

Zoning Reform Moves Closer

The Coalition for Zoning Reform hosted Community Planning Day at the state house on April 12 to meet with concerned citizens and to rally legislative leaders in support of the Community Planning Act (CPA II). This Act is a modified version of an earlier one, known as the Massachusetts Land Use Reform Act (MLURA). CPA II includes more affordable housing components and eliminates the proposed changes to Section 3 of Chapter 40A (the so-called Dover Amendment which gives zoning exemptions to educational and other institutions). The re-tooled bill was recently filed in the Senate by Sen. Pamela Resor.

The Coalition for Zoning Reform drafted the bills in response to what they see as key issues that inhibit planning in communities statewide. These include allowance of building along roads without subdivision review, known as Approval Not Required (ANR); no mandated consistency between master plans and land use regulations; the inability of municipalities to levy impact fees; and the difficulty in changing statutory requirements due to the necessary two-thirds vote.

CPA II has been assigned to the Senate Committee on Municipalities and Regional Government. Meanwhile, the original MLURA is still before two committees, Municipalities and Regional Government, and Community Development and Small Business.

Because CPA II is thought to have a better chance of passage, the Coalition, the Zoning Reform Working Group and their legislative backers are concentrating efforts on moving it forward through the process. For more information visit www.massmunilaw.org/zoningart.htm?cid=2677 or contact Membership Coordinator Don Keeran at dkeeran@apcc.org or 1-877-955-4142.

Sandisfield Builds Salt Shed

The *Farmington River Watershed Action Plan - A Comprehensive Management Plan to Address Nonpoint Source Pollution* (BRPC, 1997) identified uncovered sand and salt road deicing material as a potential contributor to contaminated runoff. To address this problem, the Town of Sandisfield built an 80X84 ft salt shed. Despite permitting delays and a lack of grant funds, the shed, pictured below, was



The Sandisfield Salt Shed

built thanks to extensive effort by Town officials. This included researching traveling to look at other salt sheds, investigating different types of materials, and, comparing durability as well as cost. The design meets the town's financial limits while also addressing concerns of the salt seeping into the river. If your town would like guidance in building a similar structure, contact the chair of the Sandisfield Selectboard, Victor Hryckvich, at 413-258-4711.

Tip Amended

The Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization amended the 2006-2010 Regional Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) April 10, bringing it in line with recent federal transportation appropriations and to update costs. The amendments reduced funding in some highway categories, increased funding for BRTA service and added special new projects designated by Congress. The new projects include improvements to the Mount Greylock Scenic Byway, Downtown Pittsfield Streetscape Improvements and job access service provided by the Transportation Association of Northern Berkshire.

Contact: Andrew Lenton

Volunteers Needed

BRPC needs volunteers with experience in radiology and chemical spill containment to help with an emergency response plan.

Contact: Thomas Matuszko

Calendar

May 3	Executive Committee Meeting	3:30 p.m.	BRPC
May 16	Highlands Community Initiative Workshop : Understanding Frontage for ANR	7:00 p.m.	Hinsdale Town Hall
May 18	Full Commission Meeting	7:30 p.m.	BRPC
June 7	Executive Committee Meeting	3:30 p.m.	BRPC
June 15	Annual Dinner	7:30 p.m.	BRPC

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**Spotlight on Smart Growth:
Master Plans**

Smart growth planning should begin with a comprehensive strategy to coalesce every aspect of planning, including transportation, design guidelines, zoning, natural resources, economic development, and housing. This strategy is encompassed within a Master Plan, which identifies a community's goals and recommends actions. Massachusetts encourages communities to create a Master Plan by awarding points for them in the Commonwealth Capital application, however, the real benefit is that it serves as a community-driven blue print for the future. The plans are drafted with *maximum* public input so that resident's priorities are reflected. While Master Plans typically look twenty years ahead, they should be revisited every few years to track the progress and continued relevance of goals. Recently, the City of Pittsfield began the process of updating their Master Plan, while municipalities such as Sheffield and Dalton are implementing the recommended actions from their plans. *Contact: Thomas Matuszko*

**BRPC Welcomes a New Planner,
Says Goodbye to Another**



Michael Hoffmann, pictured above, joined the transportation planning team in April. He hails from the northeast, but has been living in Portland, Oregon for the past decade. Michael's professional interests include access management and safety issues, such as designing safe routes to school for kids. Michael and his family are delighted to live in the Berkshires and he looks forward to creatively assisting towns and cities to meet their transportation goals.

Community Development Planner Jennifer Kenny left BRPC in April for a job with the City of Olympia, WA. She said that she valued the opportunity to work with BRPC and that she will greatly miss living in Berkshire County. We wish her luck and thank her for her contributions.

40th Anniversary of BRPC

This year's Annual Meeting will celebrate the 40 years that BRPC has been in existence. So put on your calendar the evening of Thursday, June 15th so that you don't miss the celebration! We are changing venues this year to the Berkshire Hills Country Club on Benedict Road in Pittsfield. Our special guest speaker will be Rachel Fletcher, who has been an active community organizer in this region for many years. We will also present the annual Charles Kusik Award to a very deserving member of our community.

Understanding ANR

The Highlands Community Initiative is sponsoring a workshop with attorney Paul Bobrowski to introduce participants to the concept and requirements of frontage for ANR (Approval Not Required) plans and provide guidance on some of the trickier scenarios. The course is 7:00 p.m. on May 16 at the Hinsdale Town Hall. To register contact, Jane Christensen at 413-268-8219 or email jchristensen@ttor.org.

Call for Nominations

It's that time again! We need delegates or alternates who are interested in being nominated to serve as Chair, Vice Chair, Clerk and Treasurer for BRPC for next year. Contact Mary Ellen Ausman (Pittsfield), Rene Wood (Sheffield), or Tim Zelazo (Florida) if you are interested.