ambassadors at the North Bridge Visitor Center. This partnership has provided benefits to the Town in the opportunity to talk to the many visitors at the North Bridge Visitor Center. Our staff is able to provide information which directs them to explore more of Concord, recommending shopping, dining and attraction offerings.

ECONOMIC VITALITY COMMITTEE

The mission of the Economic Vitality Committee (EVC) is to focus on infrastructure, policy, and action items that enhance a vibrant, economically robust, and mutually rewarding exchange between residents, visitors, merchants, museums, and non-profit cultural centers of the town of Concord.

The COVID-19 crisis radically impacted all sectors involved in the economic vitality of the town. In response, the EVC chose to place its mission on pause in order to switch into a crisis response mode. Almost overnight, strong alliances were formed with key partners across the public and private sectors of

the town – including the Town Manager, the Visitor Center, the newly-formed Concord Together coalition, the Concord-Carlisle Community Chest, the Concord Business Partnership, the Chamber of Commerce, and dozens of private citizen and merchant volunteers. The EVC worked hand in hand with these organizations to collaborate, encourage, and create awareness and support programs to help Concord businesses survive the pandemic. The result was a strong rebound for retail and restaurants in our town.

As we realized that some programs created in a crisis actually provided vibrancy and community opportunities to the town, the EVC worked hand in hand with other town committee and staff to permanently allow outdoor dining, and to create a dialogue around other programs that support both residents and businesses.

One very important achievement for Concord in 2021 was the funding and hiring of an Economic Vitality and Tourism Manager. This concrete demonstration of the Town's commitment to integrating tourism efforts into the ongoing vitality of our local economy is warmly welcome. This role – together with the EVC – also provides an important communication point between the citizenry and the business community.

As we begin 2022, the EVC continues to support the now-established programs that promote local businesses, but will also return its attention to its original mission. Future work will revolve around these key areas:

- Encouraging ongoing collaboration between tourism, the Town, regulatory bodies, and commerce to ensure optimization of economic vitality while ensuring that residents also see a net positive experience
- New business advocacy – welcoming the charming and unique small businesses that will ensure a consistent charm and attraction for our town centers
- Infrastructure and regulatory streamlining – continue to identify areas where business and the town can interact with more efficiency to ensure ongoing economic vitality
- Informed progress and milestones – in early 2022, the EVC will conduct a series of surveys

and focus groups with businesses and residents to inform programs in the future – ensuring a careful balance between preserving the charm and unique culture of the Town and encouraging, fostering, and promoting a well curated growth in our town’s economic vitality

As always, we warmly welcome the participation and ideas of all – and we invite citizens, committee members, and town officials/staff to attend a future meeting with us.

FIBER BROADBAND COMPLETION TASK FORCE

Gail Hire

Mark Howell, Chair

Gordon Brockway, Light Board Representative

Scott Hopkinson, PAAC Representative

David Hesel, HOA Representative

The Fiber Broadband Completion Task Force (FBCTF) was created by the passage of Article 41 at the 2021 Annual Town Meeting. The article required that the Select Board appoint a citizen committee to conduct a targeted, focused effort to study and recommend possible solutions and funding sources for expediting completion of the Town’s fiber optic communications network. The task force is required to prepare a report in time for the 2022 Annual Town Meeting.

The Select Board approved a detailed charge and appointed the members of the Task Force in August 2021. The Task Force immediately recognized that the scope is large and the time to work was very short. Task Force has met almost every week to study the fiber network, explore barriers to Concord Light Broadband subscription growth and investigate opportunities to expand the fiber network.

The Task Force defined four specific focus areas to study. First, the “last 5-7% of streets”. This looks at the gaps in fiber construction; where there is CMLP electric service but no Concord Light Broadband service? The fiber network currently reaches about

93 percent of parcels, but only about 80% of residential and business units in the Town of Concord. The goal is to understand the scale and scope of these unserved areas. Once defined and categorized, logical completion plans may be developed. Constructing a fully Town-wide fiber optic network is a significant investment that would take multiple years. As such, considerations of how to incorporate this work into the Town’s capital planning process will be addressed in the report.

The second focus area is “Barriers to Subscription Growth.” Most of the Town is already served by the fiber network. Yet estimates are that only about 25% of the potential subscribers actually do use the service. As an enterprise operated by CMLP, it is prudent to understand the potential demand and the inhibitors to usage that exist. The Task Force is examining methods for tracking demand, customer trends, and marketing opportunities.

The third focus area is investigating opportunities to expand “Fiber-to-the-Home (FTTH) and Fiber-to-the-business (FTTB),” also known as the ‘last mile.’ Some parcels are served by fiber from the right-of-way, but potential customers on these premises have additional obstacles to installation. Rental units, condominiums and many small businesses fall into this category. Some of the restriction on installation has to do with policy choices made by Concord Light. In other places, offering simultaneous or coordinated installations to multiple customers could quickly expand FTTH and FTTB. The Task Force will work to identify such issues and consider if changes might be advisable.

Lastly, it is widely recognized that the existence of a municipally owned fiber optic network is an asset to the community. Like other Town Enterprise funds, the responsibility to establish the goals and implement a set of governing policies rests with the citizens. The Task Force is collecting a list of potential policy alternatives and will include them with the report along with options and/or recommendations for implementation of ongoing governance.

Once the Task Force has created its initial report, it will create opportunities for review and comment. The results of this work are intended to be advisory.