

Economic Development and Community Planning
Annual Report
FY2020

The Department of Economic Development and Community Planning mission is to continuously improve the quality of life and promote economic growth, stability and vitality in Uxbridge by supporting existing and new businesses and facilitating investment and economic development that is beneficial to the Town, its neighborhoods and business districts, and that meet or exceed community expectations.

The Department is staffed primarily by the full-time Economic Development and Community Planning Director with limited assistance from the Land-Use administrative staff whose primary functions lie with the Planning Board (full-time) and Board of Appeals (part-time) respectively, as well as interns, work co-op students and Senior Work-off Program participants.

During FY20, the Department collaborated with other Town departments on a variety of projects, studies, programs and grant applications. In addition, new frameworks were crafted for even more collaborative efforts, including a community art event, a Town-owned property strategic plan, and a full range of emergency management policies, procedures, and planning tools.

Economic Development and Community Planning has, in collaboration with the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC), completed Phase I of a two part McCloskey Building Repurpose Study, and is conducting the Regional Emergency Operations Center Study, and the ADA Self Evaluation and Plan that is taking a hard look at municipal buildings and facilities to determine what needs to be done to make each compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act. In addition, the Regional Housing Study was initiated.

The Department is also actively working with the Uxbridge Historical Commission on the development of plans for the future of the Cornet John Farnum House property. The Farnum House is the oldest remaining residential property in Uxbridge. Economic Development and Community Planning also worked with the Historical Society to develop plans and secure funding for a digitalization of the Uxbridge Historic Collection.

In addition, Economic Development and Community Planning played a role in the ongoing Municipal Vulnerabilities Preparedness project, Green Communities and the development of a comprehensive Emergency Management CERT Plan and CodeRed marketing campaign, contributions to both efforts was made by Massachusetts Maritime Academy work co-op student, Shane Keville-Wagner.

Another key project that involved a Massachusetts Maritime Academy Student Intern, Evan Sheehan, was the Municipal Facilities Management Policy and Procedures Project. The project resulted in the crafting of individual operations manuals for each of the Town's municipal buildings.

During the course of the year, the Department worked with the Planning Board and two neighboring communities (Sutton and Douglas) on the development of a new zoning by-law section, Multi-Town Mixed Commerce. Fall Annual Town Meeting approved the new zoning section. In addition, the staff worked with the Planning Board and staff to make improvements to the delivery of service, changes to the Zoning by-law, and the development of long range planning concepts.

Economic Development and Community Planning with the assistance of the Project Review Team (PRT) worked with more than a dozen new businesses during the year, including:

- Bare Naked Greens, LLC
- Baked Beans, LLC
- Blackstone Valley Naturals, LLC
- Deep Roots, LLC
- Grass Appeal, LLC
- Cultivate
- Mainely Productions
- Conception Nurseries
- Coyote.

The professional staff worked closely with the developer of Zipp Industrial Park (Millville Road) as he developed the plans for an all-new industrial subdivision.

Any conversation regarding the year 2020, cannot ignore the impact felt by everyone as we have learned to deal with the impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic. During the initial phases of the outbreak and as the State and local governments imposed restrictions, the Department provided guidance by way of direct email to local business owners and managers. In addition, all notices were posted on the EDCP page of the Town's web site and shared with Town Department heads and key staff so that information would be readily available. Economic Development and Community Planning also co-hosted a (ZOOM) presentation with the Uxbridge Board of Health made to local business owners and managers that provided guidance for re-opening.

As always, the professional staff of the Department of Economic Development and Community Planning wishes to thank the other Town Departments for their support and willingness to collaborate, the businesses, Boards and Committees that have looked to this office for support and information, the Central MA Regional Planning Commission for their partnership and their support and expertise, the aforementioned Shane Keville – Wagner and Evan Sheehan from MMA, Thomas Randy Fields from the Senior Work-Off Program, and Lynn Marchand and Melissa Shelley from the Land Use Department.

The staff and the volunteers yet to come, look forward to working with other Town Departments, local businesses, the Commonwealth of MA, regional planning organizations, and the local education and workforce organizations to answer the call of Uxbridge, to make it a community ready for the next level of excellence and the next level of relevance.