

BRPC Wins BEF Onota Invasives Management Grant

Thanks to a Community Improvement Grant from the Berkshire Environmental Fund, BRPC will work with the City of Pittsfield to develop an Invasive Species Management Plan for Onota Lake. The plan will guide the City in managing invasive species while protecting the lake's native plants, including some rare and endangered species. BRPC will work with the City and the Lake Onota Preservation Association (LOPA) to develop invasive species management goals and objectives, identify alternative management approaches, assess approaches for feasibility and cost of implementation, and draft a sound management plan. *Contact: Melissa Jette*

BRPC Receives Funding for Community Housing Trust Project

BRPC has been awarded \$20,000 through the Smart Growth Demonstration Initiative to assist rural towns in developing organizational capacity to address local housing needs. The principal goal of the project is to develop and implement a regional Community Housing Trust that will offer a community-based mechanism for planning, financing and developing quality affordable housing opportunities in small, rural Berkshire municipalities. The funding agencies are the Citizen's Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA) and MassHousing. The Towns of Alford, Monterey, Tyringham, Sheffield, the Community Land Trust in the Southern Berkshires, Construct, Inc., and the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition are the principal sponsors of the project. *Contact: Bryan Boeskin*

BRPC Calls for Potential Brownfield Site Notifications

BRPC is soliciting notification of possible brownfields for a county-wide inventory. All potential sites are welcome, from former gas stations to larger industrial areas. These need only be possible areas of contamination; no documented problems are required (Superfund sites are ineligible). Qualifying brownfields will be considered for future assessment and clean-up funding. Except where there are immediate public health risks, property owners will not be publicly identified and locations will be kept confidential. Site profile forms are available at www.berkshireplanning.org or by calling extension 12 at BRPC. *Contact: Joellyn Warren or Jennifer Kenny*

MPO Restructuring Update

The Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is responsible for overseeing regional transportation planning and has approval authority over the TIP and Regional Transportation Plan. A new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) concerning the structure and functions of the MPO is now being developed. MPOs are supposed to consist primarily of a region's local elected officials; however the current structure of the Berkshire MPO does not meet that test, as it consists only of BRPC, the BRTA, MassHighway and the Executive Office of Transportation. The proposed reorganization will expand this structure to include local elected officials. The new MOU will also define the roles of various regional agencies and committees in the MPO decision-making process. *Contact: Andrew Lenton*



The staff celebrated Debbie Polito's 10+ years of dedicated service at a dinner party on February 17, 2005. Executive Director Nat Karns presented her with gifts from the staff and a fond farewell.

BRPC Bids Farewell to Debbie Polito

The BRPC said goodbye to secretary Debbie Polito after more than 10 years of friendly, dedicated service. Staff and Commission members alike will miss her smiling greeting at the door and her trusty handling of incoming phone calls and outgoing mailings. Debbie's organization and good cheer has kept the Commission running smoothly; it will be an adjustment for all to continue the work of the BRPC without her. The office celebrated her years of good work at a dinner party February 17th. We extend our deepest gratitude and best wishes to her on all her future endeavors.

ATTENTION: New BRPC Phone System

With the departure of Debbie Polito's "friendly voice" at reception, BRPC has gone to an automated phone answering system. A directory now guides callers to each staffer's extension. When staffers are unavailable, the caller will be directed to voicemail or can dial *844 to get from voicemail back to the directory to reach another staffer. The BRPC "Contact" webpage at www.berkshireplanning.org/9/ has been updated to show all staff extensions. The BRPC regrets any inconvenience this adjustment may cause.

CALENDAR

March 17	BRPC Full Commission Meeting	7:30 PM	BRPC
March 19	Citizen Planner Training Collab. (CPTC) Annual Conference	9:00 AM	College of Holy Cross
April 6	Executive Committee Meeting	3:30 PM	BRPC



Right-to-Farm by-laws are key to Massachusetts Office of Commonwealth Development's new Commonwealth Capital Initiative, the state program devised to promote sustainable development, or "smart growth."

Developing Right-to-Farm (RTF) By-laws for Berkshire Towns

BRPC has been awarded \$25,000 in Smart Growth Technical Assistance (SGTA) program funds and \$2,000 from the Highland Communities Initiative to assist the Towns of Alford, New Marlborough and Savoy in developing and implementing Right-to-Farm (RTF) by-laws and to explore other local measures to protect agriculture. The project is principally funded by the MA Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA). The New Marlborough Planning Board and the Alford Land Trust also pledged financial support for the project. BRPC is also working with the Town of Sheffield to develop an RTF by-law and implement other elements of the Town's Master Plan through a separate SGTA grant from EOEA. *Contact: Bryan Boeskin*

Massachusetts Land Use Reform Legislation Re-filed

The Massachusetts Land Use Reform Act was re-filed for the current session of the Massachusetts General Court. Forty-eight legislators, including Senator Nuciforo and Representative Guyer, sponsored or co-sponsored the bill. The Massachusetts Land Use Reform Act is the first major updating of the Commonwealth's planning, zoning and subdivision control statutes in almost 30 years. The Act encourages communities to adopt or update their local comprehensive plans and enables them to develop effective land use regulations that are consistent with those plans. At the same time, many of the existing statutory impediments to the achievement of "smart growth" in Massachusetts are eliminated so that communities may better manage their growth and shape their futures.

The first step through the legislative process is the Joint Committee on Municipalities and Regional Government (Representative Guyer is a member.) Up to date information can be obtained at <http://www.massmunilaw.org>. *Contact Tom Matuszko*

E-mailing BRPC Staff?

Use first initial and last name (all lower-case) followed by @berkshireplanning.org.

Regional Issues Committee (RIC) Working on OSRD Model By-law(s)

BRPC's Regional Issues Committee is working to develop model cluster zoning, or Open Space Residential Development (OSRD), by-law(s) that will address a number of concerns specific to the character of the Berkshire Region. Some of the key areas of inquiry will be: determining economic efficacy of OSRD-type by-laws from a community, as well as developer, perspective, particularly in exurban areas without infrastructure (i.e. water, sewer, roads); determine minimal, viable lot sizes and densities based on issues such as percolation rates and acceptable community standards; determine acceptable ways to incorporate affordable housing provisions into OSRD by-laws, determine and address attitudinal obstacles to adopting OSRD and cluster by-laws in the region. *Contact: Bryan Boeskin*

Clearinghouse Reviews

Oak & Spruce Resort Sewer Extension Permit Comments (12/30/04)
Becket Chimney Corners YMCA Wastewater Project NPC Comments (2/15/05)
Berkshire Country Meadows - Planned Unit Residential Development ENF Comments (2/15/05)
Contact: Melissa Jette