

Director of Planning & Community Development Department 2019 Annual Report

Mission Statement:

The mission of the Director of Planning & Community Development Department is to collaborate with residents, town officials and business owners by following best practices of urban planning and development to progress short- and long-range plans that identify and prioritize the needs of the municipality while promoting a well-designed, livable and thriving community.

Department Overview:

The Director of Planning and Community Development Department consists of one employee who provides technical support and leadership regarding land use and development to all Town Departments, Committees and Boards as requested. She contributes guidance and expertise with civic-minded volunteers on the Stoneham Square Strategic Action Plan, advocacy through the Transportation Advisory Subcommittee, and leads regionally with conversations about first and last mile mobility solutions for Stoneham residents and employers. Professional involvement, noteworthy department emphasis, and financial awards over the last year are detailed below.

Awards & Accolades:

- Professional Planner Award, American Planning Association: Massachusetts Chapter
- National Complete Streets Champion, Smart Growth Alliance

Professional Recognition & Affiliations:

- Vice President, Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)
- Stoneham Representative, MAPC
- Delegate, North Suburban Planning Council
- Member, Stoneham Transportation Advocacy Committee
- Member, MAPC Executive Committee
- Member, Metro Common 2050 External Advisory Committee
- Member, MetroFuture Inc. Board of Directors
- Member, Massachusetts Association of Planning Directors
- Member, American Planning Association Massachusetts Chapter

Additional Participation:

- Member of Commonwealth Delegation, MAPC Arts & Culture Learning Journey Trip to Seattle, WA
- Suffolk Downs Redevelopment Advisory Committee, Draft Environmental Impact Report Review to MEPA

Department Highlights:

- Professional Planning Review – Oversight and assessment of all proposed special permit requests, zoning language, and site plan applications to the Town of Stoneham.
- Zoning Updates – Submitted zoning warrant articles on daytime domestic animal care, bar seating, establishment of an energy revolving fund, reauthorizing existing revolving funds, zoning map changes, and clarifying Chapter 15 Section 4.1.5.3 to town boards for consideration at Town Meeting.
- Stoneham Commercial Improvement Program – Continued to facilitate the financial program for businesses in the Central Business District to improve its signage, windows and storefront esthetic.
- Green Communities Designation – Received and spent \$169,615 from the Massachusetts Green Communities Division of the Department of Energy Resources and \$40,000 from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council in municipal energy improvements.
- Green Communities Policies – Energy-forward policies were reviewed and adopted by the Board of Selectmen and School Committee. Policy approval were part of the application process and effect energy choices moving forward.
- Pop-Up Stoneham – Resumed summer place-making summer event series held on Town Common designed to engage residents, businesses and visitors of all ages while energizing the community. Additionally, collaborated with the Stoneham Recreation Department, Stoneham Coalition, and Stoneham Community Development Corporation to host “Ghostbusters” movie night on the Common.

- Complete Streets – Successfully aided the Town in receiving \$379,084 from the Massachusetts Department of Transportation to complete seven projects from the Town’s Prioritization Plan. Projects began in fall 2018 and are expected to be completed in late spring 2019.
- Community Compact – Received a correspondence on September 18, 2018 from the Lieutenant Governor congratulating the Town on completing the three best practices identified on the original compact. Held conversations with the Select Board on next steps and filed paperwork for a new Compact with the Commonwealth. Town is awaiting approval.
- Stoneham Open Space & Recreation Plan Update – Plan was submitted and approved from the Division of Conservation Services. Document is available on the town website and the department continues to pursue funding opportunities to address the highest priorities.
- How to Do Business Guide – Updated document to share changes in contact information and changes to policies. Guide was published electronically, distributed among business community, and hard copies are available in town hall.
- Municipal Aggregation – Worked with Town partner Good Energy to introduce, market, and educate the public on community electricity aggregation. Assisted in the procurement and selection of a supplier for a 20 month contract to residents and property owners.
- Stoneham Housing Production Plan – Worked with consultants, Steering Committee, and members of the community to create the first ever Plan to identify housing need and demand as well as establish goals for future housing development. Project is still ongoing.
- Tri-Community Greenway – Worked and finalized with the Department of Transportation, Town of Winchester, the City of Woburn, and consultant Stantec on wayfinding signage designs for the Greenway. Additionally, served as municipal lead in project and construction build-out.
- Stoneham Strategic Action Plan – Follows the matrix of the Action Plan in nearly all facets of planning. Meets quarterly with the Action Plan group as well as monthly with the Stoneham Transportation Advisory Committee.
- Stoneham Traffic Commission – Participates in monthly meetings with the Town Administrator, Chief of Police, Police Safety Officer, Fire Chief, Department of Public Works Superintendent, and Town Clerk to address traffic and safety issues throughout the municipality

Project & Grant Awards:

- Housing Choice Community Designation
- Green Communities Designation & funding through Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources
- Complete Streets Tier 3 Funding
- District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) and FY2018 Planning for MetroFuture Technical Assistance to create the Town’s first Housing Production Plan
- Executive Office for Administration and Finance (EOAF) grant and District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) funding to update its Open Space & Recreation Plan