

TOWN PLANNER'S REPORT

TAD REDWAY, TOWN PLANNER

Development Activities:

The past fiscal year has witnessed a significant increase in non-residential development activity over the previous year.

PERMIT ACTIVITY (April 2013-May 2014)	
• Staff Review Permits	10
• Site Plan Permits	3
• Conditional Use Permits	11
• Subdivision Reviews	0 (1 pending)
• Zoning Map Amendment	0
• Private Way Application	1

This uptick suggests that the non-residential real estate market is slowly recovering with businesses starting to reinvest and expand their

operations. Subdivision pressure remains very soft, indicating there remains excess inventory in single-family lots that has still not been exhausted.

Over the past year, the Town has witnessed some impressive expansions including the completion of the redesigned Weirs Motor's facility, construction of the new Champaign Energy corporate offices on Route 1, opening of the Kate's Homemade Butter manufacturing facility along with approved plans for construction of a research dairy barn, another expansion at Arundel Machine, expansion of Bentley's Campground, and the creation of the Wellness Center on Portland Road, and the miracle of Arundel's relocated historic homes at the North Chapel Commons project site. In the next few months, look for major expansions at Southern Maine Marine, the former One Steel Recycling Center now under new management, and the construction of a new state-of-the-art granite countertop fabrication center at 1362 Portland Road.

The Staff Review Committee has expedited the permitting of several new businesses including fast-tracking the Champaign Energy corporate headquarters. However, the Committee's most pressing job in the last twelve months has been reviewing and processing 5 private way exemptions that enable property owners to build on existing lots without compromising having to rebuild the entire road. This special zoning exemption provision (section 7.7.B.1.b) was approved by Arundel voters last year and has proven to successfully provide relief to existing property owners without compromising public safety or endangering emergency responders.

Comprehensive Plan Review Committee:

At the direction of the Board of Selectmen, the Comprehensive Plan Review Committee (CPRC) was re-formed to review the implications of the creation of several new zoning districts in the Land Use Ordinance as proposed by the Planning Board. The ten-member committee chaired by Donna Der Kinderen focused its initial efforts on evaluating the compatibility of new zoning districts proposed by the Planning Board with past findings of the Comprehensive Plan and the Town's renewed focus on economic expansion. The CPRC's mandates required the Planning Board to hold a series of workshops with all property owners in the proposed districts, and to make special accommodations to preserve residential property rights in the business districts. In the end, the Committee proposed five new mixed-use (business and residential) districts to be included in the Comprehensive Plan:

- M1- *Downtown Business 1 District* on the southern portion of Route 1;
- M2- *Downtown Business 2 District* directly behind the DB1 district along Route 1;
- M3- *Gateway District*, located at the northern end of Route 1 at the Biddeford City line;
- M4- *Townhouse Corner District*, a new business district located on Arundel Road and Log Cabin Road north of the Kennebunkport border

- *M5- Alfred Road District* located on Route 111 between the Biddeford border and the CMP transmission line crossing.

In addition, the Committee advocated for the provision of public infrastructure and facilities that would improve the success and absorption rates for the business districts. The Committee's work is far from complete. In the next year, the CPRC will be reexamining the location and land use schedule of the current residential zones as well as examining the future of the Route 111 corridor. The proposed amendments to the 2007 Comprehensive Plan are available for public inspection at the Town website (www.arundelmaine.org) or the Town Clerk's Office, and is listed for Town vote on Warrant # 5.

Zoning Amendments:

With a lull in new applications this past winter, the Planning Board had an opportunity to do some broken field running in finalizing the zoning amendments for the districts sanctioned by the Comprehensive Plan Review Committee. The Board held a number of public workshops, consulted with the Economic Development Committee, and held joint meetings with the CPRC to develop new district regulations and ordinances for three of the five districts proposed in the new Comprehensive Plan amendments. These districts include the following:

- *Downtown Business 1 District:* A high density commercial district along Portland Road from the Kennebunk River to Searle's Lane that employs greatly reduced setbacks, larger building footprints, architectural standards, shared parking, and an expanded palette of permitted uses designed to encourage the creation of a distinctive downtown service center for residents, tourists, and neighboring residents. District boundaries follow property lines where feasible and designate all existing business properties as permitted uses.

- *Downtown Business 2 District:* This district is located directly behind the DB-1 district and is intended to attract more intensive and a broader range of uses than also compliment and support the businesses situated in the DB-1 district along Portland Road, Limerick, River, and portions of Old Post Road.
- *Townhouse Corner District:* Currently zoned only for residential, the proposed Townhouse Corner district will reinstitute the historic pattern of smaller scale commercial uses with residences along portions of Arundel and Log Cabin Road. This district requires new business to visually integrate with the residential architecture of the neighborhood while providing new economic opportunities in this traditional tourist corridor.

Along with corresponding changes to the definitions, the land use tables, district descriptions, and the performance standards of the LUO, these proposed new district regulations are proposed in Warrant Article #6.

The Planning Board's intent to develop the regulations for the proposed Gateway District and the Alfred Road district after Town Meeting and then follow on the heels of the CPRC's work in the residential district to complete the rest of the Ordinance re-write by this time next year

Tax Increment Finance Districts:

For several years the Planning Department has been advocating the use of Tax Increment Finance (TIF) districts as a means to spur economic development while temporarily sheltering increased tax valuation from State of Maine funding formulas for Municipal Revenue Sharing, School Apportionment Funding, and York County taxes. Last month the Town held a special Town Meeting to approve and submit the Planning Department's application to the State for a TIF district in the Central Maine Power Company transmission corridor. The district was approved by the State of Maine and will dedicate

all new tax revenues generated by CMP power line improvements to the Arundel Fire Rescue Department for purchase of desperately needed apparatus, equipment, and training for the next 30 years, with no corresponding impact to School funding formulas and municipal revenue sharing.

The Town is proposing a second such TIF district for the *Arundel-Kennebunkport Seasonal Cottage* project off of Route 1 in which the projected valuation of \$70 million would finance economic development infrastructure (sewer), shelter revenues from School funding formulas, York County taxes, and municipal revenue sharing funds for 25 years, and provide long-range taxpayer relief. Like the CMP TIF, if the project fails, the Town incurs no financial exposure. Town Meeting consideration of this second TIF will be under Warrant Article #3.

Any citizen wishing to participate in the drafting of land use regulations or the comprehensive plan please contact me at 985-4201 or at townplanner@roadrunner.com. The Planning Office should be considered by property owners to be a resource in any of your development endeavors and I look forward to serving all Arundel residents and businesspeople in the upcoming year.