

# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

## DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND LAND MANAGEMENT

Megan Zammuto, Assistant Town Manager/Director of Planning and Land Management

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 the Annual Report.

feedback from the community. Ms. Hughes also received a technical assistance grant from the Massachusetts Housing Partnership to have zoning and Geographic Information Systems specialists assist the Board with the development of the draft zoning and zoning overlay district boundaries and MBTA Communities Guidelines compliance model. Senior Planner Erin Stevens created a dedicated MBTA Communities website that included a wealth of information, resources and an ever growing Frequently Asked Questions guide. Ms. Hughes and



## PLANNING DIVISION

Marcia Rasmussen, Director of Planning & Land Management

Elizabeth Hughes, Town Planner

Ann Clifford, Senior Planner

Erin Stevens, Senior Planner

Heather Carey, Office Coordinator

Hayleigh Walker, Senior Administrative Assistant

Kim Johnson, Senior Administrative Assistant

2023 was a whirlwind year for the Planning Division with big projects, staff changes and lots to do! First, the Big Projects. It has to be the passage by the State of the MBTA Communities Multi-family Zoning Law. Starting in April, Town Planner Elizabeth Hughes received a technical assistance grant from the Citizens Housing and Planning Association to have a community engagement specialist assist the Planning Board a series of public forums to provide information on the new Law and begin to get

Ms. Stevens submitted a Community Planning Grant application and received \$25,000 to hire a consultant to perform the required Economic Feasibility Analysis of the proposed MBTA Communities Multi-family Zoning Bylaw to determine if the bylaw can include an affordability requirement greater than 10%.

The DPLM Director Marcia Rasmussen connected with the right people early in the year at the MBTA to discuss getting the West Concord Train Depot painted before the Town's 250th Celebration. In October, Town Planner Elizabeth Hughes contacted the MBTA contact to once again get this project rolling and was told that if the Town was able to provide the paint, crews with the MBTA would come out and get the job done. No way were we going to pass up this opportunity up! With the help from Senior Planner Ann Clifford, the paint colors were match, the paint ordered, and the job completed. The Depot looks great.

Now, the staff changes. After 36 years of amazing service to the Town of Concord, Director Marcia Rasmussen retired, but not before seeing the completion of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail bridge over Route 2. Ms. Rasmussen's legacy of all the projects she worked on, all the plans she guided, and knowledge she has about the community and the people will be truly missed. The Planning Division also said good-bye to Senior Administrative Assistant Hayleigh Walker in August and in November welcomed Kim Johnson, who jumped right in to support the Planning Division staff and the Zoning Board of Appeals, Historical Commission, and Historic Districts Commission. And while not really a staff change, the Planning Division was sure excited with the happy news in November from Senior Planner Erin Stevens about the early arrival of twins!

Finally, the lots to do. With grant funding from the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) and Community Preservation Committee (CPC), Senior Planner Ann Clifford secured the services of the preservation consultant Heritage Strategies, LLC, to assist the Historical Commission (CHC) and Historic Districts Commission (HDC) in developing a community-wide Historic Preservation Plan. She is working closely with the consultant, commissioners, stakeholders and the public to develop the plan, as well as managing the project and the state and local grants that funded it. Ms. Clifford collaborated with the CHC on an application to the CPC for funding to conduct an update to the survey of pre-1775 historic structures in Concord in accordance with current MHC standards. She helped the CPC monitor the finances of over 60 existing projects, close out over 30 projects, and review 17 new project proposals, during the transition from one town-wide accounting system to another. As part of the review process for 75 applications to the HDC and 17 demolition applications to the CHC, Ms. Clifford conducted research on structures to provide historical context, apply preservation standards, and help inform decision making. In addition, she provided cultural histories on Concord sites, structures, and traditions to other committees such as the 2025 Permanent Memorial Committee.

Senior Planner Erin Stevens provides direct professional support to the Transportation Advisory Committee, working with the members on a whole

host of transportation and mobility issues in the community. She also collaborated with Town staff on a successful Safe Routes to Schools grant that funded the purchase of two school zone speed signs that were installed on Thoreau Street for the Alcott School. The speed signs are feedback signs to alert drivers and record vehicle speeds. Ms. Stevens spent months working with Town staff on the development of a Request For Proposals to hire a consultant team to create a Transportation and Mobility Plan, which was just getting started in the fall of 2023. Another great project that Ms. Stevens initiated was successfully receiving a Community Transportation Technical Assistance Program to have the team from the State's Central Transportation Planning Staff do a study of the Route 2 crossings at ORNAC and Main Street for potential short term safety solutions to assist vulnerable users such as pedestrians and bicyclists safely cross over Route 2 at these intersections. The study was completed in August and proposed short-term interventions at each intersection to improve pedestrian safety based on existing conditions analysis, survey feedback and comments, and input from stakeholders. The bike share returned in April but with a special twist, Ms. Stevens coordinated with the Town of Acton to have a regional bike share, the Minuteman Bike Share! Bikes from any station between the two towns were able to be picked up and dropped off at any of the other locations. With the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail bridge over Rt. 2 open, this was a great boost for transportation, recreational rides, errands, and enjoyment of this great regional amenity.

Lastly, it is because of Office Coordinator Heather Carey and Senior Administrative Assistant Kim Johnson that the Planning Division is able to provide 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), as well as support to the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Advisory Committee (BFRTAC), the West Concord Advisory Committee (WCAC), and the Transportation Advisory Committee. Think about all the agendas, minutes, applications, projects, consultants, webpages, emails and phone calls Ms. Carey and Ms. Johnson coordinate, keep track of and handle in a year. For that, we are all thankful.

## BUILDING INSPECTIONS

Paul Creedon, Building Commissioner/Zoning Enforcement Officer

Gary Smith, Local Building Inspector

Kevin Pickering, Local Building Inspector

Tracy LaPierre, Senior Administrative Specialist

John Alesse, Electrical/Wiring Inspector

Wayne Caldwell, Plumbing/Gas Inspector

### Building and Zoning Activity

The Building Inspections Division issued 1,046 building permits in 2023, compared to 950 last year. The overall construction value increased in the year 2023 to \$ 195.3 million compared to \$86.3 million in 2022. This is an increase in the value of construction of 126.3%. Of this total, \$73.5 million was for residential construction with \$121.8 million in commercial work.

The value of “new residential dwelling units” built in Concord went from \$22.5 million last year to \$17.5 million in 2023. This new residential construction value represents fourteen new detached single-family homes, four duplex units and four additional dwelling units (ADU), one commercial to residential unit for a total of 22 new housing units. Of these 22 new homes, twelve, or 55% were the result of “tear downs” (an act of demolishing a building, usually to build a new one on the same site)

In 2023, the issuance of Mechanical permits increased by 16.4%, the number of Electrical Permits increased by 7.2% and Plumbing/Gas permits increased by 9.4%. Overall, 3241 permits

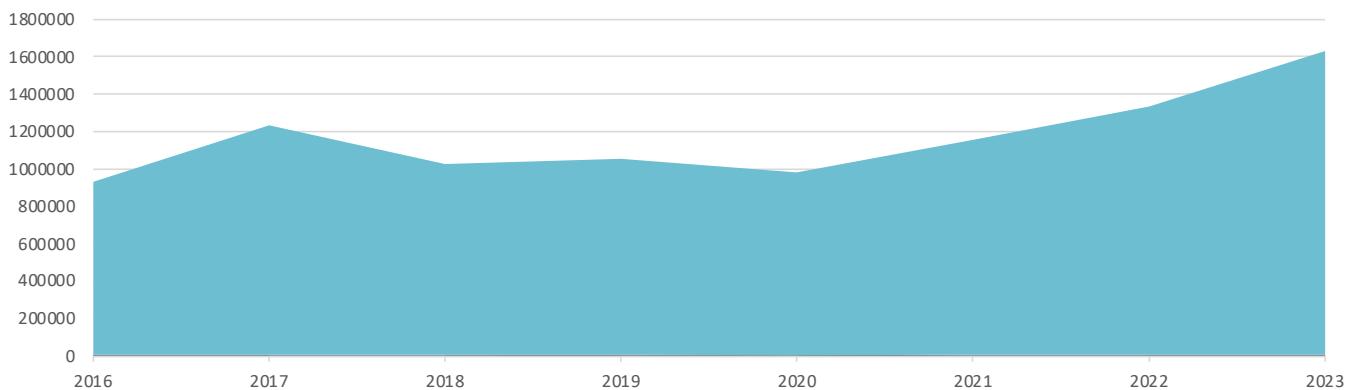
were issued with a 9.1% increase. The Building Division collected \$1,622,922 total in permit fees in 2023 versus \$1,329,495 collected in 2022. This is a 22% increase from last year.

### Staffing/Operations

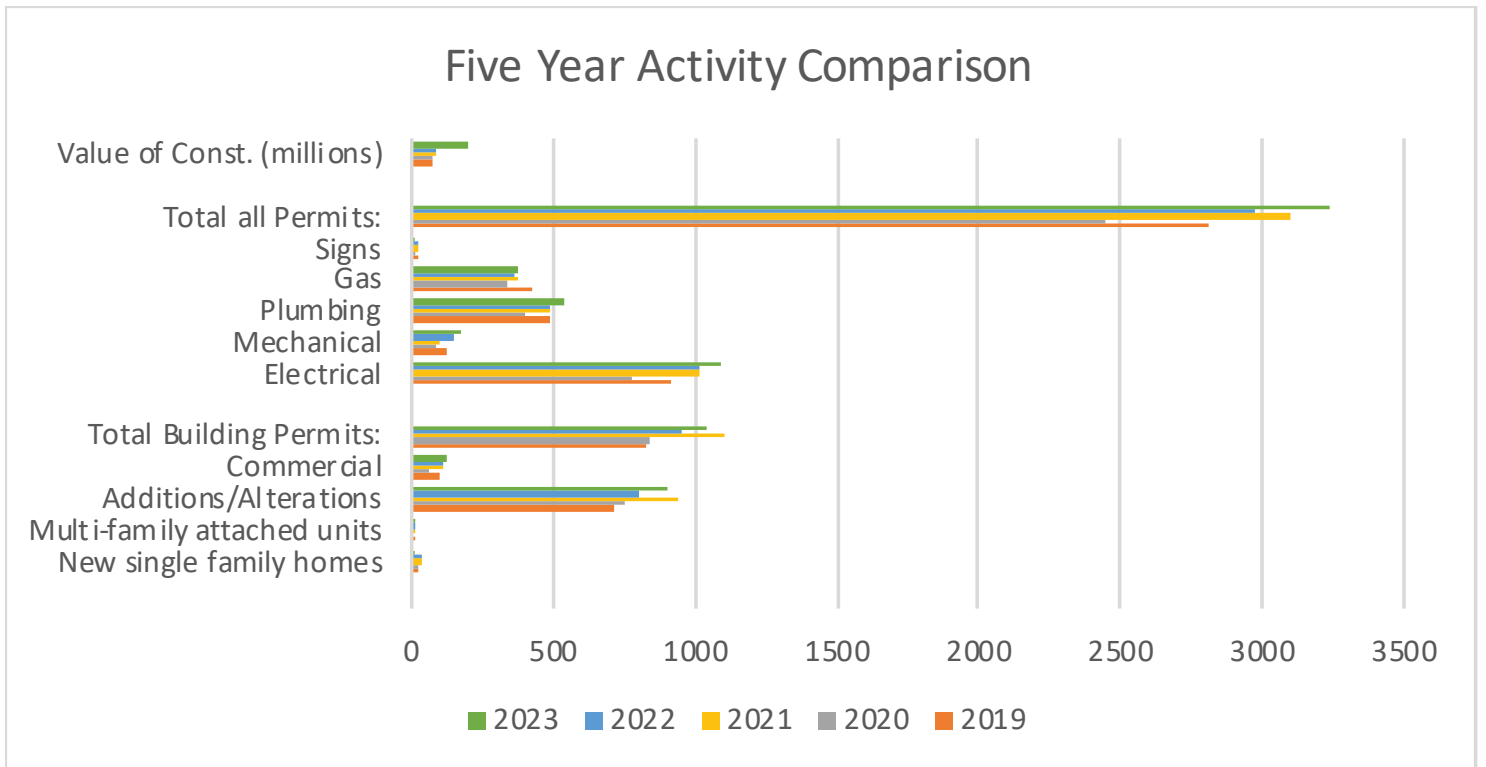
Our staff is comprised of four full-time and two part-time personnel and is strongly committed to pursuing diligent Zoning and Sign Bylaw enforcement, as well as enforcement of the State Building code, which includes, but is not limited to handicap accessibility, structural integrity, fire safety, energy codes and many other regulations relative to public safety. Our staff provides technical assistance to property owners, builders, real estate professionals, other Town departments and staff, boards, as well as other committees in town. In addition to issuing building permits and conducting required onsite inspections, the building division 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 include the following: A new Concord Academy Centennial Arts Center, the new Concord Public Middle School, and completion of Concord Children’s Center facility at 250 Old Bedford Road.

Permit Revenue



Number of permits issued	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
New single family homes	43	39	44	20	26	34	32	14
Multi-family attached units	6	4	6	6	0	8	2	4
Additions/Alterations	760	719	748	710	749	945	808	901
Commercial	100	88	86	97	61	116	108	127
Total Building Permits:	909	850	884	833	836	1103	950	1046
Electrical	865	996	945	916	780	1010	1013	1086
Mechanical	108	93	141	126	81	97	146	170
Plumbing	542	524	507	488	397	493	483	544
Gas	428	433	437	422	340	377	361	379
Signs	29	32	31	29	7	24	17	16
Total all Permits:	2881	2928	2945	2814	2441	3104	2970	3241
Value of Const. (millions)	84.7	96.7	72.2	70.9	74.8	84.4	86.3	195.3
Permit Fee Revenue	\$927,555	\$1,224,460	\$1,017,932	\$1,048,267	976,317	1,148,245	1,329,495	1,622,922



## ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Theo Kindermans, Chair  
 Ravi Faiia, Vice Chair  
 Elizabeth Akehurst-Moore, Clerk  
 Thomas Swaim, Associate Member  
 Elizabeth Dwyer Leonard, 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 June, Theo Kindermans was elected as Chair, Ravi Faiia was elected as Vice Chair, and Elizabeth Akehurst-Moore was elected as Clerk. Elizabeth Dwyer Leonard joined the Board as an associate member in September. The Board is currently in need of one additional associate member.

In 2023, the Board held twelve (16) public hearings and conducted one (1) official site visit. The Board heard applications for one (1) appeal from a decision of the Building Inspector/Zoning Enforcement Officers, one (1) Variance, one (1) Comprehensive Permit, and thirty-five (35) Special Permits which included eight (8) renewals for previously granted Special Permits. Of these applications, thirty-four (34) Special Permits were granted, two (2) applications were withdrawn without prejudice at the request of the applicant, one (1) was denied, and two (2) applications were pending at the end of the year. (Some of these applications included multiple activities; therefore, the activity totals below may exceed the number of applications.)

### Zoning Board of Appeals Application Activities

Change, alteration or extension of a nonconforming use, structure	5
Nonconforming single & 2-family structure (inc. by more than 50%)	10
Site plan approval (associated with a special permit)	3
Institutional, Educational or Philanthropic Use	4
Relief from design requirements	1
Relief from parking requirements	3
Relief from the height requirements	1
Parking of Commercial Vehicles	1
Special home occupation (new and renewal)	4
Additional dwelling unit/Two-family dwelling unit	2
Side Yard Setbacks	3
Work in the Flood Plain conservancy district	3
Combined Business/Residential Use	1
Bed & Breakfast or Tourist Home	4
Lodging for farm workers/Farm Product Sales/Stables	1
Relief from maximum floor area ratio	2
Fairs Bazaaras, Antique Shows, Suppers, and Dances	4
Personal Service Shop	1
Comprehensive permit	1
Special permits	39
Variances	1
Sign bylaw variances granted	1
Appeal of the decision of Bldg. Inspector denied	1

## BOARD OF HEALTH

Mark Haddad, Esq. (Chair)  
Jill Block  
Kurt Herman  
Dr. Randy Kring  
James Whalen

In January, the Board reviewed the State Tobacco Sales Regulations that went into effect in December 2020, adopted by former Governor Charles Baker. Prior to that the Health Division and Board of Health had drafted a new local regulation, holding many well attended public meetings but decided to defer adoption for six months once Governor Baker enacted the State Regulation that addressed many of the same issues that the Board was trying to address on a local level. This all occurred during the height of the Covid-19 Pandemic and although both regulations (State and Local) had been enforced the entire time, staff felt it was time to move forward with either the regulation that was proposed or integrate the state regulation into the local guidance. Work commenced to integrate the state regulations into the local regulations resulting in increases to the fine structure for infractions among other changes, a public hearing was held in February, and by March, the new local regulations were approved. Other regulatory changes in 2023 included updating the rules and regulations governing the practice of body art to incorporate the practice of microblading (the application of ink under the skin with blades, often used to create the effect of eyebrows for example). This came about after a request by a local practitioner to establish a microblading studio in Concord. Using research from health department staff, the Board was educated on the requirements for safe application and this information was integrated into the existing body art regulation. The Board approved these new regulations in April, though ultimately, the applicant decided to locate her studio elsewhere, finding our requirements more arduous than she was willing to incorporate into her practice. Personnel changes to the Board of Health included the addition of two new members in December 2022 that had their first meetings in January 2023 – Dr. Randy Kring, a physician in the Emerson Hospital emergency department, and Kurt Herman

who brings a background in environmental engineering and geology. Dr. Kring enables the BOH to continue its linkage to the local hospital, and he has been of great assistance to the department in helping with vaccinations at the local shelter, and in assisting Melanie Dineen with Narcan access. Mr. Herman's expertise is especially welcome as the BOH monitors the cleanup process at 2229 Main Street and in local discussions regarding the future use of that site. Given the frequent role of the BOH in reviewing septic systems and private wells, this expertise is relevant and important to many of our informed deliberations. In June, the role of BOH Chair shifted from Jill Block to Mark Haddad. After Town Meeting, the Select Board liaison to the Board of Health shifted from Henry Dane to Mark Howell.

In 2022 our variance for the use of reusable containers at Debra's Natural Gourmet had been shared with the MA Department of Environmental Protection in the hope of promoting this practice on a broader level. This led to the participation of Jill Block and Melanie Dineen in a national call sponsored by Recycling Works, which is a group working to reduce solid waste nationally. Given that Federal Food Code is the basis for Massachusetts regulations and many other states, our variance can be a model applied in other localities across the country.

## 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 continues to evolve with the opportunities and changes that arrive in our post-covid era. A request for a more robust public health nursing program was headed by the Town with the approval of a Public Health Nurse position for FY 24 at the 2023 annual town meeting. Moira Carter joined the Health Division in late September as our Public Health Nurse and has been instrumental in working toward our Public Health goals and initiatives. Also in September, the longtime Public Health Administrator Karen Byrne retired. We were able to provide a celebration and wish Karen the best and are grateful for her 36 years of service to the Town. An office coordinator was hired in late December to fill this essential role and we are excited for Ebony Sodl to be a new addition to the Health Division. In the fall of 2023, the Office of Local and Regional Health released performance standards for local public health. This is part of the public health excellence program within the Department of public health. Performance Standards for Local Public Health | Mass.gov. State and local leaders are committed to the initiative to improve the public health services received by all residents in the Commonwealth. The Great Meadows Public Health Collaborative was created in 2021 with funding from the state. The Town of Concord receives nursing support, inspections, and general public health support from staff in the collaborative. Town staff have been and continue to work to the appropriate credentialing and training as outlined in the blueprint for public health published in 2019. As part of the initiative to provide the essential services, The Health Division added a part-time Sanitary inspector to help with inspections in FY 24 and continued to make progress toward online-permitting and record keeping. In our regulatory arena, the division worked with the Board of Health to update the Tobacco and Body Art regulations. Work has

commenced on the private well regulation and will continue into 2024.

### **Behavioral Health**

In January 2023, the Health Division initiated the Concord Behavioral Health Collaborative. This group of stakeholders was originally organized to define appropriate expenditure of the opioid settlement funds. The collaborative consists of individuals representing Concord public schools, Concord fire, police, library, council on aging, Emerson hospital, and many individuals from our social services networks including Eliot services, DVSN, MOAR and Concord Adult and Community Education. This group continues to seek appropriate partners, any individuals or organizations who are interested in participating are encouraged to contact the Health Director. Specifically, we are looking for individuals with lived experience of substance use. Upon the group's inception it became very clear that mental health was the most immediate behavioral health concern. The group identified that there was a need for a mental health clinician, a job description was drafted and a contract with Eliot services is pending as of this report. A full-time dedicated mental health clinician for Concord residents will help to bridge the needs gap as individuals are working toward long-term care and wellbeing. The Town Managers office was a key contributor to helping to get this to happen as were all the data and input from the collaborative. Two staff members from the Great Meadows collaborative, Laura Duff and Keli Calo presented a Hidden in Plain Sight program at the Concord-Carlisle High School at the back to school night. Work continues to develop substance use prevention work in our community. The Health Division is seeking to establish a regional substance use prevention coordinator, funded by the opioid settlement monies. This position is in draft form and is pending Select Board approval. The tentative goal is to have a position in place for FY 2025.

### **Public Health Nursing FY24**

The Public Health Nursing purpose is to prevent disease and decrease the development and transmission of health conditions that impact our residents, while assisting to support the overall health of our community. In late September 2023, Moira Carter was hired as Public Health Nurse in a

shared position for the towns of Concord and Maynard, working 25 hours per week for Concord and 15 hours for Maynard.

In partnership with West Concord Pharmacy, vaccine clinics for Seniors were offered through the Council on Aging and for Town employees. Influenza and COVID-19 vaccinations were provided to homebound residents upon request and are ongoing. Additionally, Public Health Nursing began supporting vaccine needs of residents of the Concord Emergency Assistance Shelter. The Health Division coordinated with the Recreation Department and the city of Malden to deliver the required vaccines for attendance at summer camp. Work continued in the fall to assess the ongoing vaccine needs for adults and children at the shelter and support access to appropriate care.

The Concord Health Division was approved as a Community Naloxone Program Affiliate Program, making naloxone (Narcan) and training in its use available to the community without cost. In partnership with the Great Meadows Public Health Collaborative, Narcan training was offered to Town employees on 11/7/2023. Narcan is currently available directly outside the Health Division office on the second floor at 141 Keyes Road. The Narcan is available to anyone who wishes to stop by. Training for the use of Narcan as an individual or a group is available upon request.

Public Health Nursing services have always included aiding in communicable disease case management and surveillance. Approximately 90 reportable infectious diseases are tracked for appropriate follow-up action through the Massachusetts Virtual Epidemiologic Network (MAVEN) in partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. In 2023 the confirmed, probable, and suspect cases amounted to a total of 582 cases reported through MAVEN for Concord residents. These disease cases were supported by the Public Health Nurse, as appropriate.

### **Environmental Health**

The Health Division is very active in environmental health, enforcing the Massachusetts State Sanitary Codes. Inspections of on-site wastewater,

recreational camps, pools, bathing beaches and food establishments are ongoing. In addition to the routine and construction type inspections associated with permits, the Health Division received fifty-seven public health nuisance or other type of complaint in 2023. The most frequent type of complaints were housing complaints. A new housing code was promulgated by the state in May of 2023 which addressed some of the long outstanding discrepancies in the code, making it more specific. Also new this year was the addition of the mobile food permit application which was allowed by the passage of the food truck by-law in the 2023 Town Meeting. The Division worked with the economic vitality manager, Mimi Graney, to establish a process and efficient way for this type of business to get permitted and then operate in Concord. The Town enrolled in the FDA retail program standards and will be completing a self-assessment audit and training in 2024.

The Division continues to work as agents for the Board of Health in Lincoln. This is an agreement that has been ongoing for almost 20 years. This year the Health Division collaborated with the Lincoln Board of Health on outreach initiatives around radon including a public speaker and public health communications.

Work continued this year on White Pond water quality monitoring for cyanobacteria. Water sampling showed no significant risk to swimmers for the entire summer. We are cautiously optimistic that the A-Pod technology appears to be working.

### **Looking Ahead**

Goals for FY25 include conducting a community health needs assessment, enhancing health communications, and wellness initiatives with a focus on mental health. The needs assessment This will help us to continue to make informed decisions on the needs and gaps in our community.

In the environmental Health side, the Health Division is seeking to develop a Food business working group in order to engage in conversation on food Safety with the Food Businesses. Our overall mission is to improve the Health of the Concord Community and through programs in partnership we aim to engage with all.

Permits	Applications	Transactions	Issued	Fees	Cash
Beach	4	3	3	\$250.00	\$0.00
Beaver Control Emergency (10 Day)	1	0	1	\$0.00	\$0.00
Body Art Apprentice	0	0	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Body Art Establishment	1	1	1	\$125.00	\$0.00
Body Art Technician	0	0	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Bodywork Facility	0	0	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Bodywork Practitioner	0	0	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Catering	20	15	15	\$755.00	\$0.00
Disposal System Installer	44	43	45	\$5,375.00	\$0.00
Disposal Works Installer	0	0	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Farm Stand Limited Retail	7	4	3	\$600.00	\$0.00
Food Establishment	121	115	113	\$38,135.00	\$0.00
Food Establishment Plan Review	5	1	0	\$300.00	\$0.00
Form A - Soil Test For Septic System	38	26	0	\$8,625.00	\$0.00
Form B - Disposal Works(Septic) Construction	96	95	94	\$24,350.00	\$400.00
Form C - Request For Title 5 Building Review Onsite					
Sewage Disposal	85	75	0	\$6,035.00	\$85.00
Form S - Request For Title 5 Sewage Review	54	47	0	\$47,222.00	\$85.00
Funeral Director	3	2	1	\$120.00	\$0.00
Funeral Home	0	0	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Hazardous Materials	28	33	31	\$2,830.00	\$0.00
Hot Tub / Spa	0	0	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Hotel/Motel/Campsite	6	6	3	\$350.00	\$0.00
Ice Rink	0	0	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Infectious/Biological Waste	0	0	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Keeping Of Animals	79	86	83	\$4,250.00	\$0.00
Local Upgrade Approval - Form 9a	0	0	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Milk And Dairy Application	0	0	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Mobile Food Establishment	13	15	13	\$1,400.00	\$100.00
Recreational Camps For Children	16	19	20	\$9,125.00	\$0.00
Registered Title 5 Inspector	19	18	21	\$810.00	\$0.00
Request For Variance	0	0	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Rubbish Hauler	4	4	3	\$400.00	\$0.00
Septage Hauler	19	18	18	\$2,250.00	\$0.00
Septic Inspector Registration Form	0	0	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Special Event	0	0	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Stable License	0	0	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Submission Of Title 5 Inspection Report	0	0	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Swimming Pool	32	30	30	\$3,825.00	\$0.00
Tanning Facility	0	0	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Tanning Salon	0	0	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Temporary Food	52	47	47	\$1,451.00	\$1.00
Title 5 Inspection Report	94	89	87	\$3,560.00	\$40.00
Tobacco And Nicotine Sales	14	14	14	\$2,800.00	\$0.00
Trenches	0	0	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Well Drilling	14	14	14	\$1,250.00	\$0.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>869</b>	<b>820</b>	<b>660</b>	<b>\$166,193.00</b>	<b>\$711.00</b>

Check	Waived	Online Payment	Refund	Payment Declined
\$250.00	\$125.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
\$0.00	\$0.00	\$125.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
\$70.00	\$0.00	\$685.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
\$625.00	\$0.00	\$4,750.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
\$200.00	\$1.00	\$400.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
\$2,275.00	\$2,550.00	\$35,860.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
\$0.00	\$0.00	\$300.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
\$5,425.00	\$0.00	\$3,200.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
\$12,800.00	\$2,226.00	\$11,250.00	(\$ -100.00)	\$0.00
\$2,125.00	\$340.00	\$3,825.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
\$47,137.00	\$88.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
\$0.00	\$0.00	\$120.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
\$340.00	\$211.00	\$2,490.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
\$50.00	\$0.00	\$300.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
\$900.00	\$50.00	\$3,350.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
\$300.00	\$50.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
\$1,685.00	\$1,520.00	\$7,440.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
\$45.00	\$0.00	\$765.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
\$0.00	\$0.00	\$400.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
\$250.00	\$0.00	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
\$375.00	\$970.00	\$3,450.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
\$70.00	\$1,980.00	\$1,380.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
\$1,120.00	\$0.00	\$2,400.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
\$200.00	\$0.00	\$2,600.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
\$175.00	\$0.00	\$1,075.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>\$76,417.00</b>	<b>\$10,111.00</b>	<b>\$89,165.00</b>	<b>(\$ -100.00)</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>

## PLANNING BOARD

Nathan Bosdet, Chair  
Haley Orvedal, Vice-Chair  
Linda Miller, Clerk  
Andrew Boardman  
Sue Felshin  
Mark Giddings  
Robert Almeida  
Abigail Flanagan

Elizabeth Hughes, Town Planner  
Heather Carey, Planning Office Coordinator

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 Bylaw amendments, holding public hearings on all Zoning Bylaw amendments 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 thirty times in 2023. Six of the meetings were hybrid (in-person and virtually), two site visits were in-person, and the rest of the Board's meetings were virtual. Meetings were recorded for broadcast on Minuteman Media Network's YouTube channel. In addition to their regular meetings, a hybrid public hearing was held in March for Zoning Bylaw amendments considered at Annual Town Meeting. Also, a series of meetings were conducted to address the MBTA Multi-Family Communities Act. These included 3 community-wide hybrid and virtual meetings and more than twenty MBTA Community Connection Hours and interest group sessions with the Planning Board Chair and Town Planner.

The Board began the year with one vacancy. Nathan Bosdet's term ended, and Haley Orvedal left the Board prior to her term ending. The Board welcomed new members, Rob Almeida and Abigail Flanagan, and one vacancy remained at the end of 2023.

## Residential development

The Board provided recommendations to the Zoning Board of Appeals for the construction of a barn at 160 Adams Road, the construction of an addition at 300 Ministerial Drive, and a Planned Residential Development submitted by Quarry North Road LLC to create 6 housing lots with access from the Town of Sudbury at 48Y Fitchburg Turnpike. The Board began reviewing a 5-unit Planned Residential Development at 406 Old Marlboro Road that continues into 2024.

The Board received a Definitive Subdivision Plan application by EMS Development for the laying out of a new roadway and creation of 4 new building lots at 80X and 1053 Main Street. The public hearing on this application also continues into 2024.

In addition, the Board held public hearings for the name change of a private road and for a review under the Scenic Roads Bylaw for creation of a driveway access through an existing stonewall.

Unusually, only three "Approval Not Required" (ANR) plans were submitted to the Board for endorsement in 2023. This is compared to nine submissions in 2022, six in 2021 and sixteen in 2020.

Board members participated in two Housing Roundtables, which are quarterly meetings with various boards, committees and housing groups to discuss affordable housing in the community. Commercial, institutional, and other development

The Board made affirmative recommendations to the Zoning Board of Appeals for Special Permit with Site Plan Review for the construction of an addition at the Concord Center for Visual Arts at 37 Lexington Road, for a second story addition at 59 Walden Street, and for modifications to the parking layout for a new restaurant at 794 Elm Street.

Deliberations continue into 2024 regarding the application for a Special Permit with Site Plan Review for a combined business/residence at 166 Commonwealth Avenue and a Site Plan Review application for the redevelopment of 768 Elm Street (the closed Papa Razzi Restaurant site) for a multi-tenant commercial building.

In 2023, two Comprehensive Permits were filed in Concord, one at 292-294 Baker Avenue and the other at 275 Forest Ridge Road, for which the Planning Board has provided comments to the Zoning Board of Appeals and the Select Board.

### **Zoning amendments and Town Meeting actions**

The Board reviewed draft language for potential Zoning Bylaw amendments at several meetings throughout the year for the 2023 and 2024 Annual Town Meetings. The Board moved two Zoning Bylaw Amendment warrant articles for 2023. The motions for Article 33 (Restaurant – Prohibited Uses -- Parking) and Article 34 (Mobile Food Establishment) passed. The efforts for 2024 Annual Town Meeting centered around the submission of four warrant articles: creation of MBTA Communities Multi-family Zoning, expanding opportunities for development of two-family dwellings by Special Permit to the Residence B Zoning District, minor amendment to the Floodplain Conservancy Bylaw, and general overall housekeeping amendments to the Zoning Bylaw.

### **Other activities**

Throughout the year, the Board:

- Established their goals and priority projects for the next year and submitted a memo to the Select Board.
- Reviewed the Envision Concord Plan Action Items and updated the Board's Action Item matrix.
- Drafted, circulated, and received comments regarding Rules and Regulations for the Scenic Roads Bylaw.
- Reviewed Administrative and Procedure Policy #10: Town Board, Committee and Task Force Appointment Policy and provided comments to the Select Board.
- Discussed MBTA Communities Zoning and Mapping Requirement Guidelines.
- Authorized the release from a Restrictive Covenant for 55 McCallar Lane and 41, 47, and 61 Sunnyside Lane.
- Began a discussion with a consultant regarding current and best practices in Zoning for Parking requirements.
- Began a discussion regarding a review of the

Subdivision Rules & Regulations.

- Discussed the appointment process for members to the Historic Districts Commission with that Commission.
- Discussed a climate vulnerability assessment with the Town's Sustainability Director representing the Climate Action Committee.

In addition, the Board recommends members to the West Concord Advisory Committee, which is a subcommittee of the Planning Board, for nomination by the Select Board and it nominates a member to serve on the Community Preservation Committee and on 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 and Climate Action Advisory Board.

## CLIMATE ACTION COMMITTEE

Brad Hubbard-Nelson, Chair  
Cheryl Baggen  
Gavin Colbert  
Courtney Eaton  
Jerry Frenkil  
Karen Gibson  
Paul Kirshen  
Michel McDonald  
Janet Miller  
Ben Slayden  
Jake Swenson  
Eric Simms, Sustainability Director  
Mark Howell, Select Board Liaison

The Climate Action Committee (CAC) was established in 2023, to implement policies and practices to achieve the objectives of the Town's Climate Action and Resilience Plan (CAP) adopted in 2020. CAC replaces two previous committees, the Comprehensive Sustainability and Energy Committee (CSEC, established 2009) and the Climate Action Advisory Board (CAAB, established 2019), with initial membership coming from those committees. CAC responsibilities include: a) reporting on progress in greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction and other CAP goals; b) developing tools to educate the public and businesses about sustainable practices; c) developing customer focused incentives and programs to reduce emissions; d) identifying present and future climate vulnerabilities and implement adaptation strategies; e) implementing projects and initiatives for encouraging sustainable energy practices for the entire community, including residential, commercial, and municipal entities; and f) providing input to and adopting revisions to the CAP.

This report summarizes the work of CAC and the predecessor committees CSEC and CAAB during 2023. Given the numerous responsibilities outlined above, the committee must choose a subset to focus on, which complement the work of the Sustainability Director and CMLP. During CAC's first partial year, the committee discussed and got started with several work efforts, which are not completed yet.

Metrics & reporting progress towards CAP goals:  
CAC started a work effort to quantify and report

the emissions inventory for the year 2022, working together with the Sustainability Director. The inventory uses data from several sources, including the Concord Assessors Database, municipal data from Mass Energy Insight, vehicle data from the Mass Department of Transportation, and the emissions inventory tool from Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC). We plan to complete the inventory analysis in early 2024 and report the results to the Select Board and general public when they are ready.

Residential Engagement on Sustainability: Continuing CSEC work, the CAC maintains the Cooler Concord website ([www.coolerconcord.org](http://www.coolerconcord.org)) to help residents to take sustainable action in their homes and lives. That website uses the MassEnergize web platform which has several features: a list of sustainable actions, with useful information for residents and links to information sources on CMLP and other sites; testimonials which users can leave on their experience with actions taken; an events calendar listing events related to sustainability in Concord and nearby towns, as well as online events, with notifications to users for upcoming events; some tracking of events users are taking to motivate others and see progress in GHG emission reduction. We have not been promoting the Cooler Concord site heavily, but plan to use it more extensively in the coming year.

Municipal Sector Emissions: Working together with the Sustainability Director, CAC is beginning a plan on updating municipal facilities, including schools, and looking for grant options to help fund them. This work awaits the hiring of a facilities manager to move forward.

Climate Vulnerability Assessment: During Spring of 2023 a proposal was developed by CAAB members for a town-wide climate vulnerability assessment. Climate change poses several hazards, notably the flooding of homes and infrastructure from extreme precipitation events which are becoming more frequent. These are both regional and local challenges. The proposal has been discussed with several Town entities to elicit their input and participation. Together with the Sustainability Director, the CAC is investigating grant funding opportunities for this work, including the Municipal

Vulnerability Preparedness 2.0 program, for which Concord needs to complete an equity-centered vulnerability plan in the near future.

Town Policy: During 2023, CAC and previously CAAB proposed or supported the following policy initiatives:

- In January 2023 Special Town Meeting, Article 1 confirmed the intention for Concord to apply to be part of the 10-community fossil-free new construction pilot program. The program was announced by the Commonwealth in 2022, and would prohibit new construction from including fossil-fuel infrastructure for heating or cooking. The article was sponsored by the Select Board, and passed by wide margin. The Town was notified of acceptance in December and goes into effect in Spring 2024.
- For Annual Town Meeting in April 2023, the CAAB proposed Article 23, Adoption of the Specialized Stretch Building Code. In 2022 the Mass Department of Energy Resources announced updates to the Stretch Building Code, and a small set of opt-in provisions referred to as the Specialized Stretch Code. The Article was sponsored by the Select Board and passed by large margin. The Specialized Stretch code takes effect this January 2024.
- For 2024 Annual Town Meeting, CAC has endorsed two Town Meeting articles: one to update the emission reduction goals for the Climate Action Plan to be consistent with the State's goals which were strengthened in 2022, and a second to amend the proposed Fossil-free bylaw (adopted for the 10-community pilot) to include major renovations and affordable housing.

### **Looking towards the future:**

This coming year CAC will be continuing several of the projects described above, aiming to increase our impact and help residents, businesses and the Town meet its emissions reduction and resilience goals. Reducing emissions by 50% by 2030 – just 6 years from now – is a tall order but achievable and imperative. Our success in this endeavor will not only provide an example for other communities to follow, about which CAC intends to promote widely,

and in doing so preserve hope for younger generations in Concord and elsewhere.

This coming year CAC is planning for a community engagement campaign to educate residents on the benefits of heat pump technology, initially focusing on oil-heated homes. In this campaign we aim to complement the work of CMLP and its energy coaches, encouraging residents to get updated energy audits, plan weatherization steps and install or plan for heat pump installations in their homes. The CAP goal of 50% emission reduction by 2030 implicitly requires around half of Concord homes be heated with zero-emissions electricity in this decade. The focus on oil-heated homes is appropriate because those homes have higher heating costs due to the increasing price of fuel oil.

Additionally, CAC will be planning a couple of community events this year to bring residents, students, business owners and others together to learn, take action and be examples for others to follow. With an expansive charge involving all sectors (residential, commercial and municipal), there is more to be done in climate action than the Climate Action Committee can realistically accomplish on its own. So we welcome and encourage collaboration with outside groups, including students, grass-roots organizations, other committees and any citizen volunteers who would like to get involved.

## NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

Edward Nardi, Chair  
Sarah Grimwood  
William Kemeza  
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 NRC held 18 public meetings, which included review of 29 Notices of Intent, three Abbreviated Notices of Resource Area Delineation, and 14 Requests for Determinations of Applicability, for a total of 46 new applications. One Amendment was issued to a previously approved project, and five projects were issued Extension Permits. The NRC closed out many completed projects, issuing 19 Certificates of Compliance and four Partial Certificates of Compliance. Division staff reviewed 20 Administrative Approvals for very minor projects including limited tree and invasive species removal. Six Emergency Certificates were issued, including two for beaver flooding issues and beaver deceiver maintenance on Williams Road, two for beaver flooding issues and beaver deceiver maintenance at Middlesex School, and one for beaver deceiver installation at Massport. Two Enforcement Orders were issued for noncompliance with an Order of Conditions and filling in wetlands. The decision expected from DEP (OADR) on the MBTA appeal filed in 2021 was not issued.

## NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISION

Delia R. J. Kaye, Natural Resources Director  
Albert Comins, Natural Resources Assistant Director  
William J. Holden, Land Manager  
Karen T. Bockoven, Administrative Assistant

In addition to providing technical and administrative support to the Natural Resources Commission, Division staff are responsible for the stewardship of more than 1,500 acres of Town conservation and other town-owned land (including White Pond Reservation), maintaining over 37 miles of trails, and mowing 84 acres to maintain trails and open meadows. The Division's new compact utility tractor greatly enhanced the ability to effectively undertake land management projects including invasive species removal and conservation land mowing. Major invasive species removal efforts were undertaken at Punkatasset Preserve in an effort to slow the spread of invasive species into Estabrook Woods. Two densely infested areas, the potato patch and the orchard, were prioritized this year, with plans for subsequent efforts in the future.

Conservation land stewardship is made possible by the dozens of volunteers that participate in volunteer projects and events each year. Just over 30 projects with volunteer contribution were completed this year across 14 properties and trails, totaling almost 1,000 hours of volunteer time. Dedicated trail stewards removed 168 downed trees across trails, refilled mutt mitts and trail maps, conducted trail vegetation trimming, along with general monitoring and reporting. The annual Garlic Mustard Pull and Concord Cleanup were held again this year. Division staff and volunteers continued to manage six pollinator meadows at Baker Ave boat launch trail, Barrett's Mill Farm, Cousins Field, Heywood Meadow, and at the DPLM offices. Volunteers also assisted in developing pollinator kits, funded by a Garden Club grant, which were distributed at the Emerson Umbrella at its Earth Day celebration.

Two Eagle Scout projects were undertaken this year. The first project focused on constructing five new water bars at Punkatasset Preserve to improve trail

drainage and reduce erosion. The second project aimed at improving a roughly 800-foot section of the Emerson-Thoreau Amble, behind the Police/Fire station, with bog bridge installations and repairs. 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.

Warner's Pond: The Division contracted with EA Engineering, Science, and Technology Inc. to evaluate three possible alternatives to restoring the Warner's Pond System including modified dredging, dam removal, and no action. An alternatives analysis was completed in May which identified dam removal as the preferred alternative and a total of three community meetings were held in March, May, and November. EA continued its work under a new contract to develop thirty percent design plans for a project to remove the Warner's Pond dam. Hearing concerns from some in the community about the possibility of removing the dam, the NRC initiated the development of a Warner's Pond Task Force to evaluate all options for the pond system and recommend a course of action to the NRC by December 2024. The task force charge was revised multiple times through December and is expected to be finalized in early 2024.

White Pond: Working closely with the Health Division, the Division oversaw the contract for the innovative A-Pod technology to collect and remove cyanobacterial harmful aquatic blooms (cyanoHABs) from White Pond. Division staff also conducted water quality monitoring over the season. This is the second full season of the APod technology implementation, and the second season (since 2021) that health guidelines for cyanoHABs were not exceeded.

Grant Applications: The Division submitted three applications for Community Preservation Act funding: a request for \$30,000 towards purchase of two Sentinel APods to continue water quality improvement efforts at White Pond; \$60,800 towards the restoration of a 50foot section of failing

stone wall along Heywood Street; and \$72,500 for survey and design to replace degraded stairs used to access the Hillcrest conservation land.

Conservation Crew and Rangers: Ranger DeAnna Collins returned to educate multiple visitors to Estabrook Trail, White Pond, Punkatasset, Town Forest, Mattison Field, and other lands for compliance with posted rules and regulations. Shelby Guinard returned for a second season as a Conservation Crew member, joined by Mike Murray. Their primary duties consisted of mowing, trail maintenance, invasive vegetation removal, and general maintenance on conservation lands throughout Town. The Crew continued monitoring and hand pulling efforts to remove water chestnut from Hutchins Pond, Macone Pond, and Warner's 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, tall grass, and poison ivy. The crew constructed three new property signs, restored two signs, and constructed three additional signs for sensitive restoration areas at White Pond Reservation. Lastly, they contributed to a variety of volunteer invasives removal and trail building projects, proving to be critical contributors to these projects.

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 of Natural Resources with its land management responsibilities on the 80 plus parcels with Conservation Restrictions. This year the committee members completed twenty-one monitoring reports and continued debugging a new GIS system. Members of the CRSC during 2023 were Mary Ann

Lippert (chair), Annemarie Altman, Peter Blau, and Arthur Schwope (secretary).

Heywood Meadow Stewardship Committee: The HMSC continued to work on previously initiated projects. The 2005 Landscape Preservation Plan revision is complete and accompanying photos are being selected. Upon completion, the Committee will present the revised Plan to the Natural Resources Commission for approval. The Plan illustrates the HMSC's mission to balance the important historic and environmental qualities of the Meadow. This year was focused on maintaining the Meadow and finding ways to interpret the Meadow to the public. To this end small signs (paddles) with a brief commentary and QR code linked to a longer narrative are under development. The HMSC applied for CPA monies to rebuild the deteriorating retaining wall on the West Meadow near Mill Brook. This was a year of change for the membership of the Committee. Sadly, in April, long time member and former Clerk Murray Nicolson, passed away. In September, Sandy Smith who served as Clerk, Battery representative, and editor of the newly revised Landscape Plan resigned and was replaced by Battery Representative John Thompson. In December, Joanne Gibson and Susan Clark stepped down after several years as co-chairs and will remain as members. Peter Lee was elected as Chair, Cris Van Dyke will serve as Vice Chair, David Bell as Clerk, and John Thompson as Vice Clerk. Other members of the Committee include Lola Chaisson, Mary Clarke and Stan Lucks.

Trails Committee: The Trails Committee continues with its core mission of overseeing the maintenance and improvement of conservation trails, keeping them in good condition for walkers' enjoyment. Severe weather events caused considerable tree damage on trails that our chainsaw trained members cleared in record time. To assist with trails in the Hanscom Massport property, trail volunteers built a more substantial replacement bridge for one that had washed out. Special emphasis was given to restoration of the Old Rifle Range, with removal of debris and construction of retaining walls to protect historic target raising structures, development of informational signage, and relocation of a badly eroded hillside trail to an alternate wooded route. Two Eagle Scout projects

made improvements to trails with a set of water bars at Punkatasset Preserve and repairs to bog bridges on the Emerson-Thoreau Amble. Plans are being made to improve problem sections of trails at Hapgood Wright Town Forest, with relocation and erosion abatement.

Being vigilant of trail needs and correcting obstructions to assure walkers' safe access is a never-ending task handled by dedicated Stewards and Trail Committee members. Longtime member and committee co-founder Ken Miller retired from the committee, replaced by Bouke Noordzji. Committee members include Spencer Borden, David Clarke, Carlene Hempel, Bill Kemeza, Jonathan Keyes, Bouke Noordzji and Bob White (Chair).

Conservation Land Use Permits: A total of 19 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 17 agreements over more than 220 acres of actively farmed land.

Marshall Farm: Several maintenance and improvement projects were completed at Marshall Farm including reskinning the smaller greenhouse with new plastic, replacing an old shed with a larger one, and paving half the driveway.

The eggplant crop did well this year while the tomato crop suffered from the rain. It was not a total loss, but the crop would have improved with drier conditions. Part of Rogers Field was utilized for butternut squash, which was also somewhat down due to the weather conditions. Rogers field, Harrington Park, and three other fields were used for rotational grazing of egg birds. This practice is vital to the soil nutrient levels and health of the chickens. The previous flock of egg laying hens was replaced with new birds of a different breed that are easier to raise and maintain, and meat chickens were also raised successfully. Some of the birds were lost to wildlife such as owls, hawks, and especially foxes. One acre of land was allocated for fresh cut flowers,

which are always in high demand.

**Barrett's Mill Farm:** Barrett's Mill Farm finished their 10th season in 2023 and signed another 5-year lease that will begin in March of 2024. The farm continues to be run by Melissa Maxwell and Lise Holdorf along with 12 - 15 seasonal crew members who work in the fields, high tunnels and farmstand. They grow certified organic vegetables including annual vegetables and perennial asparagus, fruit (watermelon and strawberries), and flowers, on 14.5 acres of tillable land. Barrett's Mill Farm continued to operate a farm stand open to the public 5 days a week and had a 223member CSA including eight discounted memberships to families using SNAP benefits and four donated memberships to Minuteman Arc and Dignity in Asylum. In addition, vegetables were donated weekly to the Boston Area Gleaners. The growing season was most notable for the large amount of rainfall. The rain impacted yields of summer crops such as eggplant, field tomatoes, and watermelon. Once again, the four high tunnels were a highlight of the season as they produced high quality and high yields of cucumbers, tomatoes and peppers, crops that do not typically like the cool wet weather. Other highlights of the season included great crops of sunflowers, green beans, and shishito peppers which are very popular at the farm stand and CSA.

**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 2023, its 29th growing season, the farm donated 123,000 pounds of organic produce and over 2,300 cut flower bouquets to 17 food pantries, shelters, emergency meal programs and schools in Concord, Lowell, Boston, and throughout the MetroWest. Gaining Ground now supplies 2,100 foodinsecure households each week during the height of the growing season. As of 2023, there are five hoop houses, 10 caterpillar tunnels, and 14 hedgerows on the property in addition to the timber frame barn. Gaining Ground continues to take part in the New England tradition of maple sugaring in February and March, this year harvesting over 1,500 buckets of sap and finishing 37.8 gallons of syrup to be donated. Typically farm staff work alongside 2,500 volunteers from April to November, educating schools,

corporate, faith-based and community groups, as well as individuals and families, about its hunger relief mission and regenerative, no-till farming methods.

**Community Gardens:** The longstanding 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 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!

**Cousins Field:** Cousins had a successful gardening season in 2023. The ever-changing climate always gives something to challenge gardening skills, and this summer was no different. Despite the relentless rainy weather, gardeners again grew a variety of gorgeous flowers and delicious vegetables. Tomatoes and eggplants didn't flourish this summer, but other vegetables and flowers loved the rainier than normal conditions, and everyone loved having a break from constantly needing to water their plots. Ricky Marshall again plowed the garden in April so early crops could be planted. The four no-till gardens did well and more plots may be added. Working with Division staff, the invasive bishop's goutweed that borders the garden was cut back and covered in black plastic and wood chips in an effort to stop the spread of this fast moving, destructive weed.

**East Quarter Farm:** East Quarter Farm Community Garden (EQF) experienced a moderately successful summer season in the face of weather challenges and access to the field. The gardener population remained steady at around twenty-seven with families or individuals working various size plots including annual, perennial and no-till. This year, the farmer who traditionally tills EQF announced his retirement with little time to get a replacement, and CPW tilled the field in time for the season opening. Summer weather brought extremes: very hot temperatures as well as cool days with much rain which brought

## WEST CONCORD JUNCTION CULTURAL DISTRICT COMMITTEE (WCJCDC)

Susan Beck  
Carolyn Bottum, Chair  
Helene Clayton  
Jennifer Hurley-Wales  
Susan LaChance, Clerk  
Anne Mauk  
Chris Randall

vigorous weed growth. The access path to the field was under water much of the season and on many days the simple bridge built to traverse collected water did not sufficiently provide access. Storms blew down trees, brush, and debris on the path, with the Division cleared away enough for gardeners to get to their plots. Although many gardeners fenced their plots, the abundance of plants all around allowed the deer to get enough food in other areas, and for the most part they stayed clear of EQF gardens. Despite these many challenges, gardeners worked their plots to produce a good harvest and retained a strong sense of community by stepping up to meet these challenges together.

**Hugh Cargill Community Garden:** This spring HGCC welcomed sixteen new gardeners. Regular heavy rains caused persistent flooding in the garden and kept many plots underwater for much of the growing season. A beaver dam on the Mill Brook caused early-season flooding on the north side of the garden. The drainage ditch along Walden Street helped move water from plots, but it was still a disappointing season for many. The drier plots did quite well, and no one had to water their crops. Deer pressure was less than in past years, but fencing was still critical for tender crops. Spring tillage was done by Brian Cramer from Hutchins Farm.

**Rogers Community Garden:** Rogers Community Garden had a wonderful wet year. Though it was a difficult year for tomatoes, many gardeners put in significant effort and enjoyed good yields of vegetables, herbs and flowers. The compost system was reorganized into a threebin system and there are plans to enhance a pollinator garden in the field next year.

### 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.

The West Concord Junction Cultural District Committee (WCJCDC) serves to bring awareness to and promote the unique cultural, entrepreneurial, and historical character of the West Concord Junction Cultural District. Through our projects and collaborative outreach, we offer support to the arts and business communities to enhance quality of life in the District and to attract visitors to arts organizations and performance spaces, shops, restaurants, and recreational areas.

A primary focus this year has been to enhance the visibility of the business district and bring new visitors from Concord and beyond to their doors. First, we worked with businesses to create 38 profiles for the Office of Tourism's Visit Concord website. This effort included visiting each business, taking photographs, and assisting in writing vibrant and enticing descriptions of the business's offerings.

In addition, using funds from a grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, we produced a short video highlighting the District's eclectic attractions, including our specialty shops and both gourmet and casual restaurants, our public art including a number of murals, our graphic, musical, and dramatic arts institutions, our passive and active recreational areas, and our industrial history. The video is available to view on the Visit Concord website.

We participated in our business district's Discover West Concord Day and the Holiday Stroll, organized by local businesses and the West Concord Green Thumbs, by offering fun and meaningful activities for the whole family. For Discover West Concord Day in October, passers-by participated in "Leaf

Your Mark On West Concord" by creating beautiful painted leaves out of aluminum foil that were attached to the John Forbes Arch so they could flutter in the breeze. During the December Holiday Stroll, we handed out over 200 colorful jingle bells that Holiday Strollers attached to shoes, zippers, glasses, headbands, strollers, a wheelchair, and more in order to "Make a Joyful Noise." Adults and children alike also wrote "Wishes for the World," ranging from peace and kindness to ice cream and family, on ribbons that they then attached to the John Forbes Arch, replacing the foil leaves created earlier in the fall.



*Two girls enjoy jingles given out at the Holiday Stroll.*

In order to continue our support for public art in the Village District, we used a portion of our annual grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council to provide financial support for a collaborative mural, coordinated by Art for All, celebrating the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail. The mural is a map of the Trail showing features of each town along the way as well as historical information about how the Trail came to be. It was designed by lead artist Mike Sprague and includes contributions from 100 community members including painters and photographers.

Finally, we continued a project begun in 2022 to highlight the District's industrial heritage with funds from the Massachusetts Cultural Council as well as local corporations Trashology, Green Labs Recycling, and Plug. The centerpiece of the project is a 24' x 8' mural on the side of 40 Beharrell Street depicting "a diverse group of people interacting with the local industrial spaces, transportation, housing, shopping and activities that helped West

Concord grow as a town more than a century ago," according to Edward Feather, who designed the mural and led a team of West Concord artists who painted it. The project was completed in 2023 with the addition of a plaque that details more about the mural along with a list of sponsors and artists who participated.

While an even bigger and better 2023 Porchfest with an expanded number and area of venues and many more musicians was planned, extremely rainy weather on both the day of the event and the rain date forced us to cancel both days. The very wet conditions would not only have dampened the number of people attending, but potentially ruined musical instruments and equipment. The Committee looks forward to bringing Porchfest back in June, 2024.

In July, the Committee and the Office of Economic Vitality and Tourism hosted a meeting with Michael Bobbitt, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Cultural Council, staff of the Massachusetts Cultural Council, and representatives from the cultural districts and arts communities of surrounding communities. Those attending toured the West Concord Junction Cultural District with its many murals, artist studios, and gallery spaces and held a discussion with Mr. Bobbitt and other Massachusetts Cultural Council staff about how we can collaboratively support the arts and culture in our communities.



*Unveiling of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail mural, May, 2023. – Margot Kimball (speaker), others are unidentified members of the public.*

## COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

*The annual term of service for Community Preservation Committee (CPC) members runs from June 1 to May 31.*

### **2022/2023 Town Meeting Funding Cycle – CPC Members**

Diane Proctor, Chair (Select Board Appointee)  
Burton Flint, Vice Chair (Select Board Appointee)  
Paul Boehm, Treasurer (Recreation Commission Appointee)  
Andrew Boardman (Planning Board Appointee)  
John Cratsley (Select Board Appointee)  
Sarah Grimwood (Natural Resources Commission Appointee)  
Eve Isenberg (Select Board Appointee)  
Nancy Nelson (Historical Commission Appointee)  
Charles Phillips (Housing Authority Appointee)

### **2023/2024 Town Meeting Funding Cycle – CPC Members**

Burton Flint, Chair (Select Board Appointee)  
Eve Isenberg, Vice Chair (Select Board Appointee)  
Paul Boehm, Treasurer (Recreation Commission Appointee)  
John Cratsley (Select Board Appointee)  
Sue Felshin (Planning Board Appointee)  
Sarah Grimwood (Natural Resources Commission Appointee)  
Nancy Nelson (Historical Commission Appointee)  
Ed Larner (Housing Authority Appointee)  
Diane Proctor (Select Board Appointee)

Established under MGL c 44B, the Community Preservation Act (CPA) helps Massachusetts communities preserve open space and historic resources, create affordable housing, and develop outdoor recreational facilities to benefit the public.

Concord is one of 196 Massachusetts communities that have adopted the CPA and, accordingly, the town levies a one and a half percent surcharge on all real estate property tax bills and applies the proceeds to the Concord Community Preservation Fund. The CPC receives applications for grants each September and, following the CPC's evaluation of each application, submits a warrant article with the committee's spending recommendations to Concord's Annual Town Meeting for consideration. Under extraordinary special circumstances, like those encountered in 2022 and 2023, the CPC will

propose "out of cycle" grants for consideration at Special Town Meetings.

### **2023 Annual Town Meeting – Recommendations Approved**

In the fall of 2022, the Committee received eleven new applications, one of which was withdrawn. There was a reduction of \$314,061 in available funding compared to the prior year, yet the Committee was able to meet all requests.

On January 3, 2023, the CPC voted to recommend an allocation of \$1,839,680 in CPA funds to ten projects, that were then included in a warrant article for consideration by the 2023 Annual Town Meeting. These funding recommendations were approved at the Town Meeting without alteration, as noted below. Grant Agreements and Memoranda of Understanding are in place for the following projects:

#### **Community Housing Projects:**

Town of Concord—Regional Housing Services Program. \$33,000 to support the Town's participation in the Regional Housing Services Program.

Concord Housing Development Corporation—Assabet River Bluff Housing Development. \$500,000 to support the development of five restricted affordable housing units on the recently acquired real property by the CHDC commonly known as Assabet River Bluff.

#### **Open Space and Recreation Projects:**

Town of Concord—Bruce Freeman Rail Trail. \$50,000 to provide additional amenities to enrich and enhance the user experience of the BFRT such as safety improvements at Junction Park, interpretive/contemplative improvements adjacent to the Concord Prison Cemetery site on the BFRT right of way and additional plantings and signage along the trail.

**Town of Concord—Open Space and Recreation Plan Update.** \$95,450 to hire a consultant to assist in the preparation of an update to the Concord Open Space and Recreation Plan.

**Town of Concord—Warner's Pond Restoration Project.** \$550,000 to design, plan and construct

ecological improvements and recreational opportunities at Warner's Pond.

### **Historic Preservation Projects**

**Town of Concord—Cemetery Restoration Project.** \$340,000 to restore thirty-five deteriorating stone walls and structures in Concord's three historic cemeteries: Old Hill Burying Ground, South Burying Ground and Sleepy Hollow Cemetery.

### **Town of Concord—Civil War Soldiers' Monument.**

\$165,000 to preserve and conserve the Civil War Soldiers' Monument and to replace the current tablet, adding the name of Private George W. Dugan, 54th Mass. Vols.

### **Town of Concord—Historic Preservation Plan**

**Project.** \$50,000 to hire a team of preservation consultants to assist in the creation of a Historic Preservation Plan for the Town.

### **Town of Concord—Preservation of Historic Plans.**

\$16,230 to provide for the conservation treatment and digitization of two plans of the Concord Water Works (1874-875) and seven sheets comprising Town Plans of Concord (1907-1910).

### **Administration**

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

### **Ongoing Projects**

At year end, there are nineteen ongoing projects from previous years in addition to the ten new appropriations in 2023. Thirty six projects were completed and closed out in 2023.

### **Community Preservation Plan and Procedures Manual**

A new Procedures Manual was adopted on January 3, 2023.

### **Warrant Articles relating to Junction Village, Special Town Meeting (January 2023) and Annual Town Meeting (May 2023)**

The CPC previously granted funds for the Junction Village/Christopher Heights community housing

project. When that project was cancelled, the CPC submitted a warrant article for the Special Town Meeting in January 2023 to rescind prior grants for that project in the sum of \$1,044,255.76, and to appropriate that amount to the CPC Community Housing Reserve Fund. On January 3, 2023, the CPC voted to submit two related warrant articles for the Annual Town Meeting in May. The following CPC recommendations were approved at the 2023 Annual Town Meeting:

1. Appropriate \$1,044,255.76 for the development of affordable community housing to be expended under the direction of the recently created Concord Municipal Affordable Housing Trust (CMAHT).
2. Rescind a prior grant for the Junction Village Open Space project in the sum of \$250,000 and appropriate that amount to the CPC Open Space Reserve Fund.

### **2024 Annual Town Meeting Recommendations**

The CPC held informational meetings in April and May of 2023 for potential applicants. In September, the Committee received nineteen new applications, all of which were eligible for 2024 Annual Town Meeting funding, but two of them were ultimately withdrawn. Requests for community housing funds significantly exceeded those of previous years, due in part to the creation of the CMAHT and the needs identified in the 2022 Housing Production Plan. Together, CPC members and applicants identified which housing projects were best funded by CPC and which were best funded by the CMAHT. Consequently, two community housing applications were withdrawn from CPC and submitted instead to CMAHT.

Fortunately, the funding projection of \$2.583 million exceeded the \$1.878 million in CPA funds requested by applicants. The Committee met seven times between September and December 2023 to interview applicants and evaluate projects. On December 5, 2023, the CPC voted to recommend that \$1,878,320 in CPA funds be appropriated for seventeen applications as a warrant article for the upcoming 2024 Annual Town Meeting.

## HISTORIC DISTRICTS COMMISSION

### *Commission Members:*

Luis D. Berrizbeitia, Chair  
Melinda Shumway, Vice Chair  
Katharine Mast, Secretary  
Kate Chartener  
Paul Ware

### *Associate Commission Members:*

Walter Clay  
Dennis Fiori  
William Huyett  
Timothy Whitney

As an early leader in the preservation movement in this state so rich with history, the Concord Historic Districts Commission (HDC) was established by the Massachusetts Legislature in May 1960 by a Special Act and charged with promoting “the educational, cultural, economic and general welfare of the public through the preservation and protection of buildings, places and districts of historic or literary significance...” within the districts. The HDC strives to preserve, maintain, and create physical structures and spaces that enhance Concord’s reputation as one of the most historically significant towns in the United States. Its six historic districts—the American Mile, Barrett Farm, Church Street, Hubbardville, Main Street, and Monument Square/North Bridge--deserve special attention because they contribute to our shared understanding of American history and quality of life.

The HDC is unusual in that it is a local community resource responsible for assets with national significance. It works cooperatively with applicants to discover, unveil, and apply design elements that preserve the unique historical and architectural character of the districts. This process is assisted by frequent consultations with the Concord Historical Commission such that actual historic references are considered. The Senior Planner assigned to the HDC provides insights into historic sites and structures, and the implications of the proposed changes from the perspective of Local, State, and Federal guidelines and regulations. The HDC also works constructively with prospective applicants from the public, private and non-profit sectors who bring preliminary designs for informal

discussions with HDC Commissioners. These conversations assist the applicant in understanding the opportunities and constraints relevant to the historic site, and the considerations that make an application successful. HDC meetings are always open to the public who are encouraged to comment on the applications.

The HDC follows objective standards from the Concord Historic Districts Act, Design Guidelines, Rules and Regulations, and Guidelines for Administration, as well as national guidelines for the treatment of historic properties. All these are public documents available on the HDC web site. Its volunteer members are appointed by the Select Board from nominees forwarded by the Select Board itself, the Planning Board, the Commission of Natural Resources, the Concord Free Public Library, and the Concord Museum. This process allows the HDC to represent a broad spectrum of the Concord community and to reflect its values and its aspirations for the historic present and the historic future of Concord.

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 street, way or place, and issues Certificates of Appropriateness (COA). In 2023, the HDC held twenty-one (21) regularly scheduled public meetings at which seventy-five (75) applications for Certificates of Appropriateness were reviewed. The Commission approved sixty-five (65) Certificates, twelve of which were amendments to previous approvals, and five of which were for extensions of existing Certificates. Four applications were withdrawn without prejudice and five applications were denied. The Commission also conducted eleven (11) official (and many informal) site visits during the year.

- 9 COA involved major construction and major alterations such as new construction, demolition, or adding a new store front or terrace.
- 36 COA involved design changes such as doors, windows, fences, siding, chimneys, solar panels, heat pumps, etc.

- 15 COA involved minor modifications such as paint, shutters, benches, and signs.

During 2023, commission Member Luis D. Berrizbeitia served as Chair, Melinda Shumway as Vice-Chair, and Katharine Mast as Secretary. Ann Clifford served as Senior Planner for the Town of Concord to the HDC. Due to a change of residency and the completion of terms, the Commission bid farewell to Luis Berrizbeitia, Henry Moss and Paul Ware, whose years of commitment, hard work, expertise, and contributions to the HDC are recognized and appreciated.

## HISTORICAL COMMISSION

### *Members:*

Alan Bogosian, Chair  
 Michael Capizzi  
 Nancy Fresella-Lee  
 Ryan Hanley  
 Melissa Saalfield

### *Associate Members:*

Francesca Cataldo  
 Nancy Nelson

Highlights of 2023, the 50th anniversary year of the Concord Historical Commission, include:

### **Historic Preservation Plan**

The Planning Division and Historical Commission received funding from the Community Preservation Committee and Massachusetts Historical Commission to create an historic preservation plan for Concord that supports integrated, cross-disciplinary goals set forth in the Envision Concord – Bridge to 2030 long-range plan and reflects national preservation priorities. In the two decades since the last Concord preservation planning document was written, dramatic societal and environmental changes helped reshape the approach to the practice of preservation. National preservation priorities include: 1) expanding the narrative to reflect a more complete and inclusive American story relevant to all; 2) supporting sustainability while preparing for and responding to climate change and extreme weather events; 3) addressing the housing crisis; and 4) encouraging economic vitality in the wake of the global pandemic. The project launched at the end of 2023 and will continue through 2024.

### **Nomination to America’s 11 Most Endangered Places**

In response to the proposed expansion of Hanscom Airport for private luxury jet infrastructure, the Historical Commission worked with Save Our Heritage to nominate the Minute Man National Historical Park and its historic environs for re-listing on America’s 11 Most Endangered Places.

### **Demolition Review Permits**

The Concord Historical Commission

(Commission/CHC) received seventeen (17) applications for Demolition Review in 2023. Five (5) of these structures were found to be “historically significant” and required a public hearing. Three were determined to be “preferably preserved,” with a one-year delay imposed from the date of their public hearing. The Sanborn Middle School and one other property were found to be “not preferably preserved.” Properties currently under a one-year delay are 23 Revolutionary Road and 768 Elm Street.

### **Scenic Roads Bylaw**

The Commission participated in the development of rules and regulations that will govern the implementation of the new Scenic Road Bylaw adopted in 2022.

### **Section 106 Review– Route 2A/The Battle Road**

The Commission continued its review of the Mass DOT and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) plans to provide traffic calming measures and pedestrian accommodations as part of the resurfacing of Route 2A/The Battle Road. The CHC submitted multiple letters to local, state, and national officials seeking to minimize changes that could compromise the structures and landscapes associated with Minute Man National Historical Park and archaeological sites yet to be excavated.

### **Section 106 Review – Minute Man National Historical Park – Great American Outdoors Act**

The Commission continued its review of proposed extensive Great American Outdoors Act projects involving landscapes, structures, signage and archaeology at the Minuteman National Historical Park.

### **Historic Preservation Awards**

In May, the Commission presented Preservation Awards to the following properties: 1780 House, 15 Monument; 19 Thoreau Court; 17 Laws Brook Road; 46 Hubbard Street; the Lorenzo Eaton House; 70 Monument Square; Hallowell Farm; Concord Academy; Buttrick Gardens; Sleepy Hollow Cemetery. Archaeologist Shirley Blancke received an award for lifetime achievement/preservationist of the year.

### **Wright Tavern - Preservation Restriction and Review**

On behalf of the town, the Commission oversees preservation restrictions for several historic properties in Concord: Thoreau Farm, Our Ladies Church/Concord Youth Theater, 309 Garfield Road, and the West Concord Depot. The Massachusetts Historical Commission is currently reviewing a draft Preservation Restriction for the Wright Tavern, a National Historic Landmark. As a steward of this national treasure, the Commission reviewed proposed repairs and rehabilitation work at the Tavern owned by First Parish Church and will continue to monitor and review progress.

### **Survey of pre-1775 Structures**

The Planning Division and Historical Commission applied to the Community Preservation Committee for funds to survey reported pre-1775 structures to inform preservation decisions, interpretive programming, heritage tourism and economic vitality for 2025 and beyond. This grant request will be decided at the 2024 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

The Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Advisory Committee (“BFRTAC”) focuses on protecting, preserving, and promoting the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (“BFRT”). It solicits input and deliberates on the needs and interests of all BFRT stakeholders including, but not limited to those who are residents, non-residents, disabled, pedestrians, cyclists, abutters, and others. The BFRTAC provides recommendations to the Select Board and Town Manager. The BFRTAC was created in 2005 with its original charge to focus on planning and construction of the multi-use trail through Concord. In 2023 Phase 2B (which includes the bridge over Rt.2) was dedicated and Phase 2D (connecting the trail to Sudbury) was started.

BFRTAC members as of the end of the year are Nat Welch (co-chair), Adrienne Boardman (co-chair), Mary Beth Barker, Dorcas Miller, Sam Stearns, Brian Crouse (new), & Joanne Crowell (new). Members who ended their terms in 2023 included Richard Fahlander (co-chair), Tracey Hansen, Deborah Adleman, and John Soden. The Committee would like to extend thanks to these retired members for their years of service. In May, Adrienne Boardman and Nat Welch were elected as co-chairs.

Highlights, programs, and initiatives of the BFRTAC in 2023:

- Reviewed and supported the placement of an 8x24 foot mural: a map of the BFRT from Framingham to Lowell at Beharrell Street near the bike rental kiosk.

- The Phase 2B dedication took place on October 31st with a ribbon-cutting ceremony by local dignitaries and a large crowd in attendance.
- Advocated for immediate improvements at the pedestrian crossing at the West Concord MBTA station where two wheelchair users had gotten their front wheels stuck in the gap where the rails were. The MBTA upgraded the crossing to be ADFA compliant.
- Continued to solicit public input, including monthly meetings and site visits, on topics concerning Junction Park safety recommendations and the West Concord MBTA Crossing.
- The BFRTAC continued a partnership with Concord Prison Outreach and voiced support for a Concord Preservation Committee (CPC) application for the Concord Reformatory Cemetery project “Naming the Unnamed” which intends to create a contemplative sitting area and informational kiosk where the BFRT passes by the Cemetery.
- The BFRTAC worked with the Select Board to update the Committee’s charge to reflect its new mission and consolidate membership including addition of a member from the Commission on Disabilities.
- Monitored and advocated for the completion of Jerrow Park.
- Reviewed and approved various signage along the trail including interpretive and other signs.
- Regularly reviewed the bike share program which has a station near the MBTS parking lot.

Priorities for 2024 include:

- Figuring out how to implement the “long-term solution” for Junction Park:

separating wheeled users from other trail and Park users.

- Exploring how to fund an engineering and design project that would create an ADA-compliant connection between the BFRT and the new Concord Middle School.
- Gaining public input on trail usage and safety in the winter months to identify considerations and/or a recommendation to the Town of whether to clear snow or leave snow-covered.
- Continuing to evaluate how to address key safety issues including the use of e-bikes, speed limits, road crossing signals, and trail congestion.

The BFRTAC would like to extend thanks to the Town's staff who have supported our efforts throughout the year and to the Friends of Bruce Freeman Trail for their ongoing partnership and extensive support.

## CONCORD LAND CONSERVATION TRUST

### *Concord Land Conservation Trust Trustees:*

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

### *Concord Open Land Foundation Directors:*

Thomas C. Tremblay, President  
F. Robert Parker, Treasurer  
Lynn G. Huggins, Secretary  
Jeff Adams  
Jane Gruba-Chevalier, Executive Director

The Concord Land Conservation Trust (P.O. Box 141, Concord, MA) is a tax exempt, 501(c)(3) charitable organization established in 1959. Membership is 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.

In the fall of 2022, Sam Will joined the Land Trust as the Stewardship and Engagement Coordinator following a successful summer internship. Throughout her tenure, under the guidance of Executive Director Jane Gruba-Chevalier, she made significant contributions to several key projects, including revitalizing the Land Trust's Instagram presence (@concordlandconservationtrust), mobilizing CCHS student volunteers, revamping the website and developing GPS-based trail maps (changes forthcoming in 2024), and integrating a new land management conservation software package.

In 2023, dedicated volunteers contributed hundreds of hours in maintaining trail systems, managing exotic invasive plant species, and fostering



*CLCT staff and volunteers built steps along the trail from Independence Rd. into Gowing's Swamp over the summer.*

*Left-Right: Sam Will, Molly Constable, Art Schwoppe*

plant-pollinator interactions. Trail Stewards cleared more than 65 trees from trails, laid 104 feet of boards (called bog bridges) over wet areas between Hallenbeck Land and October Farm Riverfront, and removed more than 20 bags of garlic mustard from trail systems during the annual town-wide pull. Weed Warriors cut back or removed eight different species of invasive plants across multiple Land Trust properties. River Stewards removed 965 bushels of water chestnut from the Sudbury River, opening up the waterway and protecting habitat. In collaboration with the Natural Resources Division and Concord Library's Fowler Branch, volunteers collected native seeds at Brooks-Hudson Meadow and conducted a winter seed sow alongside the Lincoln Land Conservation Trust.

Special projects involved grant funding from the Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA) to continue the ongoing effort to remove buckthorn from the Fairhaven Overlook area of Wright Woods. Additionally, the Concord Garden Club provided a grant for planting self-heal

(*Prunella vulgaris* var. *lanceolata*) in the pathways on the Ferguson Land and Brengle-Ham Field. Noteworthy contributions came from The Fenn School boys, who pulled invasive bittersweet and porcelain berry at the Corey-Bourquin Field, as well as cut back invasive buckthorn along the trails in the Upper Spencer Brook Valley. Local high school student and Boy Scout, Tommy Dohoney, collaborated with the Land Trust to design and complete a new 1,000 ft trail segment at Miller Farm, helping to earn him the rank of Eagle Scout.

Collaborating with the Appalachian Mountain Club, Land Trust staff, trustees, and volunteers successfully installed 26 box steps and drainage at the trail leading from Independence Road into Gowing's Swamp, totaling an impressive 200 person hours over 12 days.

Trustees and staff conducted annual monitoring of conservation restrictions, ensuring protection of conservation values of forests, agricultural fields, and meadows. Members actively participated in Land Trust walks and events throughout the year, with a notable highlight being a well-attended talk by Dr. Robert Gegear of UMass Dartmouth on "Conservation of Native Pollination Systems" at Concord's Free Public Library.

Board member John Bemis retired as a director of COLF after a 16 year tenure. As a lifelong resident of Concord and an organic farmer, John brought a unique and valuable perspective to Land Trust deliberations. He was and continues to be a strong advocate for Concord's agricultural heritage, including shepherding the Right to Farm bylaw through the Town Meeting in 2011. He will continue to serve as an advisor to the organization on agricultural related matters.

At the annual meeting, Land Trust members approved amending the Trust instrument to increase the maximum number of Trustees from seven to eleven. This change enables COLF directors, actively involved in Land Trust meetings and decisions, to be elected as Trustees over time, granting them voting privileges. Thomas Tremblay, a COLF director, was unanimously voted as the first Trustee on the expanded board.

The Land Trust is governed by a dedicated volunteer board, with its operations primarily sustained through annual membership donations. We express gratitude to the generous residents of Concord who have donated land, conservation restrictions, and the funds necessary for acquiring and maintaining conservation land. As one of the oldest local land trusts in the country, we take pride in Concord's longstanding commitment to preserving a balance of land uses, reflective of New England town traditions. We hope all Concord residents treasure the open spaces preserved through their generosity. The Land Trust is unwavering in its commitment to protect and steward these special places for the perpetual enjoyment of Concord residents and all.

## AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

Liza Bemis (Co-Chair)  
Melissa Maxwell (Co-Chair)  
Dan Schmid, Happy Goethert  
Stephen Verrill

Associate Members  
Joe Rogers (Clerk)  
Grace Scimone

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 five members, three of whom are actively engaged in the business of farming and two community members who have an active interest in farming referred to as “friends of farming”. The committee also has two associate members.

The extremely wet 2023 season made for tough conditions on Concord farms. Flooded fields, delays in planting and harvesting due to the weather, and large outbreaks of diseases that flourish in wet humid conditions brought extra challenges this season. Concord farmers rose to meet these trials the best they could, continuing to provide food, forage, and flowers to the community. But this season’s continuous rain coming on the heels of last season’s drought, was one fraught with stress and worry.



*18th Annual Concord Ag Day on Main Street*

2023 also saw the continuation of rising costs in agriculture. Many of the inputs farmers rely on such as potting soil, fertilizer, machinery, and seeds continued to climb as they had in 2022. The cost of living for farmers and farm crew members also continued to increase, necessitating higher hourly wages to be paid to farm workers and increased pressure on farm budgets already stretched thin due to crop losses from the weather.

The Ag Committee hosted a Spring Forum event at the Harvey Wheeler Center on April 26th titled “Turning the soil: the dirt on tillage and no-till.” The event included a presentation by Sam Glaze-Corcoran from UMass about what tillage is and a discussion with Concord farmers about tillage practices at Concord farms of varying sizes. The event was well attended by Concord community at large and by the local farming community from neighboring towns. The event was recorded by Minuteman Media and is available to watch on their YouTube channel.

The 18th annual Concord Ag Day Farmer’s Market was hosted by the Ag Committee in September of 2023. Eight farms participated as well as seventeen Concord non-profits. The event was very well attended and operated smoothly thanks to the Concord Police and Town offices coordination. With the help of volunteers from the community, as well as the generous donation from Vanderhoof Hardware of all the racer wheels and decorations, the expanded Scimone Farm veggie racetrack activities were able to be enjoyed by more families than ever before! In addition to the festivities on Main Street, the Concord Free Public Library partnered with the Concord Conservatory of Music to host a free outdoor concert on the library lawn in celebration of Ag Day. It was a wonderful community event!



*A Veggie Racer ready to test the track.*

# CONCORD HOUSING AUTHORITY

Board of Commissioners  
Stephanie Chrobak, Chair  
Stephan Bader, Vice-Chair  
Edward Larner, Treasurer  
Richard Eifler, Vice-Treasurer  
Bernice Fousek, Tenant Board Member

Executive Director  
Jennifer Polito

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 heterogenous and integrated community.

The Concord Housing Authority (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. This year, a waiver was granted for one of our elected members to be considered the "Tenant Board Member". All programs are dependent on state, federal, and vital local sources of funding and support.

The CHA operates 221 subsidized units in both Public Housing and Section 8 programs and currently serves more than 375 people. Our 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.

## Commonwealth Avenue Project – MassNAHRO Outstanding Agency Award

On September 18, the Concord Housing Authority proudly received an Outstanding Agency Award from Massachusetts NAHRO for their work on the Commonwealth Avenue Project. This project would

not be possible without the tireless efforts from CHA Board Member Rick Eifler.

In 2018, the Town of Concord purchased a parcel of land (Gerow property) on Commonwealth Avenue. By a town meeting vote, a small portion of the parcel was designated for affordable housing. A feasibility study was performed and concluded that the parcel proposed is not a buildable lot unless combined with existing CHA property. The CHA proposed a two-bedroom house on the parcel of land. The total projected budget at the time (March 2021) was \$466,345 and funding was secured through Town Affordable Housing Fund, Town of Concord CPC Fund, Town of Concord HOME Funds and Consortium HOME Funds.

In just a few short months (August 2021), due to the rapidly increasing construction costs, the architect estimated the project to cost \$706,345. The CHA requested an additional \$240,000 from the Town of Concord but was turned down by the Select Board in October 2021.

The CHA put out an RFP for the Acquisition and Development of the property which included the CHA responsible for the sewer connection using CPC funds of \$60,000 and awarded it to Habitat for Humanity of Greater Lowell in April 2022.



*The CHA and Habitat for Humanity broke ground on November 30, 2022. The home is almost completed and soon a deserving family will call this house a home.*



### **CHA Local Properties LLC Property Acquisition Program**

In November 2023 CHA Local Properties LLC was awarded \$400,000 for its CHA Local Properties LLC Acquisition Program. With additional funding from the CHA – we are anticipating purchasing a 2-bedroom unit which will have a Project Based Voucher Subsidy in early 2024.

### **Resident Service Coordinator**

In 2021 the Concord Housing Authority received a Resident Service Coordinator grant through the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities. In April 2023 we partnered with Minuteman Senior Services to provide these important services to our residents. Through this collaboration, Jaso Kuga was named our new Resident Service Coordinator. Our residents have been thrilled to have Jaso working with them. We've incorporated weekly events such as sing-alongs, meditation, yoga and much more!

### **Tenant Board Member**

In January 2021 Governor Baker signed Chapter 358 the Acts of 2020 “An Act Enabling Partnerships for Growth” into law. Sections 70-72 and 88-91 of this law make changes to Chapter 121B regarding Tenant Board Members in Towns by providing for one member appointed by the Governor, three members elected by the Town, and one “tenant board member” to be appointed by the Town. The CHA notified all residents with roughly 10 submitted applications. In late April, the Select Board nominated Bea Fousek, a resident of Peter Bulkeley Terrace to a 5-year term. Tenant board members serve in the same capacity as all other board members who are elected and appointed by the Governor.

### **Two CHA Residents Receive Scholarships**

In 1993 the New England Regional Council of NAHRO (NERC/NAHRO) established the Allan R. Andrews Scholarship Fund in memory of Allan R. Andrews who was the dedicated, creative and effective administrator of the Springfield, Massachusetts Redevelopment Authority. This year, the Concord Housing Authority had two residents receive this prestigious scholarship – Ms. Fatima Mezdad and Mr. Jason Lu. Fatima will be attending the Boston Islamic Seminary as a candidate for a

Masters' Degree in Islamic Religious Leadership. Jason Lu is a graduating senior from the Concord High School who will be attending Princeton University in the fall. On June 27 NERC/NAHRO held their Annual Scholarship Luncheon during their Annual Conference in Portland, ME. Unfortunately, Mr. Lu was unable to participate. Ms. Mezdad accepted the scholarship and thanked committee members.



*CHA resident Ms. Fatima Mezdad receives the Allan R. Andrews Scholarship at the NERC/NAHRO Annual Scholarship Luncheon.*

### **Capital Improvements**

- Boilers at several state-funded family sites
- Porches at Everett Gardens Expansion
- 3 units with new kitchens, baths flooring to be completed in March 2024
- Mold Remediation

### **Upcoming Funded Projects**

- Painting at 2-4 Bartkus Farm Rd.
- Fire panel upgrade

## CONCORD MUNICIPAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST

Keith Bergman, Chair  
Linda Escobedo, Vice-Chair  
Michael Lawson, Clerk  
Frank "Rich" Feeley  
Kerry Lafleur

The Concord Municipal Affordable Housing Trust-- whose Board of Trustees consists of five members appointed by the Select Board, including one member of the Select Board and the Town Manager-- was established in 2021 by the Town's CMAHT Bylaw 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 MGL c.44B, the Community Preservation Act. The Trust complements the Town's existing affordable housing efforts, entities and programs, and can act quickly when affordable housing opportunities arise if funding is available.

Housing Production Plan. The guiding affordable housing policy document for the Town of Concord is now the FY 2023-2028 Housing Production Plan (HPP), which was unanimously adopted by the Select Board and Planning Board in December 2022 and approved by the State in January 2023, with unanimous support of the Concord Housing Authority, Concord Housing Development Corporation, Concord Housing Foundation, and the Trust. As the Concord Housing Roundtable, those six boards plus the Community Preservation Committee are charged with coordinating implementation of strategies in the Housing Production Plan, and are convened quarterly by the Regional Housing Services Office to monitor progress. The Planning Board's proposed MBTA Communities Zoning bylaw to permit multi-family as a use by right at certain locations near commuter rail is a top priority for Roundtable partners, and the Trust supports the requirement that at least 10% of the units created-- or, if supported by the forthcoming economic feasibility analysis, 15% or 20%-- be affordable at 80% of area median income (AMI).

Implementing HPP priority production projects. The Trust seeks to implement the Housing Production Plan's production strategies to create affordable housing units in Concord and to advance HPP priority production projects by inviting applications for Trust funding on a rolling basis as each of those priority projects becomes ready to proceed. As described in the CMAHT Funding Guidelines adopted on September 26, 2023, the Trust will maintain and periodically update-- in coordination with its Roundtable partners-- a list of HPP priority production projects for which the Trust would allocate or reserve available and projected Trust funds, and invite priority project sponsors to complete and submit funding applications to the Trust on a rolling basis as each project becomes ready to proceed.

CMAHT approved Trust funding for the following projects in calendar year 2023:

- 135 Baker Avenue Buy Down - \$38,000 for a buy-down from 80% to 70% of AMI for the resale of 135 Baker Avenue to utilize the State's Universal Deed Rider and ensure this unit can continue to be counted on the Town's Subsidized Housing Inventory.
- CHDC's Small Grant Program - \$50,000 to the Concord Housing Development Corporation to continue for two years its program to provide financial assistance to preserve existing housing units occupied by income eligible households for health and safety purposes.
- CHA's Property Acquisition Program - \$400,000 to CHA Local Properties, LLC for the Concord Housing Authority's program to purchase an existing market rate 1- or 2-bedroom condominium to create an affordable rental apartment.
- CHDC's Buy Down Program - \$266,120 to CHDC for its program to create at least one unit of affordable housing through the buy- down or conversion of existing market rate unrestricted housing to restricted affordable housing.
- CMAHT has also budgeted Trust funds for the following projects expected to apply in FY 2024:

- CHDC: Assabet River Homes development – for CHDC to undertake development of 3 new affordable units on its 1-acre Assabet River Bluff property at 406 Old Marlboro Road. CHDC filed a Planned Residential Development application for this property with the Zoning Board of Appeals, and prepared a request for proposals to select a developer in 2024. The property was acquired at a \$1 million project cost (\$650,000 from the Trust) for 5 affordable units, including an existing 2-family structure.
- CHDC: Junction Village pre-development - for CHDC's pre-development expenses for the reboot of its 12.8-acre Junction Village property at 6X Winthrop Street acquired from the State. CHDC prepared a request for proposals to select a new developer in 2024. Chapter 117 of Acts of 2010 provides that “[s]uch land shall be used for housing, of which 100 per cent shall be deemed affordable housing as determined by the ranges established by [CHDC].” In its RFP, CHDC set “affordable” at 150% of AMI; and will require 25% of the units be at 80% of AMI.
- Town: 91 Main Street Surplus State Property – for the Town to pursue acquisition and pre-development of a 1.4-acre surplus State property at 91B Main Street, which—according to the Executive Office of Housing & Livable Communities-- might be acquired at low or no cost. EOHLIC suggests CMAHT earmark funds for due diligence work, and the Massachusetts Housing Partnership indicates it could provide support with RFP development.
- Town: NOVO Riverside Commons 40B development agreement - for the Town to fund financial provisions of an agreement to be negotiated with the developer of the 40B at 292-294 Baker Avenue, which might include a waiver of a portion of the sewer improvement fee for the project's affordable units (51--25%-- of total 201 rental units).

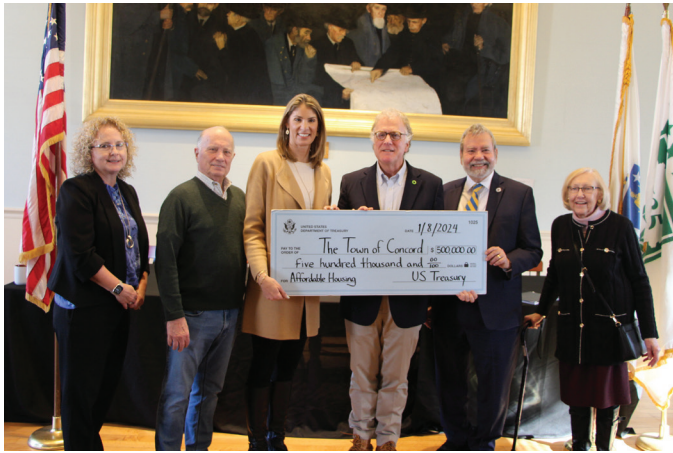
Chapter 40B and Subsidized Housing Inventory. In May 2023, Concord fell below its 10% goal under the State's Chapter 40B, and by year's end two comprehensive permit applications had been filed with the Zoning Board of Appeals to add a total

417 rental units, of which 105 would be affordable. Under Chapter 40B, a community's 10% goal is based on a numerator (the number of countable SHI units) divided by a denominator (the number of year-round housing units as determined by the latest decennial US Census). Concord's goal had been 10% of its 6,852 year-round units for 2010, or 685.2 units; but with 2020 US Census figures released on May 25th, its goal became 10% of 7,172 year-round housing units, or 717.2 units. And while Concord's 715 SHI units scored 10.43% of the 2010 Census total, they scored only 9.97% based on 2020's. As of December 13th, Concord reached 716 units, or 9.98%. Only half of those units are affordable at 80% of AMI; the rest are unrestricted. Concord also has 42 restricted units not counted on the SHI—35 moderate income, and 7 low income / non-SHI eligible. The Trust weighed in with comments on both of the new 40B developments—NOVO Riverside Commons at 292-204 Baker Avenue with 201 rentals (51 affordable), and Residences at Thoreau at 275 Forest Ridge Road with 216 rentals (54 affordable). If ZBA approves NOVO, SHI would increase to 12.77%. If both are approved, 15.78%. For every affordable unit, 3 unrestricted units are added. So there's still work to be done to increase the supply of affordable units at 80%, 100%, and 150% of AMI.

Funding for the Trust. Total revenues of \$4.1 million have been received since 2019, when Town Meeting began setting aside funds for the Trust—of which \$2,044,256 was added by the 2023 Annual Town Meeting's transfer of funds from prior appropriations for the now-defunct Christopher Heights at Junction Village project. Since 2019, some \$1.7 million has been committed for support or creation of 12 affordable units, leaving an uncommitted balance of \$2.4 million by calendar year's end. The Select Board voted on August 28, 2023 to encourage the Trust to pursue additional funding for next year by applying for CPA and ARPA funds, and the Trust is requesting \$500,000 from each. The Town and the Trust are also continuing to pursue state legislation for dedicated funding sources for the Trust, with several bills in play on Beacon Hill, including home rule petitions refiled by the January 2023 Special Town Meeting for a 1% real estate transfer fee and a building permit surcharge. Concord also supports

the LOHA (Local Options for Housing Affordability) Coalition's state-wide local option real estate transfer of fee of 0.5% to 2%. The Governor's \$4-billion housing bond bill, filed in October, includes a similar proposal—the first gubernatorial support for a transfer fee for affordable housing. If enacted, it would raise some \$2 million per year for the Trust.

The Trustees appreciate the continuing efforts of our Housing Roundtable partners—the Select Board, Planning Board, Concord Housing Authority, Concord Housing Development Corporation, Concord Housing Foundation, and Community Preservation Committee-- and are grateful for the support of the Town of Concord and the Concord community as a whole.



*L-R – Town Manager Kerry Lafleur, Michael Lawson, Clerk, Congresswoman Lori Trahan, Keith Bergman, Chair, Rep. Carmine Gentile, and Linda Escobedo, Vice Chair at a check presentation ceremony. Frank “Rich” Feeley not present.*

## CONCORD HOUSING DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Lee Smith, President  
Julie McClure, Vice President  
Peter Lowitt, Treasurer  
Ray Andrews  
Dan Drazen

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 17 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. Most recently, 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 – each home purchased by an eligible family in 2022.

The CHDC acquired a 1-acre property in 2022 as part of the Assabet River Bluff initiative, partnering with the Town and the open space organizations of Sudbury Valley Trustees and the

Concord Land Conservation Trust. The housing project was funded by the Concord Housing Foundation, the Concord Municipal Affordable Housing Trust and CPA funding. The project plans to create 5 units of affordable housing - 3 new units and improvement of an existing 2 family house. The CHDC has made substantial progress in 2023 on both the existing duplex – 406 Old Marlboro Road and the Assabet River Homes (the new construction). The CHDC completed renovations at 406 OMR including installation of fossil-fuel-free HVAC systems, applied for Project Based Vouchers for the units to subsidize the rental units, and is proceeding with required inspections. The CHDC has approved the site design, architectural plans and the landscape plans, which the consultant has used in filing the Planned Residential Zoning permit application. Permitting hearings have started and will continue into 2024.

The CHDC spent considerable time in 2023 talking to the community about Junction Village in a renewed effort to develop the property. Based on community input, the CHDC voted to issue a Request for Proposals seeking a “family” housing development on the site.

The CHDC has also continued its Small Grants Program in 2023, 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 65 grants for \$196,746, half to senior residents. Further information regarding the CHDC Small Grant Program is available on the Town website or from the Town Planning Office. The Concord Municipal Affordable Housing Trust generously provided a grant to fund the Small Grant Program in late 2023 which will enable the program to continue awarding grants for another two years.

The CHDC is an important part of Concord’s housing “family”, collaborating with the Concord Housing Authority, the Concord Housing Foundation and the 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.

## 2229 MAIN STREET OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Paul Boehm, Chair  
Carrie Flood, Vice Chair  
Court Booth  
Frank “Rich” Feeley  
Kurt Herman  
Pamela Hill  
Gary Kleiman  
David Ropeik  
Karl Seidman

### Background

The property at 2229 Main Street is a 46-acre site formerly operated by the defense contractor Starmet (formerly Nuclear Metals, Inc.). Starmet manufactured military equipment for the Army with a license by the Dept. of Energy to incorporate depleted uranium into their products. They also conducted research on other specialty metal products. Starmet’s manufacturing operations resulted in certain site contamination on the property. The site was placed on the U.S. EPA’s National Priorities List (NPL) in 2001 and Starmet sought bankruptcy protection in 2002. The site is currently a Federal “Superfund “site.

Environmental investigations, removal of wastes and cleanup have been occurring since early in the 1980s, first at the direction of the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MADEP) and later, after the site’s listing as a NPL site, jointly with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA).

Cleanup goals for the various areas of the site were established in 2015 through a court- approved “Record of Decision.” The cleanup assessments and methods were incorporated into the 2019 Consent Decree (CD) filed with the U.S. District Court. The CD binds the responsible parties, Textron, Inc. and Whittaker Corp., as well as the Federal Settling Parties, the U.S. Army and the U.S. Department of Energy to fund a trust fund to pay for the site remediation and to fund any additional cleanup required to achieve the “rigorous residential standards.” These standards are characterized by very low levels of residual chemical constituents, which technically allow for children and adults to

live at the site and to make the site available for any and all uses after cleanup.

In 2015, Concord Town Meeting voted to authorize the Select Board to acquire the property and then later to begin to reuse the site when cleanup “to a residential standard” has been accomplished. Since then, significant progress has been made toward clean-up of the site, including removal of contaminated soil from the site, isolation of the holding basin where contaminants were disposed, deconstruction and removal of the buildings and drums with chemical hazards stored on the site. The EPA has set up a website on this Superfund site and has been providing project updates on the progress made by their site contractor, de maximis, Inc.

The Superfund site has received attention from citizens and from the Town for decades. The citizens group CREW, and our “sister” committee, the 2229 Main Street Oversight Committee, have both been monitoring these cleanup efforts for many years. It is anticipated that the Town committee will continue to work with the cleanup contractors and the EPA. The Nuclear Metals/Starmet Property Re-use Planning Committee was formed in 2019 to assist the town with identifying possible ways to reuse the property for maximum public benefit. Their final report was issued in 2021.

In March of 2023 the Select Board approved a charge for a task force, the 2229 Main Street Advisory Task Force.

### The Task Force - Purpose and its Work

The purpose of the 2229 Main Street Advisory Task Force is to recommend to the Select Board whether the Town should acquire the property at 2229 Main Street. Would this be a sensible business decision, and if so, how, when, and under what conditions would the Town acquire it? Nine (9) community members with diverse backgrounds in environmental science, economics, community planning, housing, economics, and law were appointed.

The Task Force is rigorously considering all relevant aspects of the decision-making process including:

- potential uses for the site,

- the health risk and safety of reuses.
- legal aspects of and the preferred pathway for any acquisition – title, liens, potential liability and mitigation,
- aspects of any potential ownership - costs, institutional controls, insurance, etc.
- risk communication and outreach to the public.

The Task Force is also providing information on the option of the Town not acquiring the site and the issues related to that potential outcome as well. The job of the Task Force is to thoroughly research these matters, seek public input, and then make recommendations to the Select Board.



In addition to support provided by Town staff, the Task Force has been fortunate to have access to additional resources provided by the Town, the MADEP, and the USEPA to accomplish its work. This support includes: a Technical Assistance Grant (TAG) from the MADEP with supplemental funding by the Town under which a consultant, Roux Associates, has been hired to examine safety and risk of uses of various parts of the property; funding of and access to a redevelopment consultant SKEO, courtesy of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; and funding from the Town for research

and advice from Town Counsel, Mina Makarios of Andersen & Krieger, LLP.

The Task Force has been meeting bimonthly since May 2023 and held its first Public Forum on November 9, 2023. A report to the Select Board containing the results of its research, deliberations and recommendations is scheduled for delivery on October 31, 2024.



46-acre site at 2229 Main Street.

## WHITE POND TASK FORCE

The members of the White Pond Task Force respectfully submit this report to the Town of Concord Select Board.

### Introduction

White Pond is a 40-acre Great Pond in the Town of Concord. The pond is an ecological, scenic, and recreational resource that must be protected for future generations to enjoy. The Town of Concord owns 34% of the frontage on the pond. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts holds fishing rights with access via a state road and boat launch adjacent to the Town Beach. The remaining pond frontage is privately held.

The land owned by the Town of Concord is used for recreation at the Town Beach and open space at Sachem's Cove. Recent changes in the White Pond watershed such as the acquisition of the Town Beach as well as planned extension of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail and the Cold Brook Crossing development call for the establishment of the best practices needed to protect the pond and the watershed.

The White Pond Task Force began the work set out in the Charge in January 2023. Throughout the year the Task Force has held regular meetings and has researched the primary challenges facing the pond and the watershed. This was accomplished by soliciting the expertise and opinions of the relevant Town staff, outside consultants, and other town committee members as well as by soliciting public input via an online survey.

The Task Force made every effort to include the largest group of stakeholders possible.

The following list of prioritized recommendations was developed based on the feedback and information the Task Force has received over the past year.

White Pond Task Force Mission Statement  
Protect White Pond's ecological health and scenic beauty for the enjoyment of this and future generations.



### Recommendations

1. Support the deployment and maintenance of the A-pods.
2. Continue testing of water quality to assess swimming safety.
3. Support funding of the Conservation Ranger program focused on compliance with the Town's Conservation Land Regulations, with increased ranger time at Sachem's Cove on summer weekend days.
4. Enforcement of parking laws on the State access road/surrounding roads/neighborhoods, and the checking of White Pond membership at the parking lot entrance (versus membership checks at the town beach during the swimming season).
5. Support improved public outreach including the addition of permanent signage in Sachem's Cove with information about available swimming facilities at the Town Beach and the adverse ecological impacts of the destruction of vegetation, addition of nutrients via human and dog waste, etc. Continue to send the "Homeowners Guide to Living Near White Pond" to new residents on the pond regarding appropriate care and maintenance of their properties to maintain pond health, e.g., reduced use of fertilizers and the addition of plantings. (Please see examples of desired permanent signage in the attached addendum)
6. Continue to evaluate the stocking of Rainbow

Trout due to impact on Phytoplankton and potential increase in cyanobacteria blooms.

7. Support maintenance of the pond's ecological health with the off-season deployment of trash receptacles and portable toilets at the Town Beach, funding for DPW maintenance of the state boat ramp run-off mitigation, and maintenance of erosion controls on town-owned land, including new native plantings as appropriate.
8. Support the update of the town-wide wastewater management plan including a review of the potential for sewerage systems that are near the shore on the north side of the pond.

### Future White Pond Team

Establish White Pond Committee (structure TBD) to meet periodically as a coordinating body with the goal of continuing the White Pond Task Force Charge and Mission reporting to the Select Board.



### Addendum

*The photos included are for reference only. These photos are examples of permanent signage noted in Recommendation 5.*

## ECONOMIC VITALITY COMMITTEE

Mimi Graney, Economic Vitality Manager

Among the objectives of Envision Concord 2030 was the creation of the Economic Vitality Manager position to build organizational capacity. The mission is to “address the Town’s economic development goals, working with the business community, artists and cultural organizations, healthcare institutions, managing its village centers, and promoting tourism.” This role was filled in April 2023 with the hiring of Mimi Graney.

Much of the work in the first eight months was foundation setting with the building of working relationships, review of existing plans and studies, and developing an understanding of the commercial environment of Concord. Through this process a work plan and budget were developed to provide a framework for economic vitality efforts.

The Economic Vitality Manager provides staff support to the Economic Vitality Committee, West Concord Junction Cultural District, and Concord Center Cultural District, while closely coordinating with Tourism Manager. Because economic vitality is a cross-sector endeavor, there is close coordination with other town departments as well as a variety of local and regional initiatives. The Manager regularly participates in meetings of the Concord Business Partnership as well as programming of the Concord Chamber of Commerce.

In keeping with the goals of Envision Concord, work began with four key goals:

### **Goal 1: Renew and improve Concord’s village centers as vital pedestrian-friendly, economic, and social hubs that enable community engagement on a wider scale.**

A.) With a grant award from the Massachusetts Community Compact, an Age-Friendly Business Initiative is poised to launch in January 2024 to expand accessibility and inclusion within Concord’s business districts with particular attention to the needs of older residents and visitors. The project will support individual businesses, nonprofits, and other public facing spaces to make their establishment

more accessible to older adults, to share the best practices of Concord’s venues as a model for others through the creation of an Age-Friendly Business Strategies Toolkit, and build cross-sector relationships between businesses, Town staff, Senior Center, and town committees such as the Disabilities Commission and Council on Aging.

B.) Concord secured a place in the Making It Public (MIP) for Massachusetts Municipalities Program presented by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council and New England Foundation for the Arts. Over three months Town staff received training on best practices to commission public art that are in alignment with the principles of fairness, transparency, and accountability in public procurement. Through the program Concord secured funding to release a Call for Temporary Public Art for Monument Square to be installed in Autumn 2024. In addition, technical assistance was provided to develop processes and draft contracts for other public art such as those commissioned by the West Concord Cultural District Committee.

C.) Improvements to the roadway and streetscape of Commonwealth in West Concord negatively impacted area retailers and restaurants over eight months of 2023. Local Love was a promotional campaign executed in collaboration with the West Concord Business Group and Fowler Library to boost sales during the construction period.

D.) Collaborating with the West Concord Junction Cultural District, the businesses of that neighborhood were spotlighted with profiles on the VisitConcord.org website and a “sizzle reel” video.

### **Goal 2: Deepen understanding of the business-oriented environment of Concord**

A.) A detailed business inventory was created to establish baseline data across all commercially zoned properties in Concord to determine patterns in business use, support business recruitment, and identify development opportunities. This data was correlated with the Town’s Assessors database.

B.) A Sewer Improvement Fee is issued by Concord’s Water & Sewer Division when a change of use, renovation or new construction adds additional

volume to the Town's Sewage Treatment plant. A study was drafted to understand the impact of the fee on small businesses and commercial development.

**Goal 3: Foster a business-friendly community to support commercial success throughout town and to attract and retain a constant workforce.**

A.) One-on-one assistance was provided to fourteen business and commercial property owners.

B.) Communication is maintained regularly with the Concord Business Partnership, Concord Chamber of Commerce, as well as Concord250 Committees.

Goal 4: Build local civic and government capacity for economic development with a special focus on (a) related arts, cultural and tourism activities, (b) medical and healthcare specialties, and (c) "green" and environmental businesses.

A.) To facilitate the Food Truck ordinance approved at Town Meeting in 2023 new procedures were developed for the approval of mobile vendors and to assist those seeking to bring a food truck to public or private property. By the end of 2023, the Health Division issued annual permits to eight food trucks who were then eligible to participate in events town-wide.

B.) With additional staff capacity Concord now has representation to represent town interests such as District Day with Representative Lori Trahan, the Middlesex 3 Coalition and Meet Boston.

Top Priorities for 2024 include an updated section on the town website with resources for businesses, executing the Age-Friendly Concord Business Program, overseeing the selection and installation of the temporary art for Monument Square, working with the Economic Vitality Committee to identify policy changes for the 2025 town warrant to support economic vitality, and building capacity to provide one-on-one assistance for small businesses.

## TOURISM 2023

Beth Williams, Tourism Manager

The Tourism Manager provides staff support to the Concord Center Cultural District, Economic Vitality Committee, Concord250 Marketing Committee and serves as one of 2 Concord representatives for the 250th Intermunicipal agreement with Lexington, Lincoln, and Arlington. She collaborates closely with the Economic Vitality Manager. She is a Board member for the Concord Chamber of Commerce, and the Greater Merrimack Convention and Visitor Bureau.

Overall staffing numbers at the Visitor Center grew to 22 with the addition of 3 new tour guides. Staff serve in several different capacities as attendant, tour guide, clerk, and Ambassador at the Minute Man National Historical Park (MMNHP). New staff members include Jeff Driscoll (retired NPS ranger), Natalie Samulka (Concord Academy Senior) and Matt Beres (receiving his MA in History). 2023 annual revenue increased to over \$45,000 a gain of \$5k over 2022 and more than double 2019 pre-covid and pre-hiring of the Tourism Manager. Advance sales continue to grow with both National and International Tour Groups. Collette Tours brought 10 groups to Concord over the months of September and October, and they have already started booking for the 250th anniversary celebrations in 2024, 2025 and 2026. WorldStrides is another large tour and education company that brings over 20 buses each year with the focus on educational travel.

The Tourism Manager attends Discover New England's annual summit and secures groups planning 12 months out and beyond.

Three Visitor Center staff continued to serve as Ambassadors at the MMNHP 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 can provide information which directs them to explore more of Concord, recommending shopping, dining, and other attractions' offerings.

An updated Tourism Benchmark study was

completed by Chris Pappas, a consultant from Open the Door. This document in 2023 celebrated the successful completion of more than 75% of the 2019 document. Notable new and updated deliverables included beginning a yearly visitor survey, increased press announcements/stories and increased partnerships. The recommendation was made for the Tourism Manager to attend Discover new England and IPW (International Pow Wow) trade shows to cultivate business for the upcoming 250th anniversary.

The monthly tourism huddle has grown to include an average of 15-20 participants across all sectors with the most noted reason for attending is “partnerships with other organizations”! By increasing opportunities for sharing and dialog, we can pair up for more successful events and promotions such as partnering between Concord Academy and the Umbrella Arts Center or between the Concord Museum and the Old Manse. In 2023, this group started meeting in person once again with many attractions and organizations hosting us. We also added in guest speakers, ranging from the Director of the Mass Office of Travel and Tourism to the new contractor hired to do an historic preservation project for Concord.

In 2023, a new walking tour partnership was formed with the Concord Armory National Guard. Be one of the first to explore Concord’s 1915 armory and learn about the near 400-year history of the Massachusetts Army National Guard, the oldest component of the United States Armed Forces. Hear stories of remarkable service and view the objects that witnessed war. The tour will also offer participants a special glimpse into the Massachusetts National Guard Museum while it prepares to open to the public. Concord may be famous for April 19, 1775, but its service to the Commonwealth and Nation continue to this very day.

Another new and exciting initiative was the Explore and Learn pass, a partnership with the Concord Museum. This joint ticket offered visitors admission to the Concord Museum and a spot on the Daily Concord Walking tour. The concept of joint ticketing stems from both the Envision Concord Plan as well as the Tourism Benchmark Studies of 2019 and 2023.

The Town of Concord was thrilled to host a tug of war in advance of the famed Army/Navy Game at Gillette Stadium in December! Concord250 committee members came out in force at 7am in winter to cheer on the teams and spread the word about the upcoming celebrations.

In 2023, the Tourism Division began a series of Interpreter Training sessions. Speakers included Sandra Petrolinus, author of “To Make This World Right” and Marvin Alonso Greer, who led us in a conversation about interpreting hard history. In attendance over the 2 sessions were over 50 interpreters from 10 different organizations, ranging from the Concord Museum, Orchard House, Thoreau Farm, Thoreau Society, Robbins House, the Old Manse and more.