

Part II

Town Boards, Commissions,
Committees & Departments

Selectboard

The following is an overview of the activities of fiscal year July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010:

Norwich was brought to international attention when the best women's free-style skier in the world, Hannah Kearney, won an Olympic gold medal in Vancouver, Canada.

The entrance to Town has been enhanced by the paving project and new lane configuration, an attractive and very functional Bandstand, and the off-and-on-again presence of the "Welcome to Norwich" sign.

In a continuing effort to preserve the character of Norwich, the Vermont Division of Historic Preservation has assisted Norwich to become a Certified Local Government, which allows for application of Federal Historic Preservation grant monies and technical assistance, and to be registered in the National Registry of Historic Places. As a direct result, the Selectboard authorized establishment of a Historic Preservation Commission.

Public safety has been addressed with the addition of a sidewalk from Huntley Meadow to Moore Lane, bike lane designation of Route 10A, the redesigned intersection of Union Village Road and Route 132, and the purchase of a ladder truck for our Fire Department.

The Town remains on firm financial footing due to the prudent budgets submitted by department heads under the direction of the Town Manager and the forward-looking recommendations of the Finance Committee. The establishment of designated and undesignated funds assures a more comfortable preparedness.

It was determined that Foley Park is owned by the state of Vermont.

A draft of the new Town Plan was presented in April. We offer a special heartfelt recognition of the thousands of hours of passionate dedication by the volunteers who continue to make Norwich such a desirable community. Thank you.

*Roger Blake, Chair; Suzanne Lupien, Vice-Chair;
Uwe Bagnato; Ed Childs; and Sharon Racusin*

Town Manager Report

Fiscal Year 2010 has been another challenging period for local government. Town officials were able to reduce the budget and municipal tax rate, and began work on the FY11 budget with direction from the Selectboard to cut another 5% while not diminishing the level of services that residents have come to expect. This goal was exceeded by the new FY11 budget that was approved at March Town Meeting reflecting a 7.6% reduction in actual spending and a remarkable 4.2% drop from the FY07 municipal tax rate (despite declining revenues and greatly increased costs over those five budgets). Even with these cuts, we still have a fully funded Undesignated Fund, putting us in much better financial position than most other Vermont towns.

Despite this very austere and responsible budget, we have achieved a number of significant accomplishments and highlights:

- The Rt. 5 paving/corridor enhancement project was completed, including new lane configurations that now accommodate cyclists as well as vehicles, with no adverse traffic flows. We have a beautiful new entrance into town with new granite curbing, sidewalks that tie nicely into the handicap ramp for the new bandstand, and new fencing around the Green with additional plantings.
- The Town lobbied VTrans to take over ownership of Church Street and 10A as Class 1 Town Roads, and reduced the speed limit on Church Street to 25 MPH.
- Paving-a new overlay was put down on Union Village Rd. from the Rt. 132 intersection to Old Coach Rd, and Bradley Hill Rd.
- ZeroSort recycling was implemented at the Transfer Station.

- The new bandstand was officially dedicated during Olde Home Day festivities in September, and has received enthusiastic praise from the many groups who have enjoyed its use this past year.
- Safety improvements for pedestrians and cyclists were made to Beaver Meadow Rd. between Moore Lane and the Norwich Pool.
- Significant renovations commenced at Huntley Field, including new steps from the parking lot down to the field level. New lighting was installed on the Town Green skating rink.
- The Town was approached by the Congregational Church in March with an offer to sell the adjacent Parsonage, an initiative that was later defeated by voters after four public forums to discuss the Town's capital needs.
- A new three-year contract was negotiated with the union representing the Department of Public Works (DPW) employees and Police Department.
- A rousing send-off was organized by the Recreation Council for Hannah Kearney as she left to represent our country at the Vancouver Winter Olympics, followed by a heart-warming parade a month later for Hannah's triumphant homecoming from those Games with her gold medal in Freestyle Skiing.
- The Norwich Energy Committee continued its work on refining the plan, if approved at Town Meeting, for a large 237kW photovoltaic solar installation on DPW property, with a major grant from the Clean Energy Development Fund. The Town's older street lights are all being converted to LED lighting with cooperation from Green Mountain Power.

Peter B. Webster, Town Manager (649-1419, ext. 102)

Collector of Delinquent Taxes

As Town Manager, it is my responsibility to act as the Collector of Delinquent Taxes. Taxes become delinquent after the second payment is due in February if taxes remain unpaid. A Warrant is issued by the Treasurer authorizing the collection of delinquent taxes along with an 8% penalty and 1% interest per month for the first three months and 1.5% per month interest thereafter. A tax collection policy outlines the collection process, which includes payment applications, payment plans and tax sale procedures, if necessary.

Peter Webster, Town Manager (649-1419, ext. 102)

Tax Year Summary for FY10

Final Taxes Billed:	\$13,461,379.81
Taxes Collected during FY:	<u>\$13,381,032.11</u>
Taxes outstanding at close of FY:	\$80,347.70

Delinquent Tax Report

6/30/2009 Delinquent Tax Balance:	\$132,389.87
FY09/10 Delinquent Taxes:	<u>\$236,130.68</u>
Subtotal:	\$368,520.55
Less delinquent taxes collected & abatements:	<u>\$241,299.19</u>
6/30/2010 Balance:	\$127,221.36
Taxes delinquent for FY09/10	\$80,347.70
Taxes delinquent previous years	<u>\$46,873.66</u>
Total	\$127,221.36

Delinquent taxes as of December 31, 2010 \$65,037.42

Town Clerk

This year we have seen a decrease in the number of documents recorded in our office. We went from 3,997 pages recorded in the Land Records to 3,320 pages. This amounts to \$26,560 of revenue for the Town.

In FY10, we experienced a slight increase in passport applications from 50 to 60. We processed 134 motor vehicle registration renewals, licensed 612 dogs, down from last year's 632, and sold 261 Fish and Game Licenses which is consistent with the number sold last year. We issued 31 Marriage Licenses; there were 7 deaths and no home births to report this year.

I would like to welcome Christine Wallace to my office as my new assistant. Chris will be working approximately 16 to 24 hours per week and is catching on very quickly.

The Town Clerk's Office is open Monday through Wednesday and Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; on Thursdays we are generally open from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. During this time you may come in and register to vote, purchase cards for the Norwich Transfer Station as well as cards and stickers for the Hartford Landfill, renew your motor vehicle registration, obtain a passport, or research the records in the vault. Dog licenses will be available to purchase on January 3, 2011. If you do not already have a rabies certificate on file with us, you will need to get a copy from your veterinarian.

If you have any questions or need help, please do not hesitate to stop in or call and we will do our best to help.

Bonnie J. Munday, Town Clerk (649-1419, ext. 103)

Vital Records for 2010

As recorded by the Town Clerk's Office January 1 to December 31, 2010

Marriages

Rae, Janet PaulinePierce, Linda Ann
DiCecca, Anna Ashley MattsonGoldenheim, David Adkins
Monroe, Eric DavidAbbene, Laura Ellen
Warner, AaronCooper, Christina Joan
Swift, Joshua JamesDowning, Barbara Ann
Misener, Pamela SueThompson, April Denise
Trotter, Kathryn LynnLubben, Kristen Johanna
Edell, Aaron ZeligPeck, Aimee Rosann
Duffy, Ian ScottBrann, Jessica Louise
Taylor, Vivien FrancesLandis, Joshua David
Sanville, BrianDisdier, Isamarie
Winstead, Shelby DennisFoster, Edwin Martin
Schleicher, Gretchen ElenaMallett, Michael Edward
LeMasurier, Jane StewartWebster, Graham Taylor
Grant, Emily DeWittKaleczyc, John Stanley
Hoyt, Michael NicholsonMoses, Natalie Anna
Catherwood, Lauren ElizabethGinn, Raymond Jonathan
Sheehan, Carolyn AnnMyers, Patricia Ann
Barde, Karsten AlexanderMeldonian, Lauren Elizabeth
Adler, Blythe MacKenzieWilder, Ryan Christopher
Zantop, Mariana E.Rothgeb, Daniel Olin

Blout, Margaret	.....DeLucia, David Earl
Ireland, Hannah Townsend	.....Bagby, Richard Albert III
Torkelson, Sarah Hadley	.....Stickney, Timothy Greer
Catherwood, Edward	.....Miller, Terri Lee
Zaffuto, Kristin Marie	.....Harrington, Daniel Alan
Rehm, Paul Eugene	.....Cutler, Kelly Leigh
McGovern, Mark Patrick	.....Stecker, Tracy Anne
Vargo, Korry Robert	.....Christiano, Sara Ann
Dunsmore, Jessica Elizabeth	.....Turco, Scott Vincent
Drinane, Mary Claire	.....Hughes, Edward George
Patton, Amy Ruth	.....Martin, Sarah Holly
Riley, Joana Louise	.....Fraser, Kenneth Paul

There were 0 homebirths and 9 deaths which occurred in the Town of Norwich.

Boards of Abatement and Civil Authority

The Board of Civil Authority (BCA), which consists of the Town’s 12 elected Justices of the Peace along with the members of the Selectboard and the Town Clerk, hears appeals of tax valuation decisions made by the Board of Listers. As such, the BCA functions as a final opportunity to resolve disagreements with the Listers locally and with a relative degree of informality, prior to taking such disputes to the courts or to state tax officials. The relevant deadlines are such that the BCA typically hears its tax appeals in July and August. In the summer of 2009 the BCA had five appeals; in the summer of 2010 there were nine.

Along with the Listers and the Town Treasurer, the BCA also serves as the Town’s Board of Abatement, which hears requests for abatement of property taxes based on hardship, destruction of property, etc. There were two abatement hearings during the period covered by this report.

BCA members are also tasked with assisting the Town Clerk with conducting elections, a process that has been consistently smooth and uneventful under the skilled stewardship of our Town Clerk, Bonnie Munday. And, of course, the Justices of the Peace are authorized to perform weddings, a responsibility we discharge with pleasure, skill, and gratitude.

Donald M. Kreis, Chair (649-3073)



Photo: Lars Blackmore/Ameritdane Press

Cemetery Commission

The five-member Cemetery Commission is responsible for the care and upkeep, as well as necessary improvements, of all 10 Norwich cemeteries. This also includes Union Village Cemetery.

All of the new construction has taken place in the Hillside Cemetery, the only one in Town which is in active use. New roads have been put in there, and new lots have been laid out. Corner markers have been placed as new lots have been sold. A new equipment storage shed has proved an excellent addition.

The usual summer maintenance and upkeep has been ongoing this summer. The annual cleaning of gravestones will continue next summer.

The financial details of our operations during FY10 are summarized below, based on information maintained by the Finance Office and Treasurer:

Revenue Received:

Appropriation from Town Manager	\$15,000
Hillside Expansion from Trustees of Public Funds . . . . .	.0
Woodworth Unitrust	8,291
Sales of Cemetery Markers . . . . .	.890
Perpetual Care Fund - Interest	3,759
Operating Account - Interest	<u>21</u>
	\$27,961

Expenditures Made:

Wages	\$12,513
Capital Improvements . . . . .	.720
Purchased Services . . . . .	.6,548
Repairs and Maintenance . . . . .	.90
Mowing Supplies	1,275
Payroll Taxes . . . . .	.957
Workmen's Compensation . . . . .	.686
Water . . . . .	.247
Equipment Purchase . . . . .	.0
Liability Insurance . . . . .	.0
Postage	<u>0</u>
	\$23,036

Schedule 3 of the Independent Auditor's Report states our Fund Balance as \$25,594.

Fred Spaulding, Chair (649-1121)



Conservation Commission

The Norwich Conservation Commission (NCC) endeavors to inventory, monitor, and conserve the natural heritage assets in town. These assets include wildlife, wetlands, waterways, natural plant communities, and scenic resources. We share our findings with our fellow citizens, Town commissions and governing bodies.

Projects undertaken by the NCC in FY10 included:

- Facilitation of several art and nature displays at the post office.
- Sponsorship of a public lecture about sled dog biology, “The World’s Greatest Endurance Athletes,” by Dr. Charles Berger.
- Participation in the Source-to-Sea cleanup of the Connecticut River.
- Trail maintenance and bridge work by the Trails Committee.
- On-going inventory and mapping of vernal pools and wildlife road crossings.
- On-going work with conservation commissioners in neighboring towns to insure regional linking of efforts to conserve wildlife core areas and corridors.

Craig Layne, Secretary (296-7298)

Development Review Board

The Development Review Board (DRB) has seven members and three alternates appointed by the Selectboard. The Board meets on the first and third Thursdays of each month, whenever applications are before the Board. Hearings can include subdivisions, site reviews, variances, and appeals. Meetings are posted on the notice boards and you may also sign up with the Zoning Administrator to receive email notices. All meetings are open to the public.

Subdivision activity in Norwich has been significantly reduced in the past year. The DRB has heard a number of Boundary Line Adjustments, often the result of a desire to improve the shape or utility of existing land parcels. The DRB has also reviewed some site plans where the issues may be access, screening, lighting, parking, and other features.

Residents who live close to property being developed are encouraged to come to the hearings. By appearing in person, or in writing, abutters and other “interested parties” are able to comment during the hearings. Participation in a hearing automatically qualifies you to initiate or join in the appeal of a decision.

John E. Lawe, Chair (649-1585)

Emergency Management

Emergency Management's responsibility is to prepare for disasters and to coordinate responses to situations that may demand extraordinary action. Our approach is to use an "all hazards" management system. This meets the National Incident Management System (NIMS) standards established by the Department of Homeland Security. Many Norwich officials have received NIMS-compliant training in incident management and planning. Our current Emergency Operations Plan and Rapid Response Plan are NIMS-compliant. These plans are dynamic documents that require annual review and revisions. Floods, storms, fires, and hazardous materials releases have the highest probability of threatening our community.

An emergency generator was installed at the Public Works Department. This will ensure that Public Works can continue to work during power outages.

The Town Manager is, by statute, the Director of Emergency Management. The Fire Chief is the Deputy Director and Regina Owens is the Emergency Management Coordinator.

Stephen Leinoff, Deputy Emergency Management Director

Energy Committee

During FY10, the Norwich Energy Committee (NEC) completed its survey of renewable energy resources in Town funded by a grant from the Vermont Clean Energy Development Fund (CEDF). The final report submitted to CEDF contains extensive reports from consultants about the potential for wind power and a combined heat-and-power system in the village fueled by biomass or geothermal energy. It is posted on the Town's website, or available on CD Rom through the Town Manager.

The NEC continued to develop plans for a large scale photovoltaic system that would replace the electricity the municipality purchases from Green Mountain Power, thereby locking in a stable price that the Town would pay for power for at least 25 years. Sites and finances are still being evaluated.

In addition, the NEC:

- Investigated the concept of Clean Energy Assessment Districts, which would enable residents to borrow money at low interest to implement energy efficiency measures or renewable energy systems.
- Participated in a workshop on community renewable energy projects at the annual conference of the Vermont Energy and Climate Action Network.
- Helped to organize and sponsored a forum on the future of Vermont Yankee.
- Consulted with residents on energy conservation and renewable energy options for their homes.

The NEC meets regularly on the third Thursday of every month, at 7 pm at Tracy Hall. For more information, contact me or Linda Gray (649-2032, linda.c.gray@gmail.com).

Alan Berolzheimer (649-2857, berccress@sover.net)

Finance Committee

The Norwich Finance Committee (NFC) comprises seven Norwich residents: six members appointed by the Selectboard to serve a three-year term on a staggered basis and the elected Town Treasurer. These seven also serve on the Dresden Finance Committee (DFC) along with seven Hanover Finance Committee members. The NFC meets monthly throughout the year and more frequently during budget season when all four budgets are being adopted by the various Boards for voter approval at Town Meeting in March.

The NFC exercises advisory oversight in the creation of annual budgets for the town of Norwich and the Norwich School District. As DFC members they perform a similar oversight for the Dresden School District and the Supervisory Administrative Unit # 70. The NFC's mission is to advocate budgetary restraint and fiscal responsibility, and to increase public awareness and understanding of issues affecting local taxation.

During FY10, the NFC discussed and opined on such matters as the Solar Energy Project and the purchase of the Parsonage building next to Tracy Hall, voted on guidelines for the Town and School District budgets and attended many of the Selectboard and School board meetings. A member of the NFC developed "Norwich Finances for Yankees," Financial History of Norwich report and the Reverse Tax Calculator which the NFC reviewed and endorsed. The NFC provided guidelines for the Norwich School Board regarding the upcoming teacher contract negotiations and listened to the discussions about the deficit position of the School District. The NFC takes part in the annual Town Eating Day in order to highlight the NFC's role and answer questions from the residents of Norwich.

Cheryl A. Lindberg, Chair (649-1678)

Finance Office

The Finance Office is responsible for all accounting functions for the Town and all tax collection. We processed \$2,786,671 in Town bills and \$1,262,828 in gross payroll and payroll taxes. The total income processed included current year Town tax of \$3,251,220 (after deferred revenue of \$13,163) and other revenues in the amount of \$938,351.

When Town and school taxes were initially billed the total tax raised was \$13,447,090. After all amended bills were sent, the final tax billing was \$13,461,380. The original amount of billed taxes was reduced by \$16,294 due to seven BCA appeals and four Lister errors and omissions of \$1,838. On the other hand, 60 late-filed HS-122's resulted in an increase in residential taxes of \$32,421. Tax adjustments and abatements resulted in an expense in the amount of \$45,809 and interest expense of \$6,350. The final school true up from the State of Vermont had residential and nonresidential school tax at \$10,223,323.

Recent legislative changes to HS-122 Homestead Declarations do not require you to file on an annual basis unless there is a change in status, BUT if you are eligible for income sensitivity you MUST file the HS-122 Homestead Declaration Form. Please make sure that you file your Homestead Declaration Forms by April 15 of each year! By not doing so, you will pay a 1% penalty on the education tax. Refer to your tax booklet for the form or go to www.vermont.gov and file online.

Roberta Robinson, Finance Officer (649-1419, ext. 105)

Fire Department

The Norwich Fire Department responded to 211 incidents in FY10, up 5% from the prior year.

Call Types	2009-10
Structure Fires	13
Auto Fires	2
Wildland Fire	2
Other Fires	2
Medical	93
Vehicle Crashes	29
Hazardous Conditions no fire	10
Service Calls	18
Good Intent Calls	19
False Alarms	20
Other	<u>3</u>
Total	211

Our department’s rating from the Insurance Services Office is one of the best in the area and results in significant fire insurance premium savings to many property owners.

We purchased a used 75-foot Quint for \$200,000 to replace the 1979 aerial ladder. The truck was placed in service in March 2010. This versatile apparatus has been used more in three months than the old truck was used in over three years.

Six new members joined the department. Members respond to calls and participate in monthly training to maintain and expand their skills. Five of our new members completed an intensive five-month course and were certified as Level 1 Firefighters by the Vermont Fire Academy.

Vermont Homeland Security provided us with \$12,367 for new mobile radios and pagers, with our share being \$4,499. We received a grant of \$6,270 from the U.S. Fire Administration, covering 95% of the cost of a forcible entry training prop that has been used multiple times by members to improve their skills. The USEFA also provided us with a \$3,631 fire prevention grant. We purchased educational materials and delivered 17 presentations at the Marion Cross School and day care centers, reaching 1,347 children and 185 adults.

The calm of the Memorial Day weekend was rocked by an explosion that destroyed a house on New Boston Rd. The force of the explosion sent debris flying over 400 yards and damaged several houses, and a passing vehicle. The department was assisted at the scene by apparatus from Hanover, Hartford and Thetford and the New England Canine Search and Rescue Team. The Vermont Division of Fire Safety and Vermont State Police assisted in the investigation of the explosion, which was likely caused by leaking propane.

I thank our members for their commitment – their efforts save the community thousands of dollars annually. I also thank our members’ families, citizens, the Selectboard and other Town departments for their ongoing support and assistance.

Members

Officers: Chief Stephen Leinoff, Deputy Chief Neil Fulton, Assistant Chief Lloyd Tebbetts, Captain Phil Brunelle, Lieutenant Pete Schwab, and Lieutenant Matt Swett

Firefighter-Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT): Jake Blum, Susan Blum, Linda Cook (Fire Warden), Matt Herbert, Regina Owens, Nancy LaRowe, Dan Schneider, and Jon Wilkinson

Firefighters: Mark Anderson, Mary Anderson, Bryan Carroll, Nox Connelly, Mathew Davis, Peter Griggs, Richard Hatch, Aaron Lamperti, Luke Lindberg, William Mosenthal, Chad Poston, Grant Simpson, Lisa Talmadge, Warren Thayer, Alex von Reyn, Tim Webster, Evan Welch, Asaf Wyszynski, and David Yesman

EMTs: Toni Apgar, Eric Bivona, Charlene Bradley, Frances Eanet, Jennie Lamb, John Lawe, Bonnie Munday, and Hope Rennie

Support Team

The team provides food and supplies to emergency responders at incident scenes and the station. Members include: Linda Cook, Kenneth Cracknell, Linda Danilek, Annah Dupuis, Jean Fraser, Jaden Gladstone, Cheri Henry, Cheryl Lindberg, Lizanne Peyton, Liz Russell, Anne Marie Smith, Gerry Tolman, Janet von Reyn, and Laurie Welch

Stephen Leinoff, Fire Chief (649-1133; Fire@norwich.vt.us)

Fire Warden

When you call Hartford Dispatch or the Fire Warden due to a smoke/fire sighting you will be asked the following questions:

1. What is the locatable address you are at?
2. Who is calling and from what telephone number?
3. What color is the smoke and how large is the cloud?

These questions and others will help the Fire Department get to the scene faster.

We had another safe year with only one moderate grass fire that burned four acres. To prevent grass fires, burn piles/campfires should have an adequate water supply for the size of the fire. Also clear away all small brush, grass, and loose material around the burn pile/campfire. Be sure to have adequate personal to control the fire and little to no wind. Stay with the fire even when the flames go out and leave only when the ashes are cold. Burn piles may include brush, unpainted and untreated wood, grass, and leaves.

A written burn permit may be acquired at the Town Clerk's Office 649-1319 ext. 2, from the Fire Chief, Steve Leinoff 649-1133 ext. 3 or the Fire Warden, Linda Cook 649-2825. Permits are required when the ground does not have a good cover of snow.

Throughout the year, when you light the fire call Hartford Dispatch 295-9425 and Linda Cook. This will help prevent the Fire Department being toned to respond to an unknown smoke sighting.

Linda Cook, Fire Warden (649-2825)

Health Officer

The mission of the Town Health Officers (HOs) is to protect public health. The Health Officers investigate rental housing complaints that might be violations of the State Rental Housing code. Since the state of Vermont assumed responsibility for permitting new septic systems and dealing with failing systems, the HOs are involved only when a failed system creates a public health hazard. Giving advice about possible rabies exposures and follow-up of human bites by dogs are additional responsibilities.

The Vermont Department of Health annual report is on file and available in the Town Manager's Office.

The H1N1 flu epidemic arrived and passed last winter. In the event, it was less lethal than feared but proved very infective. Meanwhile, Avian flu is still infecting people world-wide

and the danger still exists that it could hybridize with a swine flu strain and cause an epidemic. From a public health standpoint, flu prevention is best tackled by hand-washing, getting the annual flu shots, and as far as possible avoiding gatherings during an outbreak and staying home if you are sick.

During summer 2010, an outbreak of “Swimmers Itch” occurred in the Ompompanoosuc River near Route 5. This allergic skin reaction to shistosome larvae (*cecaria*) in the water causes burning and itching shortly after victims enter the water. This could recur in future years, and notices to avoid swimming should be observed.

John E. Lawe, Norwich Health Officer (649-1585)
Bonnie Munday, Deputy Health Officer (649-1419)

Listers

Responsibilities of the Board of Listers

The primary responsibility of the Norwich Board of Listers is to prepare the Grand List, a record of all real property in Norwich that is subject to taxation, assessed at its fair market value. The Vermont Department of Taxes, Division of Property Valuation and Review has determined that for the purpose of levying education taxes for FY11, Norwich’s Common Level of Appraisal (CLA) is 0.9140, in other words that assessments are at 91.40% of fair market value. This CLA of 0.9140 has been appealed by the Town to the Vermont Valuation Appeal Board.

Homestead Declaration

- (1) The Vermont Legislature has revisited the subject of the annual filing of the Homestead Declaration for those property owners who own and occupy their Vermont property as their principal residence on April 1, 2011.
- (2) The new statute 32 V.S.A. §5410 requires that the homestead declaration will be renumbered as Form HS-131, and that it henceforth needs to be filed only once (no longer annually) on or before the due date for filing the Vermont income tax return and without extension. It will be necessary to file a form to withdraw a homestead declaration (using Form HS-132) when the status of the property changes (e.g., a sale). The rules for filing and the forms are available in the Vermont income tax book at www.state.vt.us/tax/pdf.word.excel/forms/2009/2009IncBook.pdf.
- (3) The Property Tax Adjustment form HS-145 (income sensitivity) must still be filed annually with the Vermont Department of Taxes by those homestead property owners eligible for a property tax reduction.
- (4) The State of Vermont has been active in contacting owners who should have filed their homestead declaration forms but failed to do so.

The State directs the Town to send a revised tax bill for each late-filed or improperly prepared HS-131 or HS-132. This involves extra work and thus extra time for Town officials.

Bragg Hill Reappraisal Lawsuit

The Selectboard settled the lawsuit with the remaining eight appellants. The settlement was approved by the Windsor Superior Court, September 2010. Although this settlement occurred in fiscal year 2011, it also impacts the previous two fiscal years. The settlement reduced the assessed values of the eight appellants such that the total taxes due for the eight over the three fiscal years are reduced by \$140,000.

As part of the settlement the Selectboard agreed to a Town-wide Reappraisal. The 2011 Town Warning includes an Article asking the voters to raise sufficient funds to be added to funds already put aside (the Town receives \$9.50 per active parcel for maintenance of grand

list and Town-wide reappraisal) to perform a Town-wide reappraisal for no later than the 2013 Norwich grand list. Towns normally wait until the Vermont Department of Taxes orders a reappraisal, which occurs when a town's CLA drops below 80%. The 2010 CLA has been calculated by the Vermont Department of Taxes to be 90.22%, which is under appeal. The Board of Listers has prepared a Request for Proposal for an outside appraisal firm to perform such a reappraisal. Proposals were due January 7, 2011. The award of this contract cannot be made until after the March 2011 Town Meeting and then only if the Article passes.

2010 Summary

In 2010, the Listers sent 335 change of assessment notices. Thirty-seven grievances were filed with the Listers, four of which were later withdrawn. Eleven appeals (one withdrawn) were filed with the Board of Civil Authority (BCA) from the Listers' grievance decisions. Of the ten BCA decisions, two have been appealed to the Windsor Superior Court and two to the Director of Property Valuation & Review, Vermont Department of Taxes. The 2010 taxable municipal Grand List value as of this writing is \$702,033,300.

2011

In the spring of 2011, the Listers will inspect new construction and properties that have been improved, whether or not these improvements were made with a zoning permit. The Listers will also correct errors in the database as they come to light, and take other actions as necessary to maintain equity in the Grand List.

Change of assessment notices will be sent in early June, 2011. Notices are mailed only to taxpayers whose property's value (total, homestead and/or housesite) has changed. Formal grievances must be lodged in writing with the Listers within 14 days of that date of mailing. A taxpayer may grieve his or her assessment in any current year, whether or not the property's value has changed. A grievance triggers a review of the entire property, and may result in a property's value being lowered, raised, or remaining the same. The results of grievance may be appealed to the Norwich Board of Civil Authority.

The Listers can be contacted via telephone at 649-1419 ext 6, or via e-mail at (listers@norwich.vt.us). Office hours vary and are posted on the door of the Listers' Office in Tracy Hall.

*Richard Blacklow, Lister; Dennis Kaufman, Lister;
Jonathan Vincent, Lister; Stephen Wheelock, Assessor*

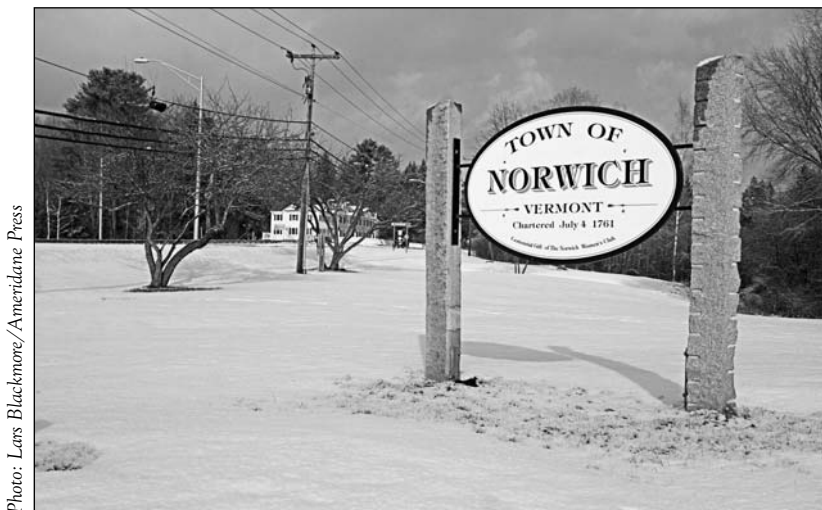


Photo: Lars Blackmore/Ameritidame Press

2010 Grand List

Total Taxable Property (2010 Education Grand List)\$705,745,500
One percent (1%) of Total Grand List7,057,455

Real Estate Exemptions by Vote

Norwich Fire District 40,000
Beaver Meadow Chapel Association109,200
Root District Game Club254,900
Upper Valley Community Grange Inc # 34351,500
Veterans (3)90,000
Charlotte Metcalf Trustee34,100
Timothy Brownell21,300
Total Voted Exemption901,000
(lost education tax to be made up by remainder of town)

Real Estate Exemptions by Agreement

Norwich Housing Corporation1,546,600

Real Estate Exemptions by Statute

Veterans, Statutory (3)30,000
Child Care Center, Inc800,900
Montshire Museum of Science6,144,100
Norwich Historical Society470,400
Norwich Nursery School152,700
The Family Place651,600
Sands Taylor and Wood Company (Vermont Public Radio)150,000
Andrew C. & Margaret R. Sigler Foundation2,032,900
Norwich Public Library Association1,721,800
Total Real Estate Exemptions12,154,400

Breakdown of Education Grand List

R-1 Residence with under 6A of Land (780)314,937,500
R-2 Residence with 6A of land or over (484)317,614,700
MH Mobile Home with or without land (15)2,247,200
C Commercial Properties (48)31,035,200
CA Commercial Apartments (8)5,399,300
UE Utilities Electric (4)6,337,500
UO Utilities Other (2)156,100
F Farms (11)10,096,500
Other (40)10,387,100
M Miscellaneous (150)30,213,000
Cable (Education Grand List only)1,264,600

Land Use Appraisal Program

Number of parcels enrolled in program136
Number of acres in program12,766
Exempt value of enrolled property23,763,200

Municipal Grand List as of:

31 December 2004Town-wide reappraisal583,060,623
31 December 2005622,504,834
31 December 2006644,879,700
31 December 2007677,140,900
31 December 2008692,512,148
31 December 2009698,955,700
31 December 2010702,033,300

Land Management Council

The Land Management Council manages the Fire District Land, encompassing 917 acres in six parcels within the Charles Brown drainage. Our mission is to manage the land for recreation and forest resources.

In the spring of 2010 we hired a new forester, Harwood Forestry Services from Tunbridge, VT. Our previous forester for many years, Greg Chase from Hartland, decided to take a full-time position with a local lumber company. Thank you, Greg, for your many years of service and a job well done.

Harwood Forestry has subsequently completed a management plan for Parcels 2 and 3, located opposite Tucker Hill Road and north of Beaver Meadow Road. We intend to conduct a timber harvest in the next few years, when economic conditions improve. These proceeds will be reinvested back into the lands.

Also this last summer, a trail crew from the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps (VYCC) continued work on the upper portion of the Ballard Trail, completing two re-routes, a plank bridge over a mud bog and general trail maintenance. This work was paid for by a grant from VTTrans and the VYCC. Many thanks to Peter and Sydney Griggs for hosting the VYCC crew for two weeks camping on their property.

David Hubbard, Chair (649-3882)

Milton Frye Nature Area Committee (MFNAC)

The MFNAC promotes the use and care of the 35.5-acre Town property commonly known as the Nature Area, which contains forest, meadow, and apple orchard. The Committee oversees maintenance of the trails in the area, sponsors educational programs, and is charged with stewardship of the property in accordance with the conservation easement jointly held by the Upper Valley Land Trust and Town of Norwich. The MFNAC reports to the Norwich Conservation Commission.

Selected activities in 2009-2010 included:

- An apple tree pruning workshop led by Stan Williams.
- A winter interpretive walk led by Alcott Smith.
- A spring Bird Walk, led by George Clark.
- A "Trails Day" Work Day focusing on removal of invasives from a section of the meadow hedgerow.
- An Upper Valley Trails Alliance (UVTA) trail maintenance workshop led by John Taylor of UVTA with a local teacher's institute group.
- Regular use of the area for educational experiences by Marion Cross School (MCS) children. Use of the area for training by the Middle School running team.
- Volunteer work by MCS students and teachers to a) mitigate the spread of invasive plant species such as buckthorn; and b) maintain the trail surface with wood chips.
- Creation and sale of note cards to support Nature Area educational programs. Cards were printed from paintings by Kate Emlen and are for sale at Dan and Whit's and the Norwich Bookstore.

Special thanks to all community members who volunteered in any of these activities.

Lindsay Putnam (649-1668)

Planning Commission

The Planning Commission is responsible for drafting the Town Plan and the land use regulations to implement the Plan. The Town Plan contains historical perspective, current conditions, and a vision for future changes in the Town. In addition to a narrative, data, and maps, the Plan includes goals, objectives, and a proposed course of action. The Planning Commission's role in the implementation of the Plan is drafting land use regulations for zoning, subdivision, flood hazard, and other development issues.

This past year was devoted primarily to the final stages of drafting the new Town Plan. During the fall we met with the public and other Town board, commission, and committee members to review specific chapters. On April 29, 2010 a complete draft was presented to the Town at a public workshop. After a public hearing, final revisions will be made and a final draft will be presented to the Selectboard for another public hearing and adoption. Implementation of the new Town Plan will begin in the spring of 2011 with a community review of future development in the areas south and east of the Village.

The Commission members also participated in the Upper Valley Municipal Network workshops with volunteers from the other Upper Valley towns and at the annual Norwich "Town Eating Day."

The Commission is a seven-member board appointed by the Selectboard to four-year terms that meets every second and fourth Thursday at 7:00 pm. Minutes, regulations, the Town Plan, land use regulations, and other documents are available on the Town website. Agendas and notices are emailed to those requesting it at planner@norwich.vt.us.

Daniel Johnson, Chair (649-1969)

Police Department

I am pleased to present to the residents of Norwich the 2010 Annual Police Report. This report reflects the hard work and dedication and professional services provided by the men and women of this agency. The Norwich Police Department is a progressive department that will always strive to maintain excellence and professionalism in its service to the citizens and businesses of Norwich.

Calls for service remained about the same from FY09 although traffic crashes showed a decrease of about 6%. Bad check cases as well as fraud cases have increased, and it is felt that the economy is driving these numbers. Traffic citations for the year were down slightly compared to last year; some of the decreases can be attributed to a shortage in staffing.

The beginning of 2010 saw the deployment of one of the Norwich officers (Officer Chuck Rataj) to Afghanistan to serve in his capacity as a Lieutenant with the Army National Guard. Since his departure the Police Department has been filling the vacant shifts caused by his deployment with overtime and the use of part-time certified officers. The beginning of 2011 brings with it the safe return of Officer Chuck Rataj and his return to serve the citizens of Norwich once again as an officer with the Norwich Police Department. Welcome home Chuck.

Norwich is an exceptional town, and I believe that the efforts of our police officers and staff during the past year have made a positive impact on the quality of life in this community. We will continue to meet the needs of our citizens and do it with a very dedicated and professional staff.

As always should you have any comments, concerns, or suggestions feel free to contact me at the Norwich Police Station (649-1460) or through my e-mail.

Chief Douglas A. Robinson, drobinso@dps.state.vt.us
 Admin. Asst. Judy Powell, jpowell@dps.state.vt.us
 Officer Michael Scruggs, mscruggs@dps.state.vt.us
 Officer Charles Rataj, crataj@dps.state.vt.us
 Officer Francis Schippert, fschippe@dps.state.vt.us
 Part-Time Officer Phil Brunelle, pbrunell@dps.state.vt.us
 Part-Time Officer James Beraldi, jberaldi@dps.state.vt.us

Police Department Statistics FY10

911 Hang Ups	30	Kidnapping	0
Abandoned Vehicle	2	Larceny	13
Accidents	80	Leaving Scene of Accident	0
Agency Assistance	209	Littering	3
Alarm	67	Lost or Found Property	27
Alcohol Offense	2	Medical Assist	29
Animal Problem	87	Missing Person	5
Arrest on Warrant	4	Motorist Assist./Complaint	69
Assault	6	Noise Disturbance	9
Attempted Suicide	3	Parking Problem	33
Background Investigation	4	Phone Problem	4
Bad Check	16	Property Check*	58
Burglary	10	Public Speaking	6
Citizen Assistance	75	Residence/Vehicle Lockout	55
Citizen Dispute	15	Sex Offense	3
Condition of Release Violation	1	Stalking	1
Court Appearance	16	Suspicious	133
Directed Patrol	130	Training	38
Disorderly Conduct	3	Traffic Citations	385
Domestic Abuse Order	6	Traffic Hazard	49
Driving License Suspended	3	Traffic Warnings (written)	481
Drugs	3	Trespassing	15
DUI	14	Unsecure Premises	0
Family Disturbance	10	Utility Problem	5
Fireworks	4	Vandalism	10
Fish and Game Offense	5	Vehicle Serial # Inspection	37
Foot Patrol/Business Checks	207	Welfare Check	12
Fraud	21	Miscellaneous	7
Juvenile Problem/Runaway	2		
		TOTAL	2522

* Property Checks were conducted on 58 days with an approximate total of 428 property check visits

Public Works Department

The main goal of the Public Works Department is to provide safe and convenient roadways throughout the year for everyone. We continually strive to maintain the level of service that Norwich residents require and desire while being fiscally responsible.

During the summer of 2009, Public Works and Buildings and Grounds employees were heavily involved in the Corridor Enhancement Project along Route 10A and Church Street, particularly with the fencing and curbing along the Norwich Green. We also completed safety improvements on Union Village Road, funded by a High Risk Rural Roads Grant. The Huntley Recreation Field sidewalk extension was completed in the fall of 2009. This added 740 feet of new sidewalk, northerly, from the original sidewalk to Moore Lane. This section is an important link for pedestrians of all ages.

In January of 2010 South Face Solar installed a solar hot water system at the Public Works building. We were approved for an Incentive Reservation for \$1,785 from the Vermont Small Scale Renewable Energy Incentive Program for this project. Previously we had no hot water to use for cleaning vehicles and equipment during winter months. An emergency generator was installed at the Public Works building in the late winter/early spring of 2010. This generator will enable all Town departments to fuel up, open garage doors, make vehicle repairs, and use the lights when the power is off. This is an important part of our emergency management system.

The winter of 2009/2010 turned out to be one of the mildest winters on record. Therefore, winter maintenance costs were down significantly. Buildings and Grounds winter projects included painting inside Tracy Hall and rebuilding, sanding, and painting picnic tables for the Recreation Department along with regular winter maintenance duties.

Several young people from the Windsor County Court Diversion Program fulfilled their community service obligations by assisting with Public Works and Buildings and Grounds projects throughout the year. This has been a good experience for all involved, and we hope to continue this working relationship in the future.

The Public Works Department continues to perform service and repair work on all municipal vehicles. The Buildings and Grounds division of Public Works performs maintenance on all Town buildings and properties. Public Works collaborates with other Town departments on many projects during the year. We also work closely with the Tree Warden. Our culvert replacement program continues, with related ditching projects being completed.

We invite residents to visit the Town website for Public Works Department information, including road maintenance policies, procedures, and permits.

I would like to thank the Town Manager, Selectboard, other Town departments, and Norwich residents for their continued support of the Public Works Department. I would also like to commend the Public Works staff for their hard work and dedication.

Andy Hodgdon, Public Works Director (649-2209; Norwich_highway@earthlink.net)

*Public Works Staff: Neal Rich, John Thorp, Gary Durkee,
Albert Lewellyn, Paul Betters, and Jason Collins.
Buildings and Grounds Technician: Justin Lewellyn*

Recreation Department

The Norwich Recreation Council/Department offers a varied range of recreational activities and events for age four through seniors. The goal of our youth offerings is to inspire a lifetime love of activity. We rely heavily on the dedication of many community-minded volunteers, particularly the Recreation Council. We are extremely fortunate also to be blessed with many local businesses and organizations willing to help sponsor the events we run. Their contributions make it all possible. We could not manage without their support, time, and dedicated involvement.

For the last three years we have been moving to on-line registration for our programs. David Bibeau and Chris Healy searched to find the system to best suit the needs of our department's diverse offerings within our relatively small community. Their time and persistence paid off as we transferred to on-line registration in the fall of 2010. We are excited about finally being able to offer this convenience.

We would like to thank the Norwich Women's Club for awarding us a grant for a new grill and hot ash receptacle which will be installed beside the Huntley Meadow pavilion next spring.

2010 brought the Vancouver Winter Olympics. Members of the Recreation Council, the Norwich Women's Club, some town and school administrators and many others, organized and rallied to have an unforgettable parade for Hannah Kearney's return with the gold. Thank you to all involved for a day that will forever be in the heart of this Recreation Director. This level of competition can take its toll, however. After Kevin Pearce's traumatic injury while training just prior to the Snowboarding Halfpipe Olympic Trials, it was wonderful to be able to celebrate "Welcome Home Kevin Pearce Day" in June. There was incredible support and turnout for this event and everyone was thrilled to see Kevin healthy and doing well, back home in Norwich again.

Please check the Recreation Department portion of our Town website for the latest programs, schedules and events at www.norwich.vt.us

Recreation Council: Lars Blackmore, President; Chris Healy, Vice-President; Aimee Goodwin, Secretary; Lisa Adams; David Bibeau; Kristin Brown; Stuart Close; Bill Miles; Scott Neuman; Clayton Simmers; John Starosta; Kris Strohbehm

Jill Kearney, Director (649-1419, ext. 109; recreation@norwich.vt.us)

Senior Action Council

The Senior Action Council is a group of seven people appointed by the Selectboard. Our purpose is to answer to the needs of seniors in Norwich. Our main duty is the home-delivered meals program also known as "Meals on Wheels." We coordinate this program with the Bugbee Center in White River Junction (White River Council on Aging), where the meals are prepared. We have volunteer drivers for each weekday to deliver the meals to Norwich. Currently there are ten people receiving the meals.

Martha Drake, Chair (649-1301)

Transfer Station/Recycling Center

The Transfer Station/Recycling Center is under the direction of the Public Works Director. Judy Trussell continues to capably serve as the Transfer Station's lead attendant with John Wight operating the trash compactor and Charlie Taylor now handling most of the recycling.

Several updates and new services were implemented at the Transfer Station during FY10:

- A new trash compactor was installed early in 2010.
- We started a textile-recycling program in conjunction with Southeastern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA), enabling residents to drop off their used clothing and textile items. This diverts textile waste from the landfill.
- Zero-Sort Recycling was implemented in June of 2010. With this system we are able to accept many more items for recycling, thus reducing the amount of trash that is generated. This system also simplifies recycling for residents and has been very well received.
- A new attendants' building was constructed as well as a new combination ploughshare/packing peanut shed.
- A community bulletin board was put up.

In May of 2010, we collaborated with Northeast Waste and the Car Store to organize our Town's event for the 40th anniversary of Green Up Day. The Greater Upper Valley Solid Waste District held two events at our Transfer Station this year: an electronics collection in July and a household hazardous waste collection in September.

Future plans for the Transfer Station/Recycling Center include the recycling of e-waste, freon items, and batteries of all types.

Once again we would like to thank all other part-time employees and dedicated volunteers who help make our facility successful. We remind everyone that the Transfer Station/Recycling Center is open every Wednesday and Saturday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns please contact me or Judy Trussell, Transfer Station Lead Attendant, at the Transfer Station at 649-1192.

Andy Hodgdon, Public Works Director (649-2209; Norwich_highway@earthlink.net)

Tree Warden

The Tree Warden is primarily responsible for managing and clearing dead and diseased trees from the town right of way as well as maintaining and adding to the treescape in the Town of Norwich. Working closely with Andy Hodgdon and the Town Public Works Department, we continued to improve our proactive approach of trimming and improving the treescape on the 100 miles of town roads in Norwich each year. This is for safety reasons in terms of overhanging trees hitting school buses and town plow trucks as well as to allow proper ditching to keep our roads from washing out. Some of the roads we worked on this year were Union Village Rd., Turnpike Rd., Upper Turnpike Rd. and Main St. We did maintenance on numerous trees that have been planted in recent years and continued to remove small diseased elms near the center of town. One purpose of the elm removal is to protect the glorious large elm on Church St. across from the school.

We continued to improve the landscaping and the work done on the north bank of Route 10A above the Ledyard Bridge. We also continued a major improvement of Foley Park adjacent to the Ledyard Bridge. We also pruned, fertilized and mulched the existing plantings in the park. We intend to continue to prune, mulch, fertilize and refurbish more of the plantings. We replaced an Oak Tree that was destroyed in a car accident and replaced some of the perennial plantings that had perished on the bank above the plaza on the south side of the bridge. At some future date, it would be great to have access to the river from Foley Park via

steps and a landing. We are also thinking about some benches and picnic tables. Many more people have begun to spend time in Foley Park, enjoying the beautiful view of the riverscape to the south. We have also begun and will continue to work to clean up and prune the orchard on the hillside behind the “Welcome to Norwich” sign off Route 5 on the way into the village. Most people I have spoken with are keenly aware of how much value trees and parks add to our environment.

We continued to develop our project to make excess hardwood cut in Norwich and other towns available to needy people in the Upper Valley for fuel. Helpful volunteers delivered fuel to many people, enabling them to get through a tough winter. This project is taking on extra meaning with the high fuel prices and the bad economy. Andy Hodgdon and his crew helped tremendously in hauling wood up to our site off Beaver Meadow Road and also improving the site. We worked with Davey Tree Co., the contractor for Green Mountain Power, to remove a large number of locust trees from the upper bank of Route 5 by the intersection with River Rd. Andy's crew hauled quite a few loads of the locust wood up to the site. Colby Jantzen completed the shed for the wood for his Eagle Scout project. Thanks to the Norwich List Serve, we had a larger group of people helping to cut split and stack over 10 cords of hardwood at this fall's “Wood Bee.” We continue to work with LISTEN, COVER and SEVCA to identify people who need the fuel. Milt Frye has helped tremendously, arranging and meeting people to help them pick up wood. More than 30 pickup loads of wood were taken out of the wood yard this year. We need volunteers to help cut, split and deliver the wood and need help coordinating these activities. If more people would actually roll up their sleeves and help on this, we could definitely assist more households. If you can help with this, have wood to contribute or need to report tree problems, please contact me at any time.

Jake Blum, Tree Warden (649-2994)

Trustees of Public Funds

According to Vermont Statutes, if a town elects Cemetery Commissioners, then the town also elects Trustees of Public Funds. The Trustees are elected on a rotating basis for a three-year term. The Trustees of Public Funds manage cemetery funds and other monies left to the Town in trust and accepted by the Selectboard.

During the Town's fiscal year, the Trustees invest monies not currently in use to maximize earnings for these funds. The Trustees meet regularly to monitor the funds. A decision was made to support area banks with investments in accordance with the Vermont Statutes, typically requesting investment rates at a minimum of six different banks in order to determine the best investment offer. The Cemetery Commissioners apprise us of their plans for working in the various cemeteries. Therefore, we invest to meet their needs. The interest is allocated between sale of lots and perpetual care.

The Land Management Council Trust Fund, WTCU Fountain Trust Fund and the other non-cemetery funds will be turned over to the Town with the beginning of FY11.

Deborah Hall, Cheryl A. Lindberg, Doug Rexford, Trustees

Zoning and Planning Office

The Zoning and Planning Department, staffed by the Planner/Zoning Administrator and the Planning Assistant, is responsible for administration and enforcement of the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations, advising landowners and their representatives on matters relating to these regulations, assisting in the preparation of permit and hearing applications, and providing staff support to the Development Review Board, Planning Commission, Historic

Preservation Commission, and the Ancient Roads Committee.

The Department also provides technical support to the Planning Commission in preparing the Town Plan and land use regulations, and maintains the Norwich Geographic Information System (GIS), the E911 Locatable Address System, and the Tracy Hall network server.

In addition to regular office activities, hundreds of hours have been devoted to the preparation of the new Town Plan. After many years of hard work by the Planning Commission with support from other Town boards and residents participating in surveys, charrettes, and public meeting after public meeting, a full draft was presented to the public in April. We anticipate adoption by the Selectboard in early 2011.

Permits were issued this year for five single-family homes, although still well below the prior five-year average of eleven, it is slightly higher than the previous year. Additions to existing buildings also increased from the previous year. Approved subdivision applications resulted in one new lot.

Specific information on zoning and subdivision requirements are listed on the inside back cover of this report. Regulations and permit applications are available at the Town website.

*Phil Dechert, Planner/Zoning Administrator (649-1419, ext. 4)
Pam Mullen, Planning Assistant*

Permit Activity (July 1, 2009 - June 30, 2010)

Zoning Permits

New Homes	5
Building Additions	40
Accessory Structures	24
Home Occupation	1
Development Envelope	1
Replacements: Bldg./Home	2
Agricultural	3

Development Review Board

Subdivisions	
Preliminary Plan Review	1
Final Plan Review	1
(creating 1 new lot)	
Conditional Use Review	4
Boundary Line Adjustment	4

Photo: Lars Blackmore/Ameridane Press

