

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

The year 2008 brought forth nine applications for public hearings submitted to the Board. The decreasing trend continues, as can be seen when compared to the 46 in 2005, 21 in 2006 and 15 in 2007.

There were four applications for variance from the Zoning Bylaws of the Town, and all were granted. One, however, was appealed by an abutter. This was resubmitted by the applicant in a manner agreed by negotiation with the abutter. Although the amendment was not necessary from the Board's standpoint, the Board voted to revise and reissue the new variance.

There were five applications for special permit. All were granted.

The Board continues to monitor the Villages at Stow project, for which a Comprehensive Permit was granted in October 2003, in accordance with the provisions of Massachusetts General Law Chapter 40B.

The Board of Appeals meets on the first Monday of each month, as needed, in the Town Building. Information regarding procedure and application for hearing may be obtained by contacting Catherine Desmond, Secretary to the Board

Respectfully submitted,

Arthur R. Lowden
John Clayton Jr., Clerk
Edmund C. Tarnuzzer, Jr.
Donald E. Dwinells
Michele Shoemaker
Richard S. Martin, Associate

Donald B. Hyde, Jr. Associate
Charles A. Barney, Associate
Lee Heron, Associate
William F. Byron, Jr., Associate
Bruce E. Fletcher, Associate

Catherine A. Desmond, Secretary

TOWN SERVICES

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

The Highway Department had a very busy winter for 2007-2008. The month of December 2007 gave us 5 plowable events of snow totaling over 32 inches of the white stuff. Throughout the course of the winter our sand/salt spreader trucks were dispatched to treat unsafe roads a total of 62 times. This consists of five Highway Department trucks treating the Town's roads with sand and salt when road conditions become unsafe from snow and ice. The remainder of the winter was fairly quiet, yielding an unofficial total of 13 more inches of snow and 4 more plowable events throughout January, February, and March.

Once winter had passed, this department spent much of the springtime cleaning up from the events of winter. This includes the sweeping of roads, town owned parking lots, and sidewalks,

fixing damage to lawns and roadsides caused from snowplows, grading gravel roads, and cleaning up any roadside debris that went unseen throughout the winter.

During the spring and summer a total of eight weeks were spent cutting roadside brush and low limbs. This is a maintenance item, which is performed every year as needed to improve visibility on roads and at intersections. During these eight weeks we also removed 15 roadside trees at various locations around town that were deemed either dead or hazardous.

Improvements were also made to the Town's Lower Village Common this spring. This included a section of Gardner Road (abutting the north side of the common), which was abandoned by the town this year. The Highway Department removed pavement from this abandoned section of road and replaced it with a sidewalk and a grassy area. The sidewalk runs between Gardner Road and the east entrance to the shopping plaza. We also assisted members of the Stow Lower Village Committee with the installation of the new post and rail fencing around the perimeter of the common. In the same area of town, this department installed three temporary pedestrian refuge islands per order of the Selectmen. These islands act as a safe haven for pedestrians crossing Great Road and have received mixed reviews from the public so far.

This summer there were several severe thunderstorms that passed through Town, which caused extensive damage to trees and roads in several areas around town. Three to four weeks were spent cleaning up tree debris and repairing road shoulders around town that were affected by the storms.

During the summer and fall we prepped Cross Street and Edson Street for reconstruction. This department corrected any drainage issues on these streets, and cut low limbs and brush on these streets as needed. Private contractors then came into town to reclaim these roads. Reclaiming is a process that pulverizes the existing road and then uses the pulverized material as a road base for the new asphalt surface. Once this process was complete and the reclaimed material was properly graded, another private contractor then resurfaced the road with bituminous concrete. Sudbury Road between Queens Lane and State Road was also resurfaced with bituminous concrete. Large-scale projects such as these are paid for with State Aid money.

This year saw the arrival of a new addition to our fleet. We took delivery of a 2008 Chevy Silverado one-ton dump truck with snowplow in July 2008.

As always, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the Board of Selectman, the Police Department, the Fire Department and the employees of the Highway Department for another year of productive work and their dedication to this Town. It's people like this that keep the Town moving forward. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael E. Clayton, Superintendent of
Streets

Scott Morse, Foreman
Rachael Belanger, Secretary
Brian Hatch
Joe Landry

Bill Tuttle
Albeo Duguay
Steve Landry
Jim Ruggiero
Scott Landry
Tim Gray
Scott Morse, Jr.



BUILDING DEPARTMENT

The Building Department issued a total of 301 Building Permits in 2008. It was a very busy year for both residential and commercial construction. We inspected the construction of office & business expansions, new homes, barns, kitchen & bath remodeling, home additions, swimming pools and wood & pellet stoves. In addition we attended seminars for building code & fire safety as required under the continuing education requirements set forth by the Department of Public Safety. In addition to the duties as Building Inspector, we are also in charge of the following municipal properties: Town Building, Town Hall, West School, and the Crescent Street Garage.

We have maintained the existing Town Buildings as follows:

Town Hall

Regular maintenance was performed. In addition, the installation of new smoke & heat detectors with a new alarm signal panel was completed.

Town Building

Regular maintenance items included changing air filters, grease for the air handling units and the hot water circulating pumps. As an energy saving measure incandescent light bulbs were changed to fluorescent bulbs. Construction of the third floor bathroom, hallway, Stow TV and the IT room was completed in May. The two bathrooms on the first floor were cleaned, sanded and

painted in June. In October the roof replacement contract was bid and a new roof was installed in November. The old shingles were recycled.

West School & Crescent Street Garage Building

These buildings were checked periodically for security. No work was performed on the buildings in 2008.

Randall Library

We provided assistance to the Library Trustees in the preparation and bidding of the window replacement contract in September. Replacement of six (6) windows on the east side of the building was scheduled to start in January 2009.

In summary, I want to thank all the Town Building staff and the Town Departments for their support. In particular I want to thank Judie Scraggs and Sheila Deleo for their dedicated assistance in the Building Department.

Respectfully submitted,

Craig D. Martin, P.E., Building Commissioner

Judith Scraggs, Administrative Assistant
Sheila Deleo, Clerk

Inspectors

- Douglas Hyde, Local Inspector
- Ray Renzoni, Local Inspector
- Charles Saari, Wire Inspector
- Robert Norton, Deputy Wire Inspector
- Michael Norton, Deputy Wire Inspector
- Eric Sahlberg, Plumbing Inspector
- Ray Smith, Deputy Plumbing Inspector
- Adam Sahlberg, Deputy Plumbing Inspector
- Raymond Smith, Gas Inspector
- Adam Sahlberg, Deputy Gas Inspector

Robert Smith, Deputy Gas Inspector

BUILDING DEPARTMENT

TOTAL BUILDING PERMITS ISSUED IN 2008

Number of Permits	Type of Construction	Construction Value
45	Single Family Dwelling	\$13,401,555.00
103	Remodeling and Additions	\$3,918,859.00
58	Strip and Re-roof	\$558,792.00
	Re-siding & Windows	
4	Swimming Pools	\$24,650.00
16	Commercial	\$966,817.00
1	Water Storage Tank	\$285,000.00
1	Wireless Communication	\$35,000.00
4	Sheds	\$21,043.00
22	Temporary Tents	\$34,369.00
39	Wood/Pellet Stoves	\$121,775.00
1	Solar	N/A
<u>7</u>	Demolition Permits	<u>\$50,000.00</u>
301		\$19,417,860.00

PERMITS ISSUED IN 2008

Number of Permits/Certificates	Fees Collected
301 Building Permits	\$99, 029.00
245 Electrical Permits	\$25, 864.00
139 Plumbing Permits	\$11, 649.00
78 Gas Permits	\$ 5,486.00
22 Sign/Banner Permits	\$ 417.28
13 Annual Certificates	\$ 480.00
 798 Total Permits	 \$142, 925.28

RECREATION COMMISSION

This past year has been exciting and eventful for the Recreation Commission. The Commission is very excited that the town was able to purchase the Snow Property and looks forward to having new recreational facilities in Stow for the community to enjoy for many years to come. Town-wide brochures are distributed throughout the year highlighting the many new programs that have been established as well as the existing programs. The Second annual Stow Gobbler Road Race was even more successful than last year with over 550 participants walking or running the race on Thanksgiving Day. Thanks to the Papanastassiou family, volunteers, and sponsors for making this race such a success. We also added numerous other programs this past year such as Thundercat's Sports Jam, Kiddie Cat Jam and Baseball Camp.

The Recreation Commission is dedicated to providing town-wide programming for all ages. During the past year the Recreation Commission has outlined its short- and long-term goals and the steps needed to achieve success. The Commission is excited about the possibilities that can be accomplished in the years ahead to make recreation in Stow an important ingredient to maintaining and improving the quality of life. The Commission would like to encourage others within the community to participate, either as an associate member or to assist in the development and implementation of programs. Also, please feel free to bring any issues or ideas to the Commission. We would welcome your input. Thanks to all the workers and volunteers who helped with the programs throughout the year.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Busch, Chairman
Robert Braceland
John Sangermano
Ellen Piccioli

Jim Henry
Laura Greenough, Recreation Director

COUNCIL ON AGING

The Stow Council On Aging (COA) is a department of the municipal government established for the purpose of providing support to those age 60 +, by being a resource of information on elder affairs, providing outreach services, transportation, social activities, and helping people remain in their homes as long as safely possible.

The COA Board meets in the Friendship Room in the lower level of the Town Building on the second Thursday of the month at 9 a.m., with the exception of July and August. All meetings are open to the public. Observers and prospective new members are invited to any and all of the COA meetings. The members of the Board are made up entirely of volunteer workers. All members are appointed by the Board of Selectmen.

Each year the senior population continues to grow in Stow. In 2000, Stow had 752 seniors, and in 2008 Stow had approximately 1,300 seniors. Due to this dramatic increase, our existing space in the basement of the Town Building is inadequate to provide for the needs of our seniors. Due to this inadequate space, our offerings are limited in the number and type of events that we can schedule and provide. We are constantly using offsite locations such as the three churches in town to accommodate the needs of our seniors. The COA Board has established a subcommittee to investigate all possibilities (land, building, expansion) for a larger space for the COA. The COA has not only experienced an increase in the number of seniors participating, but their needs have increased due to the trend to provide care in the home rather than a facility. Since the town isn't large enough to have a Social Services Department, the COA tends to be the catch-all for assisting people of all ages, abilities and income levels. Services that the Council on Aging provides are listed in detail below. They include, but are not limited, to: Information/Referrals & Outreach Services at our Drop-In Center, Transportation, Nutritional Programs, Health & Educational Classes, Arts & Craft Classes, Exercise Programs, Day Trips, Newsletter, Food Stamp Applications, Fuel Assistance, AARP Tax Preparation, Social Events and much more.

The Drop-In Center is located in the Friendship Room in the lower level of the Town Building. It is open five days a week, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Many social, cultural, health and

educational events are held in the Friendship Room throughout the year. It is also available as a warming/cooling center for people to come in, sit, read the newspaper, drink coffee, and chat. It is a great place to obtain informational materials, referrals and resources.

Advocacy, Outreach and Referrals are provided to assist those elders of Stow who may be homebound, frail or lonely, and not receiving services from outside agencies. Sharon Funkhouser, our Outreach Coordinator/Volunteer Coordinator, and her team of volunteers will visit, shop or assist in any way to inform and refer our elders to services that are available to them through the COA and outside services such as Minuteman Senior Services and other local agencies. Suzanne Howley, our Outreach Worker, does the weekly crafts class, does home visits, plans most of the day trips, assists with the newsletter, and is the primary intake worker for both fuel assistance and food stamps.

Transportation is provided to all seniors, disabled and/or handicapped persons of Stow. This vital service continues to grow each year, and remains the number one service provided to seniors by the COA. Our three vans provide transportation for food shopping, errands, doctor and hospital appointments, exercise programs, hair appointments, club meetings, wellness clinics, congregate meals, Town Meeting and Town Elections, Drop-In Center activities, special events and meetings. The vans operate regularly Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. The vans not only provide transportation service throughout the town of Stow, but to many surrounding towns as well, such as: Acton, Concord, Hudson, Marlborough, Maynard, Lincoln, Lancaster, and Sudbury. The COA was awarded a grant from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation Mobility Assistance Program and received a brand new 8-passenger Ford van in July. The grant paid 80% of the cost of the van. Prior to receiving the new van, the Montachusett Regional Transportation Authority had been loaning us a medium-size van. The Town of Stow is a member of the Montachusett Regional Transit Authority and is able to borrow vans whenever needed. The COA also arranges for volunteer drivers for special doctor or hospital appointments that are outside the area covered by our van.

Nutritional Programs Offered:

- **Congregate Meals** are served in the Fellowship Hall at the First Parish Church on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The average number of people attending the meal site is approximately 25. A \$2.00 donation is requested. The meal site not only provides nutritional meals but also provides social interaction. The COA Van Service transports many of the people who attend the meal site. We thank First Parish Church for their generosity in letting us use their hall for the town meal site.
- **Meals On Wheels** is an important part of the Nutritional program. Meals are provided to people who are homebound and unable to prepare meals for themselves due to recovering from a recent hospital stay, an illness, or frailty. Volunteers contribute many hours working at the Meal Site or delivering Meals On Wheels. Without their help many Stow seniors would not enjoy the quality of life good nutrition brings. Approximately 16 seniors benefited from this service this past year.
- **Monthly Breakfast:** the third Friday of the month, the COA provides a substantial breakfast to all who wish to attend. Approximately 40 people attend this popular event each month.

Classes: Weekly Art, Craft, Sewing and Quilting Classes are offered at the COA Friendship Room and are funded by private donors, the participants and the Stow Friends of the COA. A variety of other Health and Educational classes are provided throughout the year.

Exercise Programs offered include: Aerobic, Arthritis & Yoga Classes, and a Walking Group. This wellness activity is primarily funded by the Stow Friends of the COA, and donations from participants. We thank both St. Isidore's Church and the Union Church for their generosity in letting us use their halls for these classes.

Health Clinics are held monthly throughout the year. Approximately 18 participants attend the Podiatry Clinic each month. The Blood Pressure Clinic sponsored by the Board of Health is held on the first Wednesday of the month at the Union Church from 10am to Noon.

Day Trips – Cultural and Social Outings are offered throughout the year. These trips and events are beneficial to the social and emotional well being of our seniors. Activities are planned with the hope that they will meet the varied interests of the people of Stow.

Medical Equipment is loaned to any Stow citizens in need, free of charge, including: wheelchairs, tub bench/chairs, commodes, walkers, canes, and other miscellaneous items. COA has loaned out numerous types of equipment this past year.

Newsletter: A 12-page newsletter is mailed to over 900 senior households in Stow each month. The effort of several dedicated seniors enables us to get this publication mailed out. We thank all the newsletter volunteers for their hard work. This is our most important vehicle in getting information to the Stow senior population. The Patrons who advertise, the Stow Friends of the COA, and a grant from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs make the printing and mailing of the newsletter possible.

R.U.O.K. Program: The COA and the Stow Police partner with this telephone reassurance program. A well-being check is made by the Stow Police by telephoning the senior at the same time each day.

S.H.I.N.E. Health Benefits Counseling: Serving Health Information Needs of the Elderly is a volunteer program sponsored by Minuteman Senior Services. Twice a month, a trained counselor provides seniors with free, confidential counseling and accurate, unbiased information regarding health insurance and prescription drug options. There is no fee for this service. Over 40 seniors benefited from this program this past year with a cost value of \$1,631.

S.M.O.C.: Fuel assistance applications are accepted by all office staff members of the COA from November through April. Assistance is available to low-income eligible persons of Stow. All information is kept in strictest confidentiality. This past year, due to the high cost of fuel, there has been an increase in the number of applications that we have assisted with for both seniors and non-seniors.

Tax Preparation Assistance is a free service sponsored by A.A.R.P. An A.A.R.P. volunteer will schedule appointments with seniors of Stow from February through April for tax preparation and to apply for "Circuit Breaker". Many seniors have taken advantage of this free service this past year.

State Representative meetings: In 2008, our state representative Patricia Walrath took time from her busy schedule to meet with our seniors to discuss issues of concern to elders and to inform them of legislation that might affect them. These meetings took place on the second Thursday of each month from 11 a.m. – 12:45 p.m. at the First Parish Church during the meal site. All seniors were welcome to attend.

Senior Tax Work-Off Program is a program offered by the Town of Stow for seniors 60+ who have lived in the town of Stow for at least six months, are a home owner, and meet the income requirements. An eligible senior may work 93.75 hours at minimum wage (\$8.00) to earn \$750 worth of rebate on their real estate taxes. Positions are filled within participating town departments. This is a double benefit to both the client and the town. We had 20 applicants who participated this past year.

Senior Computers is a program that allows us to offer seniors used and upgraded computers. With the help of Ronald Hill of Stow, we are able to give computers to seniors for use in their own homes. Ron takes used donated computers, updates them, delivers and sets them up. He also will provide user training.

Special Events: This past year, the COA recognized, celebrated or participated in a variety of events which included but were not limited to: Happy “Noon” Year party, Chinese New Year, Valentine’s Tea, St. Patrick’s Day party, Red Sox Opening Day, Springfest Pancake Breakfast, Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon, Lions Club Flea Market, Summertime Picnic, Halloween Party, Fall Craft Fair, Veteran’s Appreciation Breakfast and our annual Holiday Luncheon.

Town Cane Ceremony: This past August, Stow’s Boston Post Cane was awarded to Stow’s oldest citizen: Donald F. Brown, born in 1908, at the COA annual senior picnic from the Board of Selectmen.

Volunteer Program: Approximately 80 volunteers assist the COA. Volunteers are assigned to a variety of duties within the department such as: receptionist, data entry, bookkeeping, general office work, bakers, friendly visitors, transportation, and a variety of tasks too numerous to list here. The COA relies heavily on the volunteers, who put in many hours of dedicated service to improve the quality of life for the seniors of Stow. The COA can’t thank our volunteers enough for all that they do. Without their help the Council on Aging could not function. If you are interested in becoming a valued volunteer, call the COA office at (978) 897-1880. Volunteers are needed during the weekday, even if it is just for one hour.

Stow Friends of the Council on Aging Board is composed of volunteer members of the community at large, citizens of Stow, and the Council on Aging Director (non voting member.) The Board meets the first Tuesday of the month at 10 a.m. in the Friendship Room at Town Building. All interested citizens are welcome to attend. The goal of the Stow Friends of the COA is to raise funds to supplement the programs and activities of the Council on Aging. In addition, they raise funds for the Van Operating Fund and special projects of the COA. We thank the Friends of the COA for all their hard work this past year and the support they offer the Stow COA all year long. Without the Stow Friends of the COA we would not be able to exist. They provide financial support that is needed to sustain a thriving Council on Aging for the Town of Stow. Stow is very fortunate to have such a caring, dedicated and devoted Friends group.

Minuteman Senior Services provided \$131,822 worth of services to 182 seniors in Stow this past year in return for our contribution of \$962. Minuteman Senior Services is funded by state and federal grants. We wish to thank them for all their services and assistance to our seniors.

Thank you to all the individuals who assisted the COA this past year; it was greatly appreciated. We also wish to extend our gratitude to the Stow Highway Department for keeping our vans serviced and safe for the roads and their continuous assistance whenever needed. Last, but not least, we wish to thank the seniors who give so much of their time and talents to help make the COA a place where seniors can explore personal growth, new opportunities, friendship and

camaraderie, and contribute to the community as a volunteer. So many of our seniors may be “retired” but are still very productive and “working” individuals. The seniors help themselves and others day in and day out. We are grateful for all they do, and admire their spirit of enthusiasm and empowerment.

Respectfully submitted,

James Sauta, Chairman
Newton Wesley, Vice Chairman
Eleanor Beaudette, Secretary
Paul Chaisson
Newell Dearborn
Kate Hogan
Alice Olsen
Beth Tobey
Ruth Delmonico, Associate

Kristen Donovan, Associate
Josephine Langley, Associate

Alyson Toole, Director
Sharon Funkhouser, Outreach Coordinator
Suzanne Howley, Outreach Worker
Alice Olsen, Member Coordinator
Brian Burke, Associate
Nancy Chiasson, Associate

RANDALL LIBRARY TRUSTEES

Circulation remained strong in 2008. The library circulated 110,956 items during the year. Due to our popular children’s programming, wide range of DVDs, and the breadth of the Minuteman Library Network, the library is a very busy place.

A total of 505 children enrolled in the Summer Reading and Listening Clubs, of whom 457 (over 90%) were Stow residents. Sponsored by the Stow Community Chest, The Randall Library Friends’ Association, and the Stow Cultural Council, the summer started off with our annual “moonwalk on the common” on the last day of school. The fun continued with the annual Ice Cream Social sponsored by the Friends, a magic show, puppet show, dinosaur program, and a special Dads’ Night at the Library with a jungle encounters program.

During 2008, the library was used by many community groups including: Stow Soccer, Stow Democratic Committee, the Central Massachusetts chapter of the Editorial Freelancers’ Association, Juniper Hill Water Company, Stow Republicans, Organization for the Assabet, Knitting Club, Stow Boy Scouts, First Connections, Stow Community Chest, Stow Girl Scouts, Stow Recreation, Frankie DeMeo Scholarship Fund, Stow Area Parents’ Network, Lake Boon Association, Sierra Club, Stow Garden Club, Lacrosse parents, and a Town Clerk training workshop.

The Trustees wish to thank the following groups without whose support we would not be able to achieve this level of service: Hale High School Trustees, Second Century Fund, Randall Library Friends’ Association, Merwin Memorial trustees, Stow Community Chest, and the Stow Cultural Council.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Masters, Chairman
Robert Aldape, Treasurer
Alison Campbell, Secretary
Harry Donahue
Carolyn Howe

Pierie O’Connor
Timothy Reed

Susan Wysk, Library Director
Denise Flynn, Children’s Librarian

HOUSING AUTHORITY

The Stow Housing Authority, founded by town meeting, is authorized by and operates under the provisions of Chapter 121B of the Massachusetts General Laws. The Stow Housing Authority manages and administers low-rent housing programs, which are funded by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and the U.S. Department of Housing and Community Development. The operations of the Authority are supported entirely by grants or contracts with the state or federal governments. A Board of five commissioners governs the Stow Housing Authority, with four members locally elected and the fifth member appointed by the Commonwealth. The Board of Commissioners meets as necessary at the Town Building. The Stow Housing Authority has contracted with the Hudson Housing Authority to administer the rental assistance programs.

The mission of the Stow Housing Authority is to provide decent and safe housing to needy persons. Currently, the Stow Housing Authority administers three (3) state vouchers, which are assigned to the Pilot Grove Development.

The Hudson Housing Authority staff conducts the day-to-day program administration.

The Stow Housing Authority has been named the monitoring agent for the affordable housing units built at the Villages at Stow as well as the LIP (local initiative program) located at Elm Ridge.

Respectfully submitted,

John Toole, Chairman
Robert Larkin
W. Robert Dilling, Jr.

Jack Kendra
Robert Barrell, Administrator

CEMETERY COMMITTEE

The Cemetery Committee, which reports to the Board of Selectmen, is composed of three members, each serving a 3-year term. The committee is responsible for the management, maintenance and upkeep of the town's cemeteries.

The three cemeteries in Stow (Hillside Cemetery on Crescent Street, The Lower Village Cemetery at Great Road and Pompositticut Street, and Brookside Cemetery on Gleasondale Road and Box Mill Road) are maintained by the Superintendent and seasonal part-time employees.

Improvements this past year included the installation of a new well and underground power line in the Brookside extension. This will eventually be mated with the old existing water system and will give all of Brookside water for planned planting of trees, shrubs and gardens. Also this year the purchase of a compact tractor was added to the equipment the Superintendent has to help him in the maintenance of the cemeteries.

The Committee also wants to recognize the outstanding work of Superintendent Robb Gledhill. We are very fortunate to have a person such as “GH” who, most of the time, maintains all three cemeteries by himself.

The Committee wants to thank the Board of Selectmen, the Town Administrator, all the townspeople, and especially the Highway Department for all their support this past year.

Respectfully submitted,

Fred Dodge, Chairman
Roy Dudley

William E. Clayton, Associate
G.H. Gledhill, Cemetery Superintendent

CULTURAL COUNCIL

The Stow Cultural Council completed a successful year, receiving a total of \$9,800 in grants from the following sources: \$4,300 from the State Legislature through the Massachusetts Cultural Council; \$4,000 from the Fieldstone Foundation; and \$1,500 from Town Meeting.

The council voted to grant funds to the following projects for 2008:

- Stow West School Open Houses: \$270 (Karen Gray, Stow Historical Commission)
- Lake Boon Water Carnival Music Boat: \$350 (David Gray, Lake Boon Improvement Assoc.)
- Summer Reading Program: \$1,000 (Denise Flynn, Randall Library)
- Children’s Garden Interactive Sing-Alongs: \$400 (Ed Morgan, “The Music Man”)
- Sounds of Stow 30th Anniversary Season: \$1,100 (Rick Gentilman, Sounds of Stow)
- Hale Middle School Play (artistic director): \$800 (Nancy Dodge, Hale Middle School Play)
- NRHS Play (artistic director): \$600 (Diane Sestito, Nashoba Regional High School Friends of Drama)
- Symphony Pro Musica Season: \$175 (Thomas Kazior, Symphony Pro Musica)
- 74th Regional Exhibition of Art & Craft: \$100 (Peter Timms, Fitchburg Art Museum)
- Pied Potter Hamelin’s Magical Potter’s Wheel: \$300 (Karen Gray, Stow Historical Commission)
- Hudson Area Arts Alliance Community Participation Activities and Events: \$300 (Jan Patterson, Hudson Area Arts Alliance)
- Three Apples Storytelling Festival: \$125 (Nicolette Nordin Heavey, Three Apples Storytelling Festival)
- Acton Community Chorus Concerts: \$300 (Patricia Lawson, Acton Community Chorus)

The Stow Cultural Council encourages ANY Stow resident to apply for a grant for a project of his or her own imagination, or to sponsor an event by an area artist or performer, that will benefit the Stow community. Grant applications may be received at any time, but must be received no later than October 15, 2009 for the next granting cycle. For more information see the Cultural Council page on the town website, www.stow-ma.gov.

Membership currently stands at six, which meets the Mass Cultural Council’s minimum requirement of five. Members are Anne Draudt (secretary and co-chair), Catherine Hammill (treasurer), Donnalisa Johnson (public relations), Nancy Maldari, Dorothy Sonnichsen and Betsy

Stepp (co-chair). Ann Deluty, Bob Glorioso and Lynne Juster are Associate Members. New members are appointed by the Board of Selectmen to serve a three-year term. Members can be reappointed for an additional term with a total term limit of six years. As several members' terms are due to expire in the near future, the Cultural Council actively seeks residents who are interested in joining as Associate Members, with the intent of transitioning to full Member status in the future.

Respectfully submitted,

Betsy Stepp, Chairman
Anne Draudt
Robert Glorioso
Catherine Hammill

Donnalisa Johnson
Dorothy Sonnichsen
Lynne Juster, Associate
Isabel Prokopovich, Administrative Asst

VETERAN'S SERVICES

Every city and town in the Commonwealth is required by G.L. c. 115 to appoint a Veterans' Services Officer ("VSO") whose duties include locating veterans, advising them of their rights and benefits, and helping them apply for and receive state and federal benefits. See G.L. c. 115, §§ 3, 10; 108 CMR 12.01 *et seq.* All cities and towns with populations over 12,000 must employ a full-time VSO as an advocate for the veterans of that municipality. Towns with populations under 12,000 may employ a VSO on a part-time basis.

Regardless of full or part time status, the VSO is the primary contact for veterans and their families with questions about benefits. Until a change in state regulations in 2005 this position was known as "Veterans' Agent."

The Town of Stow, as well as the federal and state governments, honors the dedicated and selfless service performed by members of all branches of our armed forces, up to and including the ongoing conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq. There are various benefits available to military veterans residing in Stow. These services and/or benefits are separate and distinct from those administered by the federal Veterans' Administration. In the case of direct financial assistance, benefits are determined based on need in accordance with state guidelines. Once paid by the town "up front," Stow receives a 75% reimbursement from the Commonwealth. Other programs are available without regard to any "means" test of the applicant and which do not require the expenditure of municipal funds.

Services provided in recent years have been varied. Financial aid was provided (anonymously) in accordance with state regulations governing income eligibility requirements and level of support. Assistance has been provided in applying to a federal program that provides grave markers for deceased Stow resident veterans. The VSO also serves as a liaison to other federal veterans' programs.

During 2008, the VSO has worked cooperatively with full-time counterparts from both Hudson and Marlboro on issues with which they deal frequently due to their much larger "client" base. This constitutes a good informal regionalization of resources to facilitate service delivery to Stow's veterans. Our Council on Aging also deserves praise for sponsoring an outreach presentation of benefits (state and federal) conducted by Tom Tullie of the Massachusetts Department of Veterans' Services.

Since the VSO is a part-time position in Stow town government, regular office hours are not scheduled in the Town Building. However, I am available on request to discuss individual situations and to determine eligibility for various local services. Stow veterans (or their surviving spouses) may contact me directly at (978) 562-6630, by email at Donhawkes@Comcast.net, or through the Town Clerk's office.

Respectfully submitted,

Donald P. Hawkes, Veterans' Services Officer

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

The Community Preservation Act (CPA), MGL c.44B, was enacted into legislation on September 14, 2000. The goal of the Community Preservation Act is to provide communities with the means to expand their ability to pursue and implement projects that preserve or enhance their quality of life. Under this legislation, municipalities may opt to participate by adopting a property tax surcharge to create a locally-controlled Community Preservation Fund. The state provides a match, up to a maximum of 100 percent, depending on what percentage surcharge is adopted and the number of communities participating statewide. The Community Preservation Fund can be used to fund projects related to the acquisition and preservation of open space, the creation and support of affordable housing, and the acquisition and preservation of historic buildings, landscapes and documents.

Stow voters accepted the provisions of the Community Preservation Act (CPA) at the Town Meeting in May of 2001. At the subsequent Annual Town Election, Stow voters opted to enact a property tax surcharge of 3 percent to create the Stow Community Preservation Fund. Stow voters also opted to adopt all of the possible exemptions to the surcharge, including: those properties occupied by low-income property owners and those properties occupied by low- or moderate-income senior property owners, if such property owners show proof of income eligibility. The other exemption is on the first \$100,000 of assessed real property, which is taken automatically and reflected in the amount assessed to each property owner. As a result, Stow is participating in a manner that maximizes the state matching funds with the least possible financial impact to the community.

The fiscal year ending June 30, 2008 was the seventh year of collections and state matching grants. In October 2008 Stow was awarded \$369,084 – an 89 percent match – greatly increasing our community's ability to take action in the three specified areas. State matching funds have been awarded each year in which Stow has participated (over \$2.2 million in state matching funds awarded to date). Community Preservation funds are deposited in a locally controlled, interest-bearing account. Additionally, Stow has earned over \$400,000 in interest on CPA funds since adoption in 2001.

Pursuant to the adoption of the CPA in May 2001, the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) was formed to develop a Community Preservation Plan and to oversee implementation of the CPA in Stow. The CPC's role is to study the existing resources of the town, identify critical needs, evaluate various options for addressing those needs, and recommend specific projects for Town Meeting consideration. All projects recommended by the CPC also must be approved by a majority vote at Town Meeting before expenditures can be made from Stow's Community Preservation Fund.

Highlights of 2008

In May of 2008, Town Meeting voters approved Community Preservation warrant articles for appropriating funds for administrative purposes (\$37,500) and for making the annual reserves required under the Community Preservation Act: Acquisition and Preservation of Historic Buildings and Landscapes (\$75,000), Acquisition and Preservation of Open Space and Recreation Land (\$75,000), and Acquisition and Support of Affordable Housing (\$75,000).

At the same Annual Town Meeting in May of 2008, Town Meeting attendees voted to appropriate \$19,500 of CPA funds for the rehabilitation of historic stone walls at the Lower Village cemetery. Stone walls contribute to the historic character of Stow and are often destroyed by time, vandalism, and motor vehicle accidents. This project was recommended by the CPC, for consideration by Town Meeting voters, because of the general historical significance of the Lower Village Cemetery and for the role that it plays as a gateway to our community from neighboring Maynard. The Cemetery Commission, in consultation with the Historical Commission, completed the first two rehabilitation projects and is currently reviewing future plans. The project came in under budget – the final cost totaling \$14,199 (the remaining balance was returned to the Historic Fund Reserve balance.)

Also at the Annual Town Meeting in May of 2008, Town Meeting attendees voted to appropriate \$227,000 of CPA funds for an easement of approximately 9,900 feet in length along a former railroad roadbed. The easement allows the possible future construction of a portion of the Assabet River Rail Trail and allows public access to the existing trail. The CPC enthusiastically endorsed this proposal due to the Rail Trail context, and a generous pledge of \$50,000 from the Stow Conservation Trust to reduce the town's commitment.

In addition to the warrant articles presented to residents at Town Meetings this past year, the CPC continues to work with the Recreation and Agricultural Commissions on the Community Recreation Facility and agricultural land formally known as the Snow Property. The project is well underway, and construction of the recreation facilities is expected to be completed in summer 2009, with the playing fields expected to be open for full use in fall 2010. The agricultural portion is already under lease to a local farmer.

Under the direction of the Conservation Commission, previously appropriated CPA funds were used to help secure an agricultural preservation restriction on 8.16 acres of the Tyler Family farmland, the location of the Applefield Farm farmstand.

The CPC looks forward to working with others to implement additional Community Preservation projects selected by Town Meeting voters. In addition, the Committee looks forward to evaluating proposals currently in the developmental phase including a Historic Documents Preservation project, a fire suppression system to preserve the historic Town Hall, and several potential affordable housing projects. The prospect of receiving significant state matching funds appears promising for 2009. Stow voters are to be commended for deciding seven years ago to be

one of first of the 139 communities in Massachusetts (representing more than one third of the Commonwealth) that are accruing the many and varied benefits of local adoption of the Community Preservation Act.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Wilber, Open Space, Chairman
David Walrath, Finance, Vice Chairman
Laura Spear, Planning Board
Mike Busch, Recreation Commission
JT Toole, Housing Authority
John Bolton, Assessors Office

Kathy Sferra, Conservation Commission
Karen Gray, Historical Commission
Kate Hogan, Council on Aging
Jim Sauta, Council on Aging, Associate
Bill Maxfield, Open Space, Associate
Bruce Fletcher, Planning Board, Associate
Pat Perry, Conservation, Associate

Bruce Fletcher, Planning Board, Associate
Margie Lynch, Housing Partnership, Assoc

Deb Seith, Administrative Assistant

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION PROJECT REPORT

	Orig Project Cost	Proj on Hold	Rescinded Projects Money Not Used	Final Proj Cost	TL Amt Appropri.
Totals for Open Space/Recreation	\$ 3,241,500.00	\$ 300,000.00	\$ 847,500.00	\$ 35,000.00	\$ 2,394,000.00
Spring Hill on Walcott - Open Space	\$ 500,000.00		\$ 500,000.00	\$ -	
Spring Hill on Walcott - Recreation	\$ 347,500.00		\$ 347,500.00	\$ -	
Red Acre Road- Conservation Land	\$ 300,000.00	\$ 300,000.00			
Conservation Comm Acquisition of Open Space	\$ 50,000.00				
Acq Open Space Tyler APR \$21,500					
Hale Woodlands	\$ 35,000.00			\$ 35,000.00	
Transfer Parcels to Conservation Commission	\$ 21,000.00				
Lake Boon Preservation Project	\$ 77,000.00				
Albright Easement	\$ 227,000.00				
Maple Street	\$ 11,000.00				
Snow Property Land	\$ 673,000.00				
Snow Property Recreation	\$ 1,000,000.00				
Totals for Historical	\$ 30,919.00	\$ -	\$ 5,556.64	\$ 24,862.36	\$ 25,362.36
Exp-West School Parking/Access	\$ 20,000.00				
Blacksmith School	\$ 929.00		\$ 184.00	\$ 745.00	
Stone Wall Repairs	\$ 9,990.00		\$ 71.72	\$ 9,918.28	
Stone Wall Repairs Project #2	\$ 19,500.00		\$ 5,300.92	\$ 14,199.08	
Totals for Affordable Housing	\$ 952,500.00	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 252,500.00	\$ 350,000.00	\$ 700,000.00
Exp - Spring Hill on Walcott	\$ 252,500.00		\$ 252,500.00		
Exp-Red Acre Road Perp Deed Restriction	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 100,000.00			
Pilot Grove	\$ 350,000.00			\$ 350,000.00	
Exp-Purchase Perp Deed Restriction	\$ 250,000.00				
Beginning		Appropriation	Deposited	Spent/	Current
Balance		Town Meeting		Set Aside	Balance
UNRESERVED FUND	\$ 1,455,121.00	\$ 2,008,400.00	\$ 955,900.00		\$ 402,621.00
ADMINISTRATIVE BALANCE	\$ 37,500.00			\$ 20,054.00	\$ 17,446.00

AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION

The Agricultural Commission is the representative of agriculture in Stow and advises other boards and commissions on matters affecting agriculture. The Commission tries to keep residents informed about the farms in Stow and how important it is to keep them in place.

The Commission prepared publicity and educational materials and participated in the 2008 Springfest with the Touch A Truck and Tractor display, attracting kids of all ages. An Agricultural Preservation Fund was proposed and passed at the May Town Meeting. A website was set up at StowAgCom.org, which lists Stow's farms and includes links to those Stow farms that have a website of their own.

Respectfully submitted,

Dwight Sipler, Chairman
Liz Painter, Clerk
Julie Martin Sullivan

Kathy Steege
Jean Lynch, Associate

OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE

In 2008, the Open Space Committee completed the town's Open Space and Recreation Plan. It has been approved by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, ensuring that the town is eligible for state funding for open space and recreation projects. Titled "Stow: Forever Green, Preserving the Stow We Know", this document catalogues Stow's natural resources, community setting, and existing open space. It analyzes the town's future open space and recreation needs and lays out a 5-year Action Plan for meeting these needs. The town must update its Open Space and Recreation Plan every five years in order to qualify for the Commonwealth's Self Help and Urban Self Help Grant programs. The Committee will work with relevant town boards, staff and nonprofit organizations in the coming years to implement the Plan.

The Committee is grateful to the Stow Conservation Commission and to their administrator, Pat Perry, for funding and coordinating the distribution of the Open Space and Recreation Plan. Copies of the plan are available at the Randall Library and should be available on the town website in the near future.

Respectfully submitted,

Vin Antil
Eve Donahue
Jean Lynch
Bill Maxfield

Chris Rodstrom
Kathy Sferra, Chair
Bob Wilber

LOCAL ACCESS CHANNEL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Board of Selectmen established and appointed the Public, Education, and Government (PEG) Advisory Committee in November 2002 for the purpose of establishing a local cable TV access

channel for the Town of Stow to provide programming in areas of public affairs, education and town government. As part of the governance agreement established by the Board of Selectmen on August 9, 2005, the name of the committee was changed to the Local Access Channel Advisory Committee (LACAC). The cable station is referred to as "Stow TV" and is available on Comcast Channel 9 and Verizon Channels 32 and 33.

Funding for operations has been provided through a license agreement, originally with AT&T and now with Comcast. Additionally, the Cable Advisory Committee negotiated a license with Verizon, which was signed on June 24. The license provides for Verizon to share in the funding for operation of the station. In December, Verizon began cablecasting Stow TV.

Coordinator Anne VanTine managed overall operations of the station. Assistant Coordinators implemented program schedules and bulletin board notices. Valerie Pederson, as the first Assistant, helped establish many procedures. Michael Sangermano filled in for July. Mary O'Loughlin has been doing an excellent job as Assistant Coordinator since last summer. Lew Halprin been very helpful as Technical Assistant throughout the year.

In the spring of 2008, Stow TV moved from a tiny windowless room into a more spacious and lighter room on the third floor of Town Building. This required separating the TV station wiring from network equipment. Thanks to careful planning and rewiring by Lew Halprin and Bob Mong, both Stow TV and the Town Building network remained operational. The new room is a much more pleasant and efficient place to work.

Stow TV purchased and installed a video server system in 2008. The primary storage and playback source for shows is now the video files on the server, with DVDs as backup. In conjunction, a complete reconfiguration of the cablecast equipment added features and improved usability and convenience. Consultant Michael Ridinger was engaged to assist with planning and to perform the installation. Volunteer Bob Mong provided essential assistance with the network and computer aspects of the installation and Linda Stokes helped plan the reconfiguration.

Stow TV coordinated with multiple organizations and citizens about local events. Stow TV works with organizations to secure permission ahead of time for volunteers to record local events. Many dozens of organizations approach Stow TV each year to put announcements on the "bulletin board." Stow TV also coordinates to ensure that volunteers have the needed resources for producing new video. Program schedules are publicized on the town web site, local newspapers and a variety of other locations.

Stow TV cablecast all the Board of Selectmen meetings, the Annual Town Meeting, and two "Candidates' Night Debates" this year. Other televised information sessions included the Finance Committee, town planning, the Land Use Committee, the Rail Trail Committee, and hearings on "Dogs at Delaney," and "Lake Boon Drawdown."

New locally-produced programs of local events included "Sounds of Stow", First Parish concerts, health and safety presentations, school concerts and events, Memorial and Veterans Day ceremonies, "Springfest" festivities, the Lake Boon water carnival, Randall Library programs for children, local plays by children, open house at Stow West School, school and kindergarten graduations, Fire Department events, Council on Aging speakers, nature and environmental issues, fairs and charity events.

Local event announcements were continuously shown on the Stow TV bulletin board and updated regularly based on requests from community organizations. Many "photo shows" were also

featured with images contributed by Jonathan Daisy, Paul Trunfio, Greg Troxel, Lew Halprin, Ann DeCristofaro, Dick Luxner, Valerie Pederson, Dwight Sipler, and others.

Stow TV volunteers produced, recorded, and edited the many shows seen on Stow TV. Video volunteers included Lew Halprin, Linda Stokes, Mike Jordan, Kathleen and Colin King, Marika Barnett, and Valerie Pederson. Linda Stokes recorded the Selectmen meetings. Bob Mong kept the computers running and configured two new computers. Robert Evans assisted with computer issues. Gerry Horne managed Town Meeting sound. Scott Glorioso assisted with some concert recordings and provided technical advice. Technical Assistant Lew Halprin made improvements to recording setups and contributed innovative suggestions for technical planning. Lew and the volunteers specified video equipment needs with LACAC member Bob Glorioso advising, leading to acquisitions that made recording easier, more reliable, and better quality.

LACAC members contributed time and advice for spending and policy decisions. Member James Parr left the committee this year, and was replaced by Chris Funkhouser.

Stow TV is intended to operate with volunteers and provide video access to town residents. If you are interested in volunteering or contributing video or photos, please contact the Coordinator at **978-897-7732 or by email stowtv@stow-ma.gov**.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen Dungan
Chris Funkhouser
Robert Glorioso

Len Golder
Lisa Lavina
Anne VanTine, Stow TV Coordinator

CABLE LICENSE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Cable License Advisory Committee assists the Stow Board of Selectmen with awarding the license a cable company requires from the town in order to provide cable television service to its residents, and to assure that the terms of the license are being followed.

Stow's first cable license was awarded to Adams Russell way back in 1986 and was renewed in 2002 for ten years. During that span of time, the company providing service under this license changed its name to Cablevision, then to AT&T, and then to Comcast, as it is known today.

Around August 2006, Verizon requested a license to provide cable television to the residents of Stow. Since the Comcast license is not exclusive, the Cable Committee started the process of providing a cable television license for Verizon that would allow Verizon to provide video cable services to Stow in addition to Comcast. For reasons not disclosed, Verizon decided to withdraw their request, but in October 2007, Verizon submitted their request again, this time participating in negotiations for the terms of the license, which culminated with the Selectmen signing a 15-year cable license with Verizon on June 24, 2008.

The license allows Verizon 12 months to provide cable television service (which is part of their FIOS service) to those customers serviced by overhead utility wires, and allows up to 48 months to provide service to those customers serviced by underground utility wires. The license also allows Verizon to omit service to some very low-density housing areas in Stow. Although not pleased with these allowances, the Cable Committee felt that Verizon will do much better than