

## **TOWN SERVICES**

### **AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION**

The Stow Agricultural Commission is charged with maintaining the viability of agriculture in Stow. This includes advising other Town boards on matters pertaining to agriculture, resolving conflicts between agricultural and residential uses, and promoting agriculture in town. The Agricultural Commission has a website, [StowAgCom.org](http://StowAgCom.org), which provides notices of agricultural events and conditions. The website can also be reached through the Town website.

In 2011, a new berry pest arrived in New England: the Spotted Wing Drosophila. This new pest attacks brambles such as raspberries, blackberries, and also strawberries and other fruit. The pest appeared in late August, and pretty much wiped out the fall raspberry crop. The pest was present in 2012 also, but no solution has yet been found. The combined efforts of the Extension Services of all the New England states are trying to determine the best way to combat this pest. There may be organic methods of control. When information is available, it will be posted on [StowAgCom.org](http://StowAgCom.org).

Residents are reminded that Stow has a right-to-farm bylaw, which reiterates State laws in our Town bylaws. As part of this bylaw, we provide a notification form for use in transfers of property that lets people know that farms are active in Stow. The notification form should be filed with the Selectmen's office before the transfer of property is completed. The form can be downloaded from [StowAgCom.org](http://StowAgCom.org) or through the Town website.

In 2012, we are pleased to report that Dave Buchholz filled a vacancy on the commission. We look forward to working with him.

Respectfully submitted,

Dwight Sipler, chair  
Liz Painter, clerk

Julie Martin Sullivan  
Kathy Steege  
Dave Buchholz

### **BUILDING DEPARTMENT**

The Building Department issued a total of 252 Building Permits in 2012. We spent a considerable amount of time at the Center School site attending construction coordination meetings and performing rough & final inspections of the buildings in order to open the new Phase I building section in February 2012 and the renovated Phase II building section in September 2012. Other inspections included commercial expansions, new homes, kitchen & bath remodeling, home additions, roofing, siding, wood/pellet stoves and annual inspections of restaurants, golf clubs & day care facilities. New home construction is 98% complete at Villages at Stow and Derby Woods. In addition we attended seminars for new ICC/MA building codes, energy codes & fire safety as required under the continuing education requirements set forth by the Department of Public Safety. In addition to the duties as Building Inspectors, we are also in charge of the following municipal properties: Town Building, Town Hall, West School, and the Crescent Street Garage. We also assist the Library Trustees with building improvement projects at the Randall Library. We have maintained the existing Town Buildings as follows: