

Town Planner Department 2017 Annual Report

Mission Statement:

The mission of the Town Planner 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 Town Planner 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. Additionally, she coordinated the easement logistics of the Tri-Community Greenway, initiated conversation about local investment with property owners, and managed all projects under the Town's Compact Community designation with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Professional involvement, noteworthy department emphasis, and financial awards over the last year are detailed below.

Professional Recognition:

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

Department Highlights:

- Stoneham Commercial Improvement Program – Created and facilitated the financial program for businesses in the Central Business District to improve its signage, windows and storefront esthetic resulting in over \$40,000 investment by local merchants and property owners.
- Pop-Up Stoneham – Established summer place-making summer event series held on Town Common designed to engage residents, businesses and visitors of all ages while energizing the community. Fourteen events were held in summer 2016 including, but not limited to: picnic & putt, bubble show, various fitness activities, millennial corn hole tournament, musical theater dance class, and “The Incredibles” movie night on the Common.
- Tax Increment Financing (TIF) – Facilitated a 10-year TIF agreement with C & S Capital Properties, LLC at 370-380 Main Street. The \$4 million redevelopment will create new, modern commercial space with ground-floor retail in Stoneham Square. The TIF is a first-time project for Stoneham and approved formally by the Baker-Polito Administration.
- 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 a-frame signage, stretch code, electricity aggregation, and non-medically prescribed marijuana moratorium to town boards for consideration at Town Meeting.
- Complete Streets Conceptual Design – Engaged with consultant at no-cost to the Town of Stoneham to complete a Complete Streets Conceptual Design for Stoneham Square. Proposal included opportunities to improve safety, increase green space, widen sidewalks, create economic development expansion possibilities for local businesses, and include a more efficient traffic design for vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians.
- Stoneham Open Space & Recreation Plan Update – Began work with consultants and Steering Committee to update the 20 year old plan in order to meet the latest Division of Conservation Service requirements, and be written in accordance with the Open Space and Recreation Plan Requirements, and the Open Space and Recreation Planner’s Workbook.
- How to Do Business Guide – Worked with municipal departments, Chamber of Commerce and local merchants to curate a How to Do Business Guide in Stoneham. Guide was published electronically and distributed among business community.

Project & Grant Awards:

- Executive Office for Administration and Finance (EOAF) Grant to create a Budget Transparency Document
- Department of Housing & Community Development (DHCD) Massachusetts Downtown Initiative (MDI) Grant for a Complete Streets Concept Study of Downtown Stoneham
- Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development (EOHED) Grant to create an Economic Development Self-Assessment Tool (EDSAT)
- Executive Office for Administration and Finance (EOAF) grant and District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) funding to update its Open Space & Recreation Plan
- North Suburban Planning Council (NSPC) Suburban Mobility Study with the communities of Burlington, Lynnfield, North Reading, Reading, Wakefield, Wilmington, Winchester, and Woburn
- District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) and FY2018 Planning for MetroFuture Technical Assistance to create the Town’s first Housing Production Plan