

ADMINISTRATION

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

The Selectmen appointed the School Building Task Force (SBTF) in 2006. This group completed its work early in 2007 and presented its recommendation at the Annual Town Meeting. The SBTF proposed a major addition/renovation at Center School. This facility would house grades pre-K to 5 and Pompositticut School would be turned back to the town for other municipal needs. Voters at Town Meeting approved the request for the necessary design funds. The Selectmen then appointed an Elementary School Building Committee (ESBC) to take the project to completion. The ESBC's first objective is to secure a commitment from the state for school building funds, and that effort is currently in progress. Please refer to the SBTF and ESBC reports for more details.

Following the election in May, the Board welcomed two new members: Kathleen Farrell and Ellen Sturgis.

The Selectmen asked the Town Administrator in 2006 to lead a project to investigate solutions to the water problem in Lower Village. There was significant progress during 2007. The Town Administrator facilitated negotiations between a private water company and a Stow resident to site a well. He also helped to develop operating and capital budgets, applied for a low-interest loan from the Department of Environmental Protection, and secured a delay on the setback enforcement proceedings in Lower Village.

The Selectmen presented an article at the Annual Town Meeting requesting funds to purchase a 13-acre parcel - the "Snow Property" - for "landbanking." The Snow property is adjacent to the Bose Corporation on Old Bolton Road. Voters did not approve the purchase. There were reservations about the asking price (\$1.5 million) and the absence of any stated specific use for the land. There was substantial discussion during the year about the Snow property, and the Board ultimately decided to bring the matter back to voters at a Special Town Meeting in December. This time the proposal included two uses for the property (agriculture and recreation), and a reduced asking price (\$1.2 million). Voters approved the proposal at both the Special Town Meeting and the subsequent election.

The success of the proposals on the school project and the land purchase was the result of a very large effort by many groups and individuals. They were able to bring together residents with differing views and build consensus. The work required a great deal of personal time and commitment. The Selectmen would like to recognize the members of the SBTF, the Recreation Commission, the Agricultural Commission, and the Community Preservation Committee, along with several other citizens who offered their skills and knowledge.

The Board made several other key appointments during the year. They included a new Building Inspector (Craig Martin), a new Council on Aging Director (Alyson Toole), and members to serve on a new Assabet River Rail Trail Committee. This team is charged with completing the Rail Trail through Stow.

Another major focus of 2007 was affordable housing. The Selectmen appointed members to serve on a new Affordable Housing Trust. This committee is authorized by statute to receive and expend funds to expand our stock of affordable homes. Stow also has several other groups whose activities involve affordable housing.

These include:

- Stow Housing Partnership
- Planning Board
- Stow Community Housing Corporation
- Stow Elderly Housing Corporation
- Stow Housing Authority
- Zoning Board of Appeals
- Community Preservation Committee
- Land Use Task Force

Representatives of most of these groups attended a Joint Boards meeting in June to discuss their relative roles and responsibilities. It became clear that there is overlap. Unfortunately, it was also clear that no single group is serving as the “driver” to make sure Stow meets the 10% affordable target.

Affordable housing was also a clear priority in the Master Plan that the Selectmen began to review late in the year. The Master Plan is the culmination of months of work. The final document will be available early in 2008. The priorities identified should help all members of town government focus on what is most important. To that end, the Selectmen hope to convert the priorities to specific action plans.

Virtually everything in the Master Plan involves land. Whether it is affordable housing, recreation, open space, or a new community/senior center, most of the town’s priorities lead to the question: “Where will you put it?” The Selectmen have identified a need for proactive and integrated land use planning. Rather than have individual groups search for space for their own needs, there should be one team that looks at both the land needs and the available resources. Therefore, the Selectmen decided to appoint a “Land Use Task Force”. Members will be on board early in 2008, and they will be charged with developing a comprehensive land use strategy for presentation to the Annual Town Meeting in 2009.

The timing of the special election in the fall and the prospect of construction at Center School led to a decision by the Selectmen to change the town’s polling location to the Hale School.

On the administrative side, the Selectmen began a project to write standard operating procedures covering a wide variety of subjects such as performance reviews, communications, the duties of the chairman and clerk, etc. Also during the year, the Board conducted several hearings related to traffic and animal control issues, approved various licenses and permits, and made numerous committee appointments. Regarding the latter, there was discussion about the need to make annual reappointments of people who are town employees.

Early in the year, the Selectmen learned about a new state law authorizing cities and towns to join Regional Transit Authorities or RTAs. Membership provides two major benefits. First of all, towns that have no service from the MBTA (such as Stow) can divert their annual MBTA assessments to pay for local transportation such as a senior van. (Stow’s MBTA assessment is \$39,000.) Second, RTA members are eligible to apply for certain state grants related to transportation. The Selectmen concluded that RTA membership was a definite “win-win” for the town and voted to join the Montachusset RTA. The first objective will be to use our MBTA assessment dollars to offset at least part of the senior van expense.

The Board would like to conclude by recognizing one other individual. Mr. Bob Billups was a long-term Stow resident. Shortly before he moved, Bob took the initiative to prepare a comprehensive analysis of the financial impact of population growth on taxes. His report provided a very direct challenge to the perennial notion that more families lead to higher property taxes. The Board expects that Bob's analysis will be a useful resource for the new Land Use Task Force.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen Dungan, Chairman
Jason Robart, Clerk
Kathleen Farrell

Ellen Sturgis
Thomas Ruggiero
Susan McLaughlin, Administrative Assistant

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

The Stow Town Administrator, by Charter, serves as the Town's chief administrative officer. In this capacity, the Town Administrator manages the day-to-day operations of the Town, functions as its chief fiscal officer, chief procurement officer, chief personnel officer and chief contract negotiator. In addition, this position serves the Town as chairman of the dispatch communications administrative body, as the labor union grievance hearing appeal officer, the sexual harassment officer and the public records management officer. Throughout the year 2007, functioning in these various administrative positions, the Town Administrator was engaged in several significant matters.

At the Annual Town Meeting in May 2007, for the second time in five years, the Town Administrator recommended a FY-08 balanced budget that did not require general override. The FY-06 operating budget needed \$350,000 in the form of a general override to be balanced and the FY-05 operating budget required a general override of \$250,000. In FY-04, the Town faced a one million dollar budget deficit and was required to utilize both an approval of a general override of \$414,500 together with budget cuts and the expenditure of stored assets to balance the operating budget.

The FY-08 municipal budget is a reasonably tight operational budget. Total spending for the general municipal budget, which includes all of the Town departments (excluding the two school districts), increased by only 4.7%. The Nashoba Regional School District assessment increased by 5%; and the Minuteman Vocational Technical District assessment decreased by 1.7%. The Town's non-bonded capital improvement project costs increased in FY-08 by 9.2% to \$453,961. The Town's non-capital raise and appropriate special articles budget increased in FY-08 by 23.8% compared to FY-07; increasing from \$265,080 to \$328,087. Included in the number non-capital raise and appropriated special articles funded in FY-08 is \$70,000 for the Reserve fund; \$40,000 for legal services and \$51,000 for information technology purchases.

The Town's annual debt payment decreased by 11.5% from \$1,621,305 to \$1,434,806. The annual debt payment budget pays the principal and interest on bond notes issued to fund the Town's larger capital improvement projects such as the Hale School renovations, Pompositticut and Center school improvements, the new police station facility and the Town Building construction. Also, the Town regularly borrows to purchase rolling stock such as fire engines and ambulances. Finally, the town periodically borrows money to acquire property; in FY-08, the Town acquired the Snow property for \$1,250,000.

Unlike FY-07, the Town is not utilizing any Free Cash to balance the operating budget in FY-08. In FY-08, we have transferred \$50,000 from Free Cash to the Stabilization Fund in a continuing effort to increase the amount of the Town's savings. Also, \$194,045 in Free Cash has been provided in FY-08 to fund a number of non-bonded capital improvement projects. Included in this list of capital projects, the Town has purchased a new police cruiser for \$30,000, along with a new highway department truck for \$60,000. In FY-08, Hale school and Center school improvements have been funded at \$88,500 and \$60,300 respectively. Additionally, the Town appropriated \$38,878 for funding renovations to the third floor of the Town Building, and \$54,000 for purchase of wireless communication equipment for the fire department.

The FY-08 budget was balanced without need for a general override primarily for two reasons. First, the Town's annual debt payment decreased by \$186,499 in FY-08. Second, the Town's Minuteman school district assessment decreased by close to 2% in FY-08. Had these two large annual expenditures not decreased in FY-08 compared to FY-07, the Town would have been facing the possible need for a fourth general override in five years.

Looking forward to next year's FY-09 budget, there is a likely possibility that another general override will be necessary to balance any budget recommendation that exceeds an approximate total expenditure growth rate of greater than 4% above the current fiscal year. Driving this prediction, is the fact that Stow possesses several structural fiscal impediments that make it increasingly more difficult to balance annual operating budgets without general overrides.

On an annual basis, the Town's tax base represents approximately 90 percent of the Town's total annual recurring budget revenues, and more problematic, this revenue source is providing an increasingly larger percentage of the Town's total revenues each year. Annual municipal state aid to Stow only represents approximately 3 percent of the Town's total annual revenues each year with little expectation that this contributing percentage will increase in the foreseeable future. On the contrary, Stow experienced cuts in municipal state aid just two years ago and we can expect level funded state aid in FY-09. The Town's annual local receipts revenues represent approximately 7% of the Town's total revenues. Both the Town's local receipts revenues and new growth tax revenues have declined each of the last two years and may continue to decline in FY-09.

The distressing fact that disproportionately high 90% of the Town's recurring revenues come from taxation is exacerbated by the fact that approximately 92% of the Town's tax base is residential. Ten years ago, the residential tax base represented 89% of the total tax base, so the trend is negative. Further, approximately 50 percent of the Town's total taxable property is either totally exempted from being taxed or is taxed at a significantly reduced rate through different tax abatement programs. The combined effect of these factors is that the Town suffers from a limited tax base that is also almost completely un-diversified. The only annual growth in the Town's tax base results primarily from housing development growth and increases in housing market values. Stow residential taxpayers receive negligible tax relief from the commercial and industrial contributors to the Town's tax base.

Until last year, the Town had been successful in delaying the inevitable collision of these two competing fiscal trends by primarily utilizing local funding sources: unused levy capacity and savings. For several fiscal years leading up until the late 1990's, the Town on an annual basis had generally voted budget expenditures totaling less than its total annual revenues. During that time, the Town's unused levy capacity grew annually until it peaked eventually at \$372,000. The Town's Free Cash and Stabilization Fund, our stored assets or savings accounts, peaked at approximately \$1,400,000. For FY-08, July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008, the Town's Free Cash and

Stabilization Fund totals only \$764,265. Between the years FY-98 and FY-06, the Town expended approximately \$4,495,262 in Free Cash and Stabilization Fund monies for the purposes of both balancing the Town's annual operating budgets and to fund various capital improvement projects.

The Town Administrator is directly responsible for managing and controlling the Town's legal budget. As it relates to litigation in 2007, only one lawsuit remains unresolved from the original number of cases generated from the first group of Town approved cell tower site permits. However, a new cell tower related lawsuit was filed last year. I have been involved in managing more than ten separate cell tower litigation cases over the last several years. Beyond the cell tower litigation cases that continued in 2007, the Town has been engaged in several other court cases during the last year.

The Town is currently still litigating one Land Court case involving Massachusetts General Law Chapter 61B; and one Chapter 61B Land Court lawsuit was decided last year. The Town lost the so-called Cushing case in which the owner of the Chapter 61B property contested the town's attempt to exercise its right of first refusal in purchasing the property. The Chapter 61B statute allows the Town to purchase, or assign its right to purchase to a qualified non-profit organization, recreation, agricultural or conservation land that has been protected from development in return for reduced taxes. In the Court's opinion, the Town had not perfected its statutory rights pursuant to MGL Chapter 61B. As it relates to the on-going Chapter 61B litigation, the Town, and the Chapter 61B property owner, Ms. Kunelius, are arguing in court over matters of fact and law regarding the Town's assignment of its right of first refusal to the Trust For Public Land.

In an unrelated area, the Town finally settled a three-year old sexual harassment and wrongful termination case that had been filed by a former Stow public safety dispatcher. A union arbitrator found that the town did not unlawfully terminate the dispatcher and The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination accepted the settlement terms negotiated between the Town and the dispatcher relative to the alleged sexual harassment.

Furthering an initiative begun in 2006, in 2007 the Town Administrator continued to direct the efforts of the working group that has been organized to assist the Town's lower village area commercial property owners in analyzing and assessing the water problems they are currently facing and developing a long-term permanent solution. During the last year, the working group has successfully located a private property owner in the in the lower village who has tentatively agreed to allow a private well to be sited on his property. The Assabet Water Company has agreed to design, construct and maintain a private water system for the lower village funded completely through customer fees. The state DEP has approved a \$605,000 long-term low interest loan to Assabet to fund the project. And many of the lower village area businesses have tentatively committed to buy in as paying customers to the new water system. If this proposed private water system is successfully installed, it will provide a much needed permanent water source to the Town's only goods and service center at no cost to the Stow taxpayers.

Also in 2007, the Town Administrator was successful in negotiating separately with representatives of the police, clerical and dispatch unions to execute new labor contracts. For many years, without exception, the Town's four labor unions and Town management have successfully negotiated employee labor agreements without ever reaching an impass or filing for arbitration. It is a tribute to both Stow's employee unions and management.

Beyond serving the Town's interests and needs by attending to specific management issues such as the matters detailed above, the Town Administrator in general is engaged regularly attending

to the routine matters associated with the day-to-day operations of the Town. In performing these duties, the Town Administrator is frequently in direct contact with municipal staff, Town board and committee members, local, state and federal agencies and officials, the public and various private groups and individuals. The Town Administrator continues to be diligent in the performance of these duties and responsibilities.

Respectfully submitted,

William Wrigley, Town Administrator

Susan McLaughlin, Administrative Assistant

PLANNING BOARD

A five-member elected board with one appointed associate voting member, the Planning Board has specific statutory requirements. The Board reviews and approves the division of land under the State Subdivision Control Law (MGL c. 41) and the Stow Subdivision Rules and Regulations; serves as a special permit granting authority under the State Zoning Act and the Stow Zoning Bylaw; and guides the process of Zoning Bylaw amendments under the State Zoning Act (MGL c. 40A).

By statute, the Board is charged with the responsibility of protecting the health, safety and welfare of Stow's residents. Guided by the Massachusetts General Laws, the Stow Zoning Bylaw, the 1996 Stow Master Plan, and citizens' comments and concerns, the Board strives to preserve and enhance the integrity of Stow's character through the use of these regulatory tools, while safeguarding property owners' rights. We recommend and specify changes to development proposals to achieve these goals. Board members and staff strive to work with both applicants and residents to help shape projects so as to positively affect the impact to the community.

Organization

At the annual election, Stephen Quinn was elected to a 5-year term, filling Malcolm FitzPatrick's expired term. Malcolm, who served for five years and chose not to seek re-election, has been a tremendous asset to the Board.

Following the election, the Board elected Ernest Dodd to serve as Chairman, Laura Spear as Vice Chairman and Leonard Golder as Clerk. Bruce Fletcher was appointed as the Voting Associate Member. The Associate Member's voting power is limited to Special Permit applications, in the case of absence, inability to act or conflict of interest on the part of any member of the Planning Board or in the event of a vacancy on the Board. Malcolm FitzPatrick and Donna Jacobs were appointed as non-voting Associate Members. Kathleen Willis and Karen Kelleher were designated to endorse ANR Plans (Subdivision Approval Not Required). The Board appointed representatives to various Committees:

- Community Preservation Committee: Laura Spear
- Master Plan Committee: Ernest Dodd
- Elementary School Building Committee: Stephen Quinn
- Liaison to Zoning Board of Appeals: Stephen Quinn

We have had a very busy year. In order to keep up with the work plan, we added working meetings in addition to the regularly scheduled meetings so that we now meet every Tuesday evening. Appointments are reserved for the first and third Tuesday of the month.

Development Activity

In 2007, the Planning Board met with developers and discussed the potential for eight (8) new building lots and sixty-six (66) new Active Adult Neighborhood units.

The Board approved:

Four (4) ANR Plans (Approval not Required under the Subdivision Control Law)

- Hudson Road/Maguire Lane – Creating one (1) new building lot
- Apple Blossom Way – Lot line adjustment
- Wedgewood Drive – Lot line adjustment
- Taylor Road - Creating two (2) new building lots

One (1) Subdivision Plan – currently under appeal

- River Hill Estates off of Barton Road

One (1) Wireless Service Facility

- OmniPoint Collocation at First Parish Church

One (1) 66-unit Active Adult Neighborhood

- RidgeWood Estates off of Boxboro Road

Two (2) Accessory Apartments

- 566 Gleasondale Road
- 242 Hudson Road

The Board had informal discussions with property owners and developers to discuss potential development:

- Corzine Property off of Athens Lane – This property is currently landlocked and has the potential to be combined with abutting undeveloped property. The Board met with the developer to discuss the possibility of a limited development of this parcel, which could restrict the potential for a larger scale development, if combined with other parcels.
- Kane Property off of Gates Lane – The Planning Board had informal discussions with the property owner about the potential for land to be deeded to the Town for recreation purposes in conjunction with a residential development.

With the assistance of the Board's Consulting Engineer, Susan C. Sullivan, P. E., the Board monitored ongoing construction of eight (8) subdivisions and two (2) Special Permits:

- Country Club Estates (Fairway Drive), a 7-lot subdivision, located off of Edson Street
- Wildlife Woods, a 67-lot subdivision, located off of Sudbury Road
- Red Fox Run (Cranberry Circle), a 5-lot subdivision, located off of Hudson Road
- Orchard View (Brandymeade Circle) a 12-lot subdivision, located off of West Acton Road
- Meadowbrook (Trefry Lane), a 17-lot subdivision, located off of Boxboro Road
- Derby Woods (Sylvan Drive and Dunster Drive extension), a 33-lot subdivision, located off of Harvard Road
- Butternut Farm Golf Course
- Arbor Glen Active Adult Neighborhood
- Whispering Woods (Kettell Plain Road), a 14-lot subdivision, located off of Maple Street
- Marble Hill (Asa Whitcomb Way), a 3-lot subdivision, located off of Taylor Road
- Taylor Road 6-lot Planned Conservation Development

Street Acceptance

The Board recommended Town Meeting acceptance of six (6) streets: Cranberry Circle, Fairway Drive, Trefry Lane, Indian Ridge Road, Blueberry Court and a portion of Woodland Way.

Chapter 61 Notices

The Planning Board made recommendations on two (2) Chapter 61 notices: 1) Avery property off of Dunster Drive and 2) Collings property off of Barton Road.

Agricultural Preservation Restriction

The Planning Board was pleased to support an Agricultural Preservation Restriction application for the Tyler property on Old Bolton Road. The Planning Board very much appreciates Mr. Tyler's commitment to farming in perpetuity on his property. Agricultural preservation is at the heart of Stow's planning efforts. Stow is proud that our farms have withstood the threat of development. The Planning Board has consistently worked to protect our working farms by pushing for development designs and implementations that are sensitive to the needs of farmers in our town.

Enforcement Issues

The Board continued to work with property owners and developers on enforcement issues:

- Butternut Farm Golf Club - Special Permit Conditions
- Trefry Lane emergency access way
- Orchard View subdivision drainage basin

Zoning Bylaw and Rules and Regulations

The Board continued its efforts to update its Rules and Regulations and the Zoning Bylaw.

Seven (7) Zoning Bylaw amendments were brought forth to the Annual Town Meeting:

- Definitions – This article removed of subsection numbers and listed definitions in alphabetical order to accommodate future changes without the need to renumber the entire section. **ADOPTED**
- Assisted Living Residence – This article changed the title “Assisted Living” to “Independent Adult” to more accurately reflect the type of development, which was not intended to be an “Assisted Living Facility” as defined by the State. **ADOPTED**
- Bed and Breakfast Establishment – This article was intended to permit a Bed and Breakfast Establishment to be operated with an on-site manager rather than requiring the owner to occupy the establishment. This change should encourage the Bed and Breakfast community in Stow and result in the preservation of older residences. **ADOPTED**
- Overlay Districts - This article was for organizational purposes only, moving the Wireless Service Facility and the Active Adult Neighborhood Sections of the Bylaw, which define the requirement of these overlay districts, to Section 5, the Overlay District Section of the Zoning Bylaw. **ADOPTED**
- Use Regulations – Historic Buildings and Structures – The purpose of this article was to encourage preservation of historic and/or culturally significant buildings and structures and foster economic development by permitting uses not otherwise permitted in the

Residential, Business, Compact Business, Commercial and Industrial Districts, if in the opinion of the Special Permit Granting Authority, the use is in harmony with the character and uses allowed in the district. Such Special Permit will also be subject to the requirements of other Sections of the Bylaw, including but not limited to, mandatory findings as outlined in Sections 9.2 (Special Permit) and 9.3 (Site plan Approval) of the Bylaw. ADOPTED

- Signs - This article was in response to the recommendations by the Agricultural Commission and is intended to support the agricultural character of Stow by providing more flexibility in size and quantity of signs during peak seasonal events and by permitting permanent signs on-site and at Town entrances, marketing the presence of Stow's Agricultural Community. ADOPTED
- Lighting - This article was intended to reduce light pollution and to clarify our existing lighting bylaw by providing requirements for the type of exterior fixtures, the intensity of light producing devices permitted with different applications and restrictions on the area of illumination. These changes will generally have more of an effect on larger users of exterior lighting, such as business or commercial users, rather than residential users. ADOPTED

Four (4) articles were brought forth to the December, 2007 Special Town Meeting:

- Recreation-Conservation District Uses - This article was merely housekeeping to clarify the intent of Recreation-Conservation District Uses by:
 1. Changing the term "swamp land" to "wetlands" and the term "permitted" to "allowed"; including cross country ski areas, as a non-commercial recreation use allowed in the Recreation-Conservation District;
 2. Correcting the Zoning Bylaw reference to Farm Stands;
 3. Adding uses allowed for religious, nonprofit educational and Public Service Corporations, in accordance with M.G.L. c.40A, s.3; and
 4. Adding golf carts, but no other motorized recreational vehicles, as a permitted use subject to Special Permit. ADOPTED
- Accessory Apartments by right - This article proposed to allow all accessory apartments by right. The existing Bylaw requires a Special Permit for an accessory apartment on a lot that contains no less than 1.5 acres and Site Plan Approval for an accessory apartment on a lot that contains less than 1.5 acres. The intent of the proposed change is to streamline the permitting process for Accessory Apartments. The requirements in the Zoning Bylaw for an accessory apartment are very specific as to site plan and size requirements, which can easily be reviewed and permitted by the Building Inspector, rather than a permitting process, requiring a Public Hearing through the Planning Board. NOT ADOPTED

Voters voiced the wish for a Public Hearing process.

- Cross-country Ski Uses in the Residential District Subject to a Special Permit by the Planning Board - This article proposed to prohibit the use of recreational motorized vehicles on cross-country ski courses in the Residential District. ADOPTED

- Golf Course Uses in the Residential District Subject to a Special Permit by the Planning Board -

This article proposed to remove the restriction on restaurants related to golf course uses in the Residential District. The intent of the Bylaw was to remove the arbitrariness in the definition of a snack bar vs. a restaurant and encourage this type of non-residential use. Golf Course uses are a key element to Stow's character and economic development. ADOPTED

Sidewalks

The Board approved expenditure of funds from the Sidewalk Fund to construct sidewalks along Pompositticut Street. It is expected that the Highway Department will commence construction in the spring of 2008.

Fees Collected

Fees collected in 2007 in the amount of \$6,062.63 offset expenses incurred for processing these applications and for miscellaneous copies. Plan review and inspections are paid for by the Applicant.

Work Plan

The Board's work plan continues to include efforts to maintain Stow's rural character, Lower Village and Gleasondale Village planning, pathways/sidewalk planning, assessment of the Town's future land needs, the need for a public water supply in Lower Village and Gleasondale, updating Rules and Regulations and the Zoning Bylaw, light pollution, and affordable housing. The Board held many extra meetings dedicated to reviewing the Zoning Bylaw and Rules and Regulations with plans for extensive changes to encourage Smart Growth and Low Impact Development techniques.

Lower Village

The Lower Village Sub-Committee continued working with the Planning Board to enhance the Lower Village area, our vital Business District.

Lower Village Traffic Study

The Board and its Lower Village Sub-Committee feel strongly that any changes in the traffic pattern for Lower Village shall be in harmony with the Town's goal to enhance the Lower Village as the vital business center of our community, focusing on creating an identity for our historic Lower Village, consistent with the rural character of Stow.

The Board and its Lower Village Sub-Committee's goal is to continue to seek input from residents on its recommendation for implementation of the recommended "Preferred Alternative" as outlined in the Traffic Planning Study, prepared by Fay Spofford and Thorndike (FST), addressing vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle transportation conflicts. It is our goal to seek funding for design in 2008.

Lower Village Common

The Board and its Lower Village Sub-Committee recommend that the Board of Selectmen consider abandonment of a portion of Gardner Road (from a point near the entrance to the Shopping Center at Papa Gino's to Great Road). The Sub-Committee's objective is to help enhance the Lower Village appearance and historic heritage by returning the Lower Village Common to its original size as much as possible by converting that portion of Gardner Road into the common.

On recommendation of the Lower Village Sub-Committee, the Planning Board accepted an offer from the developers of Faxon Farm for purchase of materials for granite post and wood rail fencing, meeting the Fencing Style and Specifications For Use In The Stow Lower Village, as adopted by the Planning Board. This fencing will be used to accent the Lower Village Common rather than to enclose it. This fencing will serve as an example of the plan for a standard streetscape in the Lower Village.

We are thankful to the Highway Department who has been cooperative in implementation of the Lower Village Planning efforts. The Highway Department agreed to:

- Install temporary refuge islands in the spring of 2008. This will provide an opportunity to determine how effective such improvements will be before investing funds for a permanent solution.
- Install sidewalks along Pompositticut Street to the Maynard town line. This will foster pedestrian traffic to the Lower Village.
- Landscape the Town property located off Route 117 in the Lower Village, between Red Acre Road and Pompositticut Street.

Lower Village Mixed Use Overlay District – The Board continued its efforts to create a Lower Village Mixed Use Overlay District and hopes to bring forth a proposed Bylaw to a Fall 2008 Special Town Meeting. The Planning Board and its Lower Village Sub-Committee recognize the fact that any plans for a Mixed-Use Village Overlay District cannot be accomplished without providing water and/or wastewater treatment for the Village, whether it be through a municipal agreement with an abutting town or the establishment of a community water supply in the Lower Village. At the request of the Planning Board, the Town Administrator formed a working group to find a solution. These efforts have resulted in working with property owners and Assabet Water Company to create a privately owned and operated public water supply. It is hoped that a solution will be in place in 2008.

West Stow Planning

West Stow Planning remains a priority. This area of Town has a large amount of open land at risk of development and with little protection. Several key parcels are currently being developed or are in the planning stage. In its review of concept development plans for this area, the Board has stressed -- and will continue to stress -- its goal for any proposed development to make provisions for an Open Space corridor and trail network from the Hudson town line to Great Road, the use of low impact development techniques, the encouragement of diversity in housing stock, and a village feel.

Light Pollution

The Light Pollution Sub-Committee continued working with the Planning Board on proposed lighting bylaw changes. The final recommendation was brought forth to and adopted by Town Meeting. The Committee continues to work with developers and the Planning Board to ensure that lighting will comply with the new bylaw. The Sub-Committee continues to urge residents to confine their lighting to their property by re-directing or replacing fixtures to achieve better lighting that is not bothersome to others.

Other Activities

The Board continues to keep abreast of proposed changes to Massachusetts General Law and has provided comments on proposed changes:

- Community Planning Act II – A rewrite of MGL Chapter 40A (Zoning Act)
- Amendments to MGL Chapter 40B (Comprehensive Permits)

Thanks

None of the planning efforts would be possible without the enormous contributions by Stow residents who serve as volunteers on the boards and committees and Town staff. It is a pleasure to continue working with all of you.

The Board thanks the following Sub-Committee members for their ongoing efforts:

Lower Village Sub-Committee: Chairman Don McPherson, Bruce Fletcher, Karen Kelleher, Lucille King, Barbara Sipler, Laura Spear and Russ Willis and Associate Members Phil Moseley, Tom Farnsworth and Thom Neff.

Light Pollution Sub-Committee - Chairman Russ Willis, Bill Chiarchiaro and Greg Troxel.

Our very capable professional consultants: Susan Sullivan of Places Site Consultants, Inc. and Town Counsel, Jon Witten, of Daley and Witten, LLC.

As can be seen by this report, the Board had another busy year, but this amount of work would never have been possible without the tireless and competent efforts of Karen Kelleher and Lois Costello, who not only work diligently for the Board, but also for the general public with whom they interact on a daily basis.

Respectfully submitted,

Ernest E. Dodd, Chairman
Laura Y. Spear, Vice Chairman
Kathleen A. Willis
Leonard H. Golder, Clerk
Stephen Quinn
Bruce E. Fletcher, Voting Associate

Donna Jacobs, Associate
Malcolm S. FitzPatrick, Associate

Karen Kelleher, Planning Coordinator
Lois Costello, Administrative Assistant

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

The Conservation Commission consists of up to seven members appointed by the Board of Selectmen to administer and enforce both the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act and the Town of Stow Wetlands Protection Bylaw. Areas subject to protection under these regulations include wetlands, rivers, streams, other water bodies and their banks, and flood plains, among others. In addition to these resource areas, the Commission must review and if appropriate, stipulate conditions under which proposed activities within 100 feet of the resource or 200 feet of ponds and streams except for Lake Boon must be conducted. The Commission also works to manage over 1,200 acres of conservation land throughout the community and to protect additional high priority lands. Trail maps and permit applications are available in the Conservation Commission Office, which is located in the Town Building.

Presently, the Commission consists of seven members with varied backgrounds and a common interest in environmental issues. In addition, we have the strong support of several associate members who work on special projects, such as wetland delineation, drainage issues, trail mapping, forestry management, community gardens and open space planning.

Conservation Land Updates

Four permits were issued for guided walks and educational activities at the Flagg Hill Conservation Area and Heath Hen Meadow Brook Woodland. The walks are sponsored by the Stow Conservation Trust and serve to familiarize participants with the trails and natural resources unique to the area.

There were several reported instances of trees down across trails after high winds. The steward checked the trails and removed the obstructions and potential hazards. Trails were checked in preparation for the "Emerald Necklace" hike sponsored by the Stow Conservation Trust. Seasonally, the overgrown trail entrances were mowed at Wheeler Road and Gates Lane for improved access to Spindle Hill; Orchard View trail connection; Lanes End; Heritage Lane; and from the rear of Pompositticut School for Marble Hill. The meadow located on the Woodhead parcel of Flagg Hill was mowed to control successional species and enhance habitat for Eastern Bluebirds.

Meadowbrook Estates, a Planned Conservation Development, deeded 32.3 acres to the Town of Stow for conservation related purposes. The parcel features a section of open meadow, forested wetland, vernal pools, and a trail connection to the Flagg Hill Conservation Area. In addition to protecting sensitive natural resources, a neighborhood of forty-seven homes is now within walking distance (<1/4 mile) of conservation trails. Projects for the property include an informational kiosk, construction of a footbridge (completed), and placement of nesting boxes for Eastern Bluebirds.

The Conservation Commission accepted a conservation restriction on 20.8 acres of land and was gifted 20.2 acres of land off Hudson Road from Pulte Homes of New England, LLC to be managed for continuing agricultural use and conservation purposes. In addition, the Commission acquired an easement off Maguire Lane to provide pedestrian access to Elizabeth Brook as a benefit to the town and an 18-acre parcel off West Acton Road was transferred to the care, custody, management and control of the Conservation Commission at Town Meeting.

The Stow Community Gardens is located at the Captain Sargent Conservation Area just off Tuttle Lane on the eastern side of Stow. During the past year, the Community Garden's Steward, Joyce Bunce supervised the creation of 30 x 50 foot and 30 x 25 foot garden plots. The Commission received thirty-one applications for the use of the garden plots from residents and non-residents, which was an increase from 2006. This year there were quite a few families, a Cub Scout troop, some Brownies, senior citizens and two plots grown for the Stow Food Pantry. The gardeners donated organic tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, cabbage, broccoli, green beans, wax beans, yellow squash, zucchini and winter squash.

Community interest and support is particularly noteworthy. Scott Morse harrowed the existing plots in the spring and again at the end of the growing season in early November. A second pitcher pump was installed in April, which made a huge difference in both production and in the number of the gardeners interested in farming at the site. Further improvements are planned for next year. Thank you, Joyce!

The Stow Highway Department deserves high praise for keeping the conservation area parking lots in good condition, plowing them during the winter and assisting the Commission in keeping trails passable and safe. High praise also to the Stow Fire Department and Police Department for rescue efforts, fire protection, and assistance in enforcing the regulations and trail inspections when called upon.

The majority of our Conservation Land Volunteers are Stow residents, others are from neighboring towns, and everyone shares a common interest in being involved with conservation related activities. Our work force has provided 957 hours of volunteer labor in the Flagg Hill Conservation Area and Heath Hen Meadow Brook Woodland over the past 8 years. A heartfelt **Thank you** to all of the volunteers for their contribution to our community and the lands they cherish. Anyone interested in volunteering should contact the Commission at 978-897-8615.

You can help preserve the beauty of our lands by reporting acts of vandalism, violation of regulations, downed trees, and other potential hazards to the Commission at 978-897-8615. Thank you in advance for your help and cooperation.

Public Hearings

Hearings for residential construction, wetland delineations/resources and restoration projects as a result of enforcement action continued at a brisk pace, including Minute Man Airfield for their Vegetative Management Plan, Arbor Glen Active Adult Community, Ridgewood Estates Active Adult Community, Villages at Stow, Bose Corporation, Massachusetts Fire Fighting Academy, and several small subdivisions. Commission members continued their participation in several town-wide planning projects, including updating of the Master Plan, School Building Committee, Lower Village Water Study Committee, Open Space and Recreation Plan and Community Preservation Committee.

The Commission held 52 public hearings for projects during the year. A total of \$11,054 was generated for the Town by these hearings and applications. License Agreements, Community Garden fees, Regulations for Wetland Protection Bylaw, Trail Guides, copy fees and donations also generated \$2,965.

Cooperative Efforts and Long Range Planning

Work plan priorities for the coming year include but are not limited to the publication of an approved Open Space and Recreation Plan, revisions to the Wetland Protection Regulations, the Land Stewardship Committee, baseline monitoring for conservation restrictions, vernal pool education and invasive species identification. The commission also works collaboratively with local conservation organizations including the Stow Conservation Trust and Sudbury Valley Trustees on both land protection and land management issues.

Administration

Becky Mattison is the liaison to the Master Plan Committee and Kathy Sferra is the Commission's liaison to the Community Preservation Committee. Doug Moffat and Kathy Sferra are the Commission's liaisons to the Open Space & Recreation Plan Committee. Kathy Sferra is also a member of the Open Space Committee. Thanks to the dedication and hard work of these committees, a Community Preservation Plan has been drafted, the development of a Community Development Plan is in progress, a Draft Open Space & Recreation Plan has been completed and is now being finalized and the formation of a Stewardship Committee is in the beginning phase.

Bruce Trefry is the Commission's Land Steward and the parcel steward for Flagg Hill Conservation Area and Heath Hen Meadow Brook Woodland. Bruce provides overall management of these sensitive resource areas and does an outstanding job for the Commission.

Joyce Bunce is the steward and a former assistant steward for the community gardens at the Captain Sargent Conservation Area on Tuttle Lane. She is also a member of the Stow Garden Club. Joyce has done a wonderful job coordinating participants, laying out plots and educating the gardeners on organic farming. Thank you, Joyce!

Due to work and family commitments, David Cobb and Stephan Jablon resigned from the Conservation Commission. The Commission would like to take the opportunity to thank David and Steve for their contributions and sincere concern for the preservation of the town's wetland resources, agriculture and conservation lands.

Dennis Walsh was appointed in July to fill one of two vacant seats. Dennis has a scientific background and a strong interest in amphibians, protection of their habitat and educating the public on their importance to the environment. Dennis is currently conducting a multi-year monitoring program in the Stow Town Forest (Gardner Hill) to establish baseline amphibian population dynamics in Stow

Kathy Tarbi was also appointed in July after being an associate member of the Commission and attending many meetings to familiarize herself with the Commission's responsibilities and jurisdiction.

Pat Perry's consistent management of daily operations is outstanding. We all thank Pat for her efforts. Thanks to her hard work, the Commission has maintained and improved its high standard of professionalism in its interactions with town residents, other town boards and commissions, and state regulatory and enforcement bodies. As we add more conservation land to that already under management by the Commission, and as development activity in Stow accelerates, it becomes more and more important to coordinate the activities of the Commission with other town boards and effectively maintain required documentation. Pat continues to do an outstanding job in her role of coordinating daily operations and the successes of the Conservation Commission are due in large part to her dedication and effort.

The Commission benefits from working with town departments, land trusts, associate members and the community. Your input and assistance are invaluable to the Commission. **THANK YOU!**

If you have an interest, expertise or experience in conservation or environmental protection and would like to be a member, an associate member or volunteer, please call the office at 897-8615 or attend a meeting. Meetings are generally held on the first and third Tuesday of every month.

Respectfully submitted,

Ingeborg Hegemann Clark, Chair
David Coppes, Vice Chair
Kathy Sferra
Doug Moffat
Rebecca Mattison
Dennis Walsh
Kathy Tarbi
Bruce Trefry, Associate

Dwight Sipler, Associate
Stewart Dalzell, Associate
John Harding, Associate
Joyce Bunce, Associate

Patricia Perry, Administrative Assistant
Elizabeth Cote, Assistant

BOARD OF HEALTH

As the local authority responsible for the health and safety of Stow residents, the Board of Health continues its service to the Town by insuring that our water, sanitation, habitation, and environment continue to meet the high standards set by those early pioneers who recognized that good health practices create positive outcomes for people and the environment.

Medical Reserve Corps

During 2007 we continued to work closely with the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) as well as the Fire and Police Chiefs on the Town's Emergency Planning Program. Money from Emergency Preparedness Grants distributed by the Department of Homeland Security came to the Town through the MRC to allow planning, purchase, and storage of materials necessary in case of a natural or man-made disaster. The Town received a trailer that creates a movable response vehicle for on-sight assistance in a possible emergency situation.

After many months of planning, the Board of Health and the MRC ran a Flu Clinic for the Town in November utilizing our Emergency Dispensing Site Plan. This enabled the Town to critique its plan, understand where it worked and where its weaknesses were. It was a very successful clinic and we spent many hours afterward creating the After Action Plan that we were required to submit to the Department of Public Health. We hope to encourage more residents to volunteer for the MRC and to undertake the basic training provided by the state and federal government. Anyone who is interested in volunteering should contact the Board of Health for information and contact numbers.

Hazardous Waste and Recycling

The Board collaborated with the Stow Boy Scouts Troop 1 in the spring of 2007 to advertise the electronics collections that they were organizing. We encouraged the Town Municipal Offices to recycle many old computers and parts and donated money from the hazardous waste fund to the Boy Scouts for taking all of this old equipment. This worked well for us, as the intent of the program is to safely dispose of the materials. We hope to work with them again in 2008. The electronics are recycled by the pound and by creating a separate collection for these materials it leaves the Board with the ability to use its hazardous waste funds more efficiently by offering to collect other kinds of hazardous materials.

Mosquito Control

The Town of Stow continues to belong to the Central Massachusetts Mosquito Control Project to provide control of this pest, which is a carrier of such diseases as Equine Encephalitis and West Nile Virus. The Project is committed to an Integrated Mosquito Management Program, which utilizes a variety of control techniques and evaluation procedures. The first and most permanent method is called water management, source reduction or wetlands restoration. The second method is called larviciding and the third method is to attempt to control the adult mosquito by spraying on a **request-only** basis. The presence of adult mosquitoes is confirmed before any application is done.

Permitting & Revenues

Revenue of \$33,336.00 was remitted to the Town. The following is a list of permits issued:

| | | |
|--|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Bed & Breakfast – 4 | Ice – 3 | Tobacco – 7 |
| Pet Shop – 1 | Septage Haulers – 15 | Pools - 2 |
| Installers – 51 | Camps – 3 | Dumpsters – 13 |
| Food Service – 53 | Rubbish Haulers – 4 | Title 5 Inspections – 59 |
| Cider Mills – 4 | Stables – 25 | Massage Therapists – 6 |
| Disposal Works Construction Permits - 43 | | Wells – 23 |

Animal Control

The Board continues to work on revising the Animal Control Bylaw for the Town of Stow and expect to present it at the May 2008 Town Meeting. The Animal Control Officer, who is also the Assistant Animal Inspector, and the Animal Inspector, who is also the Assistant Animal Control Officer, continue to provide excellent coverage throughout the Town with the ability to respond quickly to any situation. The following is a report of activity for the year 2007:

| | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| Dog Complaints – 98 | Cat Complaints – 9 | Wildlife Calls – 40 |
| Injured Dogs – 5 | Found Dogs – 23 | Found Cats – 8 |
| Lost Dogs – 37 | Lost Cats - 20 | Cruelty/Neglect – 10 |
| Other – 64 | Dead Animals on Roadways – 46 | Dogs Impounded – 8 |
| Dogs Returned to Owners – 8 | | |

Citations Issued:

Written Warnings – 11
\$50.00 Fines – 4
\$25.00 Fines – 3

Quarantines:

Dog to Human 10 day - 8
Dog to Dog 10 day - 2
45 Day Cat – 10
45 Day Dog – 3
6 month Cat - 2

Residences Owning Farm Animals in Town - 50

| | | | |
|---------------------|--------------|----------------|----------------|
| Cattle – 26 | Goats, 27 | Sheep – 64 | Swine – 4 |
| Llamas/Alpacas – 15 | Equine – 128 | Chickens – 265 | Waterfowl – 27 |
| Game Birds – 16 | Rabbits – 51 | Donkey – 1 | |

The public is invited to visit our office in the Town Building to learn what information we have available on public health, the environment, hazardous materials, and recycling. As always, we encourage you to call or visit should you have any questions or problems. The office is open from 9AM to 5PM Monday through Friday and our telephone number is 978-897-4592. Don't forget to visit us on the Town of Stow website. We post our meetings and information on special issues on this site. Visit us at www.stow-ma.gov.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcia B. Rising, Chair
Betty Cormier
Sylvia Daley

Lynn Fishman, Clerk
Jack Wallace, Health Agent
Susan Latham, Animal Control Officer
Phyllis Tower, Animal Inspector

Theora S. Cole, Administrative Assistant

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

The year 2007 brought forth twelve applications for public hearing submitted to this board. The decreasing trend noted in last year's report continued, compared to the 46 in 2005 and 22 in 2006. The Board also received a request for a six-month extension of the one-year time limit on a variance due to expire in January 2008, and it was granted.

The Board conducted public hearings on the twelve new applications, in addition to a combined variance/special permit hearing on requests received in December 2006. Five variances were granted, five were denied, and one was denied without prejudice. The three applications for special permit were all granted.

One petition for variance first heard in December 2006 had been continued to January 2007 and closed in March. Thereafter, the decision filing deadline was extended several times while the matter (cell tower) was before the Planning Board. The decision of the Board was to deny the requested variances and was filed with the Town Clerk in June 2007.

Donald B. Hyde, Jr., a member entering his 40th year on the Board, was re-appointed to Associate member as requested by the Board, due to medical mobility problems. The Board could ill afford losing a member with such a significant knowledge of both the laws and traditions of our town, so we requested the Selectmen re-appoint him as an Associate. At the same time, Michele Shoemaker, with thirteen years on the Board, was re-appointed from Associate to fill the opening left by Don.

There remained an Associate opening, and the Board requested the Selectmen appoint Bruce Fletcher to that position. Few in our town have a greater knowledge of the town, its geography, traditions and zoning bylaws than Bruce, and the Board members feel fortunate that he made himself available for appointment.

What might be an interesting side note regarding your Board of Appeals is that the total length of continuous service by the full members now sitting is 111 years. Add in the associates, the total becomes 225 years. Longest serving member is Associate Richard Martin in his 46th year with the Board.

The Board of Appeals meets on the first Monday of each month, as needed, in the Town Building. Applications 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

2007 was another busy year for this department. The winter gave us 15 different events of precipitation of which seven of these events gave us plowable amounts of snow. We ended the snow season with an unofficial total of about 31 inches of measurable snow.

With such little snow we were able to take advantage of periods of good weather throughout the winter by pruning roadside trees and brush. A total of eight weeks were spent throughout 2007 cutting and pruning the roadside vegetation. This also includes the takedown of 17 dead or hazardous trees throughout the community. It is important that this department be proactive in cutting roadside trees and brush, as this vegetation has the potential to create hazardous situations for motorists and pedestrians as new growth occurs.

Several large scale projects were worked on this construction season which included the resurfacing of Birch Hill Road and Whitman Street with bituminous concrete. This also consisted of removing the old curbing and installing new curbing on both roads, inspecting and rebuilding all manholes and catch basins as needed, and the filling of shoulders along these roads with loam or fill as needed.

Routine pavement maintenance was done in the form of fiber-reinforced cracksealing to the following roads: Hudson Road, Gleasondale Road from Great Road to Laws Lane, and Wheeler Road.

This department also started work on a pedestrian pathway on Sudbury Road that runs from Barton Road to Pine Point Road. When this project is complete, the pathway will provide a much safer route for pedestrians who travel along this stretch of road.

Assistance by this department was also given to the Fire Department with the installation of a dry hydrant, for fire protection, on Walcott Street, and we fixed a water line break coming from the well at the Town Building. This well provides water to five different buildings around the center of Town, so it is very important to keep on line.

Overall, 2007 was a very productive year for this department, in closing I wish to thank, once again, all of the Highway Department employees who dedicate themselves day in and day out to the Town, the Town Administrator, the Board of Selectman and their administrative assistant, as well as the Police and Fire Departments for their continued support of this department and the Town of Stow.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael E. Clayton, Superintendent of Streets

Bruce Fletcher, Asst Superintendent
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 267 Building Permits in 2007. Richard Roggeveen the Building Inspector for the past seven years retired in April 2007 and I started as the new Building Inspector in June 2007. It was a very busy summer and fall. We inspected the construction of new homes, barns, kitchen and bath remodeling, home additions, swimming pools and wood stoves. In addition we attended classes for building inspector certification and code seminars to keep up with the continuing education requirements as set forth by the Department of Public Safety. In addition to the duties as Building Inspector, we are also in charge of the municipal properties that include the Town Building, Town Hall, West School, and the Crescent Street Garage building.

Town Buildings

The Building Department is responsible for maintaining the following buildings:

Town Hall

Regular maintenance, in addition to replacing shingles that had blown off the west end of the roof during high winds

Town Building

Regular maintenance items included, changing air filters and grease for the air handling units and the hot water circulating pumps. In August, Augusto Sprinkler Co. completed the annual test of the dry sprinkler system. In November, the construction of the 3rd floor bathroom, hallway and the ITAC room was started with wall framing, insulation, drywall, drop ceiling, rough wiring and rough plumbing completed prior to the end of the year.

Crescent Street Garage Building

Two (2) of the wooden overhead doors were replaced due to structural deterioration. Thank you to Steve Landry from the Highway Department for painting the doors prior to installation.

In summary, it has been a productive first 6 months for me and I want to thank all the Town Building staff and the Town Departments for their support. In particular I want to thank Judie Scraggs for guiding me through the thousands of files and permits kept in the Building Department.

Respectfully submitted,

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

Judith Scraggs, Administrative Assistant

Inspectors

Douglas Hyde, Local Inspector

Ray Renzoni, Local Inspector

Charles Saari, Wire Inspector

Kenneth Desmond, Deputy Wire Inspector

Robert Norton, Deputy Wire Inspector

Eric Sahlberg, Plumbing Inspector

Ray Smith, Deputy Plumbing Inspector

Raymond Smith, Gas Inspector

BUILDING DEPARTMENT

TOTAL BUILDING PERMITS ISSUED IN 2007

| Number of Permits | Type of Construction | Construction Value |
|-------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| 55 | Single Family Dwelling | \$13,371,821.00 |
| 81 | Remodeling and Additions | \$3,187,051.00 |
| 58 | Strip and Re-roof | \$527,000.00 |
| | Re-siding & Windows | |
| 3 | Swimming Pools | \$43,000.00 |
| 3 | Water & Wastewater Plants | \$695,800.00 |
| 1 | Wireless Communication | \$80,000.00 |
| 11 | Annual Inspections | N/A |
| 19 | Temporary Tents | N/A |
| 9 | Wood Stoves | \$18,500.00 |
| 25 | Sign Permits | N/A |
| <u>2</u> | Demolition Permits | <u>N/A</u> |
| 267 | | \$17,923,172.00 |

PERMITS ISSUED IN 2007

| Number of Permits | Fees Collected |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| 267 Building Permits | \$90, 570.00 |
| 267 Electrical Permits | \$36, 103.35 |
| 144 Plumbing Permits | \$13, 155.00 |
| <u>92 Gas Permits</u> | <u>\$ 4, 062.00</u> |
| 770 Total Permits | \$143, 890.35 |

RECREATION COMMISSION

This past year has been exciting and eventful for the Recreation Commission. The Commission has worked very hard over the last year developing a Recreational Master plan and researching land options for more recreational space in Stow. The Commission is very excited and looks forward to having a new space in town to create new recreational facilities. Town wide brochures are distributed throughout the year highlighting the many new programs that have been established as well as the existing programs. The first annual Stow Gobbler road race was our most successful program of the year with roughly 400 participants walking or running the race on Thanksgiving Day. We look forward to this program growing and becoming a Thanksgiving tradition here in Stow. Thanks to the Papanastassiou family, volunteers, and sponsors for making this race such a success.

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
Mark Pieper
John Sangermano
Bill Jones
Jim Henry

Tim Allaire, Associate
Lars Rohrberg, Associate
Eric Bachtell, Associate

Laura Greenough, Recreation Director

COUNCIL ON AGING

COA Mission Statement

The Stow Council On Aging is here to provide support to seniors by being a resource of information on elder affairs, provide social activities, outreach services, and help seniors to remain in their homes as long as safely possible.

Executive Summary

Services that the Council on Aging (COA) provides are listed in detail below. They include but are not limited to, congregate meals, Meals on Wheels, Drop in Center, health and educational classes, transportation, social events, newsletters, fuel assistance, AARP tax preparation, outreach and referral services and much more.

Congregate meals are served in Stow on Tuesdays and Thursdays of each week. Stow does not have a senior center that can provide meals five days a week, therefore meals are served at the First Parish Church of Stow and Acton in their Fellowship Hall two days only. The average

number of people that attend the meal site is 23. For a small fee of \$2.00, the meal site not only provides nutritional meals but also provides social interaction. The COA van service transports many of the people that attend the meal site.

Meals On Wheels is an important part of the Nutritional program. Meals are provided to people who would not be preparing meals for themselves otherwise. These people may be 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.

We thank First Parish Church for their generosity in allowing us the use of their hall for the Meal Site.

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 through out the year. It is also available for people to come in, sit, read the newspaper, drink coffee, and chat.

The Director, Alyson Toole, is available five days a week, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. unless out of the office on business. The Outreach Coordinator, Sharon Funkhouser, works, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays and the Outreach Worker, Suzanne Howley, is in the office from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. The staff is here primarily to serve seniors and people with disabilities, but since Stow does not have a Social Services Department, we also assist all ages. The COA is also a good resource to others who are concerned with care and services for their loved ones.

Studio Art Classes explore several mediums for the beginner to advanced artist. Under the direction of Instructor Cynthia Durost of Wild Rose Studio in Acton, seniors are able to explore their hidden talents and creativity through acrylics, oils, pastels, charcoal, etc. in a relaxed and self-paced environment. Classes meet on Monday mornings from 9 a.m. - 11 a.m. in the Friendship Room at Town Building. A donation of \$8.00 is requested to assist in the funding of this class. A private donor and the artists themselves and the Friends of the COA fund this class in large part.

Exercise Aerobic Classes are held on Mondays, Wednesday, and Fridays at St. Isidore's Church Hall from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., September through June. This wellness activity is funded in part by a grant from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs, the Friends of the COA, and a donation of \$2.00 per student/per class. We thank St. Isidore's Church for their generosity in letting us use their hall for these classes. Classes are for ages 50+.

Health Clinics are held throughout the year. The Podiatry Clinic is held monthly in the Friendship Room, by appointment. The Blood Pressure Clinic is held on the first Wednesday of the month at the Union Church from 10am to Noon.

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. The 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 van operates regularly Monday through Friday, from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. We request a 24-hour notice for these appointments. Doctor and hospital appointments should be at least 48 hours in advance or as soon as they are made. The vans will provide transportation to Acton, Concord, Hudson, Marlborough, Maynard, Lincoln, and within Stow. The COA was awarded a grant from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation Mobility Assistance Program. This grant will pay for 80% of the cost of a new van. The new van is expected to be delivered early next year. The COA is in desperate need for a new van. Our old, rusting van had many mechanical problems throughout the year and the engine finally died. Thanks to The Friends of the COA for helping to pay for repairs to keep the van on the road as long as possible. Thanks to our State Representative Patricia Walrath and State Senator Pamela Resor for assisting us with obtaining a loaner van from the Montachusett Area Regional Transit Authority (MART) until our new van is delivered.

The COA also arranges for volunteer drivers for special doctor or hospital appointments that are out of the area covered by our van.

The Staff of the COA with approval of the Director arranges events. Activities are planned with the hope that they will meet the varied interest of the people of Stow. Some trips are cultural, while others may be social. Day trips are scheduled throughout the year. Trips and events are beneficial to the social and recreational needs of our seniors. Due to the inadequate space we have in the basement of the Town Building we are limited in the number and type of events we can schedule.

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

S.M.O.C.: Fuel assistance applications are accepted by all office staff member of the COA from November through March. Assistance is available to low-income eligible persons of Stow. To receive information on fuel assistance or to request an appointment, call the Council office at (978) 897-1880. All information is kept in strictest confidentiality.

Tax Preparation Assistance is a free service sponsored by A.A.R.P. An A.A.R.P. volunteer will meet with seniors of Stow from February thru April for tax preparation and to apply for "Circuit Breaker". To schedule an appointment the client must call the C.O.A.

State Representative Patricia Walrath takes time from her busy schedule to meet with our seniors to discuss issues of concern to elders and to inform them of legislation, which may affect them. These meetings take place on the third Thursday of each month from 12 - 1 p.m. at the First Parish Church during the meal site. All seniors are welcome.

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 of services that are available to them through the COA and outside services such as Minuteman Senior Services and other local agencies. If you are interested in becoming a valued volunteer in our Outreach Program, call the C.O.A. office at (978) 897-1880. Volunteers are needed during the weekday, even if just for one hour.

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 Friends of the C.O.A. is to raise funds to supplement the programs and activities of the Council on Aging. They raise funds for the Van Operating Fund, special projects, programs, and activities of the C.O.A.

You may become a “Friend” of the C.O.A. by either volunteering, sponsoring a special project, or to make a monetary contribution. Call the C.O.A. office at (978) 897-1880, or any of the Friends of the COA Board members. We thank the Friends of the COA members and volunteers for all their hard work this past year and the support they offer the Stow C.O.A. all year long.

Minuteman Senior Services provides many thousands of dollars worth of services to the senior population of Stow each year in return for our contribution of more than \$900. Minuteman Senior Services is sponsored by state and federal grants. We wish to thank them for all their services and assistance to the seniors and the Council office.

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” up to 100 hours or \$750 worth of rebate on their real estate taxes. “Jobs” are filled within participating town departments. This is a double benefit to both the client and the town. For more information call the C.O.A. office at (978) 897-1880. All information is kept in the strictest confidence.

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 computers, updates them, delivers and sets them up. He also will provide user training. This program is funded by a small donation from the seniors and by the Stow Friends of C.O.A. We thank the Friends for their generous support of this highly successful new program.

Thank you to all the volunteers who help out in the office. The Seniors of Stow and the Council on Aging rely on the many hours the volunteers contribute as well as their dedicated to improving the quality of life for the seniors of Stow. Without their help, the Council on Aging could not function.

There is much talk lately of the aging of the “Baby Boomers” and how it will impact the services offered. I feel that this age group will be an asset to towns. People that are technologically aware tend to live a healthy life style and, therefore, are less physically limited. When Baby Boomers became available to volunteer in a few years I hope they will consider the Council on Aging when they are looking for an outlet for their energy and talents. They will be a great resource.

Thank you St. Isidore’s, the Union Church, and the First Parish Church of Stow for allowing us to use their facilities to conduct programs throughout the year. We extend our sincere appreciation to all of the volunteers who assist the Council on Aging in so many capacities. They are the “life-line” of our department.

We would also like to extend our appreciation to the citizens of Stow for their support at Town Meeting this past year in assisting the Council on Aging with their goals of providing the seniors of Stow with a meaningful quality of life as they age.

We wish to extend our gratitude to the Stow Highway Department for their continuous assistance whenever needed.

Without the 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 and devoted Friends group.

Last of all we wish to thank the Senior Citizens of Stow who give so much of their time and talents to help make the Council on Aging a place where a Stow Senior 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 you do and admire your spirit of enthusiasm.

Respectfully submitted,

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

Jo Langley, Associate
Brian Burke, Associate
Nancy Chaisson, Associate

Alyson Toole, Director
Sharon Funkhouser, Outreach Coordinator
Suzanne Howley, Outreach Worker

RANDALL LIBRARY TRUSTEES

Circulation remained strong in 2007. The library circulated 109,009 items during the year, about 17 items per Stow resident. This heavy usage is ascribable to our innovative children’s programming, the wide range of DVDs the library now has, and the Minuteman Library network itself which enables patrons to search the holdings of 41 library systems online. The library now has wireless (WiFi) access for the public. Ask at the desk!

A total of 526 children enrolled in the Summer Reading and Listening Clubs. Sponsored by the Stow Community Chest and The Randall Library Friends’ Association, the summer started off with our annual “Moonwalk on the Common” on the last day of school and continued with an Ice Cream Social, magician, puppet show, DJs program, and storytellers from the Three Apples Storytelling Festival. The annual Dads’ Night at the Library was well attended as dads and kids came to see the Wingmasters owl show.

During 2007, the library was used by many community groups including: ski program registration, Stow Republican town committee, Stow Democrat town committee, the Juniper Hill Water Company, Stow Minutemen, Stow Garden Club, Organization for the Assabet, Girl Scout leader meetings, Stow Community Chest, Publishing group, Writers’ Group, Knitting circle, Stow Brownies, Assabet Rail Trail, SAPN new baby party, Stow Food Pantry, Senior art show and reception at Springfest, Sudbury Valley Trustees, Stow Soccer registration and coaches meetings, and SAPN blanket babies.

The roof at the front part of the 1975 addition was repaired and resingled. We are also developing bidding documents for the replacement of windows and rotting sills.

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, Childrens' 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. The Stow Housing Authority is governed by a Board of five commissioners, four of which are locally elected with 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. Presently, 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, Chairman
W. Robert Dilling, Jr.

Jack Kendra

Robert Barrell, Administrator

CEMETERY COMMITTEE

The Cemetery Committee is composed of three (3) members appointed by the Board of Selectmen to serve three-year terms. Under the supervision and control of the Board of Selectmen, the committee maintains the public cemeteries of the town. With the approval of the Board, appoints such employees as are necessary to maintain the cemeteries. Robb "GH" Gledhill is the Cemetery Superintendent and oversees cemetery operations and seasonal personnel.

There are three (3) cemeteries in town, Hillside Cemetery on Crescent Street, Lower Village Cemetery at Great Road and Pompositticut Street, and Brookside Cemetery on Gleasondale Road and Box Mill Road.

The Cemetery Committee expresses its sincere appreciation to the Community Preservation Committee for funding the historic stonewall preservation project, around Lower Village Cemetery.

The committee also wishes to thank the Highway Department for their efforts in keeping the cemetery roadways clear of snow and for assistance received throughout the year in cemetery operations.

I would like to thank all the visitors, family and friends for their beauty and charm in making the grounds full of color and thanks to "G.H."

Respectfully submitted,

Fred Dodge, Chairman
Roy Dudley
Clarissa Potter

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

CULTURAL COUNCIL

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

In 2007, the Cultural Council redefined their mission as follows: "To create a closer knit community in Stow by sponsoring and supporting activities and events that bring the diverse elements of our community together for enjoyment and cultural enrichment."

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

- Community Arts Festival: \$500 (Stacey Almy)
- Sounds of Stow Concert Season: \$1,000 (Rick Gentilman, Sounds of Stow)
- Lake Boon Water Carnival Music Boat: \$350 (David Gray, Lake Boon Improvement Assoc.)
- Summer Reading Program: \$800 (Denise Flynn, Randall Library)
- Channel 9 Video Production Competition: \$300 (Lewis Halprin)
- Jeff Barnhart Visits Stow Performances: \$800 (Lewis Halprin)
- Charlie Chaplin Silent Movie Night: \$300 (Lewis Halprin)
- Decorated Traffic Light Controller: \$675 (Lewis Halprin)

- River's Edge Participant & Performance Programs: \$200 (Jan Patterson, Hudson Area Arts Alliance)
- Acton Community Chorus Concerts \$100 (Patricia Lawson, Acton Community Chorus)
- Stow & Acton Garden Tour: \$200 (Janet Pane-Joyce, Tower Hill Botanic Garden)
- Three Apples Storytelling Festival: \$100 (Nicolette Nordin Heavey, Three Apples Storytelling Festival)
- Clarence Darrow Performance: \$200 (Richard Clark with Stow Council on Aging)
- Stow West School Open Houses: \$540 (Karen Gray, Stow Historical Commission)
- Symphony Pro Musica Season: \$175 (Thomas Kazior, Symphony Pro Musica)
- 25th Anniversary: Stow Free to Explore Weekend: \$175 (Michael Judd, The Discovery Museums)
- Senior Citizen Musical Program: \$250 (John Root with Stow Council on Aging)
- 73rd Regional Exhibition of Art & Craft: \$100 (Peter Timms, Fitchburg Art Museum)
- American Boychoir Concert: \$1500 (Michael Paladini, First Parish Church Music Committee)
- Hale Middle School Play (artistic director): \$850 (Catherine Hammill, Hale Middle School Play)

The Cultural Council conducted a Community Input Survey (required every three years) in the Spring of 2007, with a good response from the community.

Membership currently stands at six, which meets the Mass Cultural Council's minimum requirement of five. Members are Anne Draudt (secretary), Bob Glorioso, Catherine Hammill (treasurer), Donnalisa Johnson (public relations), Dorothy Sonnichsen, Betsy Stepp (chair). Lynne Juster is an Associate Member. 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. The Cultural Council is actively seeking additional members. As of March 5, 2008, there is an opening for one additional voting member, and openings for two associate (non-voting) members.

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. Some are direct financial assistance benefits that are determined based on need, paid by the town "up front," with 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. Temporary 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 which provides grave markers for deceased Stow resident veterans. The VSO also serves as a liaison to other federal veterans' programs.

Since the VSO is a part-time position in 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 2007, was the sixth year of collections and state matching grants. In October 2007 Stow was awarded \$ 390,888 - a 100 percent match - effectively doubling 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 (a total of \$1,901,296 awarded to date). Community Preservation funds are deposited in a locally controlled, interest-bearing account.

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 Committee'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 Committee must also be approved by a majority vote at Town Meeting before expenditures can be made from Stow's Community Preservation Fund.

Highlights of 2007

In May of 2007, 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).

Also in May of 2007, Town Meeting voters approved a Lake Boon Preservation warrant article appropriating \$77,000 of CPA funds to eradicate the non-native invasive weeds overtaking Lake Boon, an important community recreation resource. The Town Hudson also contributed 1/3 of the total cost towards the project. In June of 2007, basins 2, 3, and 4 were treated successfully. In July of 2007 a booster treatment was done for basin 2. Feedback has been very positive, and the Lake is on its way to recovery. This project will continue until 2009 under the direction of the Lake Boon Commission.

At the same Annual Town meeting in May of 2007, Town Meeting attendees voted to appropriate \$9,990 of CPA funds for the reconstruction and 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 Town of Maynard. The Cemetery Commission, in consultation with the Historical Commission, oversaw this restoration project to completion in September of 2007. The project was such a success that the Cemetery Commission is in the process of proposing a second Stone Wall restoration project at the Lower Village Cemetery.

In December of 2007, Special Town Meeting voters approved a warrant article appropriating \$673,000 of CPA funds to acquire 7.0 +/- acres of a parcel (known as the "Snow Parcel") for active recreation and open space and appropriating \$1,000,000 for the development and creation of recreational fields /facilities on the 7.0 +/- acres in accordance with MGL Chapter 44B. This article complemented another warrant article, which was approved at Town Meeting and at the polls, for raising and appropriating funds for the remaining 6 +/- acres of the parcel and for an additional \$200,000 for the development and creation of the recreational fields /facilities. The

6+/- acres on this parcel will be leased for agricultural use, but not legally restricted to that use in the long term.

Also in December of 2007, a contingent from the CPC met with the Chief Legal Counsel and other staff at the Department for Housing and Community Development (DHCD) seeking endorsement of the CPC's innovative affordable housing deed restriction program. A decision from DHCD is expected in the first quarter of 2008 as to whether the units would count on the Subsidized Housing Index for the Town. In this affordable housing program, the Town will purchase deed restrictions on existing housing units in Stow, ensuring that the unit remains functionally affordable in perpetuity. To be affordable, housing units, when they are sold, must be sold to individuals or families who earn less than 80% of the median household income for this area. The program has received substantial interest and support from other communities.

In addition to the warrant articles presented to residents at Town Meetings this past year, the CPC worked with the Historical Commission to research possibilities for a new fire alarm and sprinkler system for Stow's historic Town Hall, built circa 1848. Town Hall is one of the very few historic buildings owned by the Town of Stow, and a key component of our Town's history. Its beautiful hall serves as a communal meeting place throughout the year for untold numbers, including children, musicians, and Town Committees, Boards, and Commissions. It houses many important documents for the Historical Commission, Recreation Commission and Cemetery Committee. Its lower floor serves as a miniature museum for important Stow artifacts and valuable historic documents. A sprinkler and upgraded alarm system will reduce the likelihood of our losing to fire this integral piece of our community. Due to some problems with the RFP process, the CPC was unable to move forward with plans to sponsor the intended warrant articles for these projects. The Historical Commission continues to shepherd this proposed project.

The Committee looks forward to working with others to implement additional Community Preservation projects selected by Town Meeting voters including the Lake Boon Restoration project, and a new Recreational Complex. In addition, the Committee looks forward to evaluating proposals currently in the developmental phase including a Historic Documents Preservation project, another Historic Stone Wall preservation project for the Lower Village Cemetery, a fire suppression system to preserve the historic Town Hall, and several potential affordable housing projects. The prospect for receiving state matching funds appears promising for 2008, though possibly not continuing at the 100% match level. Stow voters are to be commended for deciding six years ago to be one of first of the 119 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
Kathy Sferra, Conservation Commission
Karen Gray, Historical Commission
Kate Hogan, Council on Aging
Mike Busch, Recreation Commission
JT Toole, Housing Authority
John Bolton, Assessors Office

Bruce Fletcher, Planning Board, Associate
Margie Lynch, Housing Partnership, Assoc
Jim Sauta, Council on Aging, Associate
Bill Maxfield, Open Space, Associate
Bruce Fletcher, Planning Board, Associate
Pat Perry, Conservation, Associate

Deb Seith, Administrative Assistant

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 assisted the Planning Board in the revision of sign bylaws presented at the May 2007 Town Meeting. The Commission also prepared publicity and educational materials and participated in the 2007 Springfest.

The Commission joined negotiations between the Conservation Commission and the Commonwealth Department of Agricultural Resources to prepare an application for an Agricultural Preservation Restriction on the Tyler Land (at the junction of Great Road and Old Bolton Road). The Commission also joined with the Recreation Commission in preparing a plan to preserve the Snow Land (off Old Bolton Road) for Town purposes. The land will be used partly for recreation and partly for agriculture.

Respectfully submitted,

Dwight Sipler, Chairman
Liz Painter, Clerk
Julie Martin Sullivan

Kathy Steege
Jean Lynch, Associate

OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE

The Stow Open Space Committee has been working for several years to update the Town's Open Space and Recreation Plan, which was last updated in 1997. The town is required to have such a plan in order to be eligible for state grants for the protection of open space and recreation lands. At the end of 2006, the Committee released a draft of "Stow Forever Green – Preserving the 'Stow We Know'" and held a public meeting soliciting comments on the plan. During 2007, the Committee focused its work on revising the plan to reflect many of the excellent public comments that were received at the public meeting and in writing following the meeting.

The final revised draft was submitted to the Massachusetts Division of Conservation Services within the Executive Office of Environment and Energy and was conditionally approved by the state as of September 2007 (pending submittal of the final plan). Minor revisions and updating of maps is being completed with the final plan expected to be distributed and posted on the town's website in 2008, along with an executive summary. This conditional approval makes Stow eligible again for "Self Help" and "Urban Self Help" open space and recreation grants, and maintains that status through 2012. In their approval, the state noted that the plan was "particularly thorough". The Metropolitan Area Planning Commission also commented favorably on Stow's plan.

The plan summarizes the progress that the town has made in providing for its open space and recreation needs and sets forth goals and specific action items for the next five years. The plan will provide a framework for the efforts of various town boards and committees involved in the protection of Stow's open lands, and guide municipal partnership efforts with both state and federal agencies and nonprofit organizations. It will also serve as an important reference for the town's Community Preservation Committee and will serve as the Natural Resources and Open Space component of the town's Master Plan.

This plan identifies nine specific objectives for protecting land in Stow. They are:

- Protect agricultural lands to preserve and enhance Stow’s agricultural base, and maintaining its viability for the long term.
- Protect lands that provide areas for active and passive recreation including ball fields and trails.
- Protect lands that link existing conservation holdings in Stow and surrounding communities.
- Protect lands in areas of town currently underserved by protected open space.
- Protect land with significant surface and groundwater resources.
- Protect land that will preserve Stow’s small town nature.
- Protect important natural habitats and wildlife corridors.
- Protect important scenic vistas.
- Protect land with significant historical or cultural resources.

To advance Stow’s open space and recreation goals, the plan calls for specific actions on several fronts – ranging from active efforts to acquire or otherwise protect priority lands that are important for the nine objectives identified in this plan, to adoption of creative zoning changes to reduce and/or concentrate future development and preserve areas not suitable for development. It is clear that given the pace of development locally and regionally, the town needs a strong, ongoing and well-prioritized land protection effort that makes use of all of the “tools” in the toolbox – encouraging donation of land and conservation restrictions, purchasing key properties, and making use of limited development, zoning incentives and creative land protection partnerships with private organizations that can assist with raising funds.

As the plan is completed the Open Space Committee will turn its attention implementation of the plan and working with the many other boards and committees with action items in the Plan.

Special thanks to outgoing chair Bob Wilber, who has ably guided the Open Space Committee for many years and to Dwight Sipler, Doug Moffet, and Pam Weathers who also assisted with preparation of the draft Open Space and Recreation Plan at key points over the past several years.

Respectfully submitted,

Vin Antil
 Eve Donahue
 Jean Lynch
 Bill Maxfield

Chris Rodstrom
 Kathy Sferra, Chair
 Bob Wilber

LAKE BOON COMMISSION

The Lake Boon Commission (LBC) is made up of three people appointed by the Selectmen of Hudson and Stow. There are two members from Stow and one from Hudson, reflecting the area of the lake in each town. Current serving members are Lee Heron from Stow, Cindy Curley from Stow and Conray Wharff from Hudson. The LBC holds meetings at the Stow Town Building about once a month. The meetings are public; everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend. Meeting notices are posted at both Town Halls at least 48 hours before the meetings.

In the past year we applied for funds from the towns of Stow and Hudson to treat the weeds in Lake Boon and conduct an ongoing lake management program. The funds were approved by both town meetings, allowing LBC to proceed with an existing contract with Lycott Environmental for

lake management. After obtaining the required state permits on May 23, 2007, a biological survey of the lake was conducted by Lee Lyman, which clearly indicated that significant re-growth of both Fanwort and Variable Water-milfoil had returned to the lake after the incomplete treatment of 2002.

On June 7, 2007, 163 acres of the lake were treated per plan and with notice to the residents. The treatment was mostly successful and will be followed up with spot treatments as part of the ongoing lake management program this season. Today the lake is largely free of the non-native invasive weeds.

Many catch basins have been installed around the lake to reduce nutrient flow into the lake. They were done under a state 319 Grant as part of our total lake management program. Nutrient management with ongoing spot treatments should reduce the non-native invasive weeds in the lake.

Lee Heron is Lake Boon's patrol officer. He manages patrolling of the Lake Boon in both the LBC patrol boat and the Stow Police patrol boat to ensure safety and enforce regulations on the lake.

He has the power to ticket violators of either LBC rules or state laws. We write many tickets every summer. Boat owners are responsible for their boats at all times, regardless of who is driving their boat. Every summer we stop many boats for minor violations. We have a zero tolerance policy for safety violations; if a boat is stopped for safety violations it will be ticketed.

The rules are posted at the launch site or available on line from the Stow web site at www.stow-ma.gov. State rules can also be found on-line at www.mass.gov. You can also e-mail Conray Wharff , to request a copy of the rules.

We are always looking for volunteers to help with ongoing lake management projects. If you are interested, please contact us via your Town Offices or send e-mail to Conray Wharff at cwharff@comcast.net

Respectfully submitted,

Conray Wharff, Hudson, Chairman
Cindy Curley, Stow

Lee Heron, Stow

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 Selectman on August 9, 2005, the name of the committee was changed to the Local Access Channel Advisory Committee (LACAC). Funding for operations of the channel is currently provided solely through a license agreement, originally with AT&T and now with Comcast. The cable station is referred to as "Stow TV."

The committee held four meetings in 2007. Coordinator Anne VanTine managed the day-to-day operations of Channel 9, coordinated volunteer activities, implemented program schedules, managed the bulletin board, and handled purchases and administrative issues. The committee took steps to select a digital video server that will replace existing schedule equipment, and to help fund renovation of a larger space for the station. Both projects will come to fruition in 2008.

Stow TV cablecast about 30 Board of Selectmen and Joint Board meetings. It cablecast six School Building Taskforce (SBTF) sessions and several free-form SBTF informational open house events in addition to other public information sessions. Stow TV cablecast the Annual Town Meeting in May and the Special Town Meeting in December. It cablecast a "Candidates Night Debate" and encouraged voter registration on the bulletin board. In the spring, it cablecast all the NRSD School Board budget planning sessions.

Stow TV cablecast over 80 new locally produced programs of local events during 2007. These included "Sounds of Stow" and other concerts, First Parish Coffeehouse concerts, school concerts and other school events, Memorial Day ceremonies, "Springfest" festivities, the Lake Boon water carnival, special entertainment for children at Randall library, several local plays by children, Historical Commission programs including the open house events at West School, school and kindergarten graduations, Fire Department events, Council on Aging speakers, presentations about environmental issues, fairs and charity events, and much more.

Stow TV implemented about 300 announcements during this time period. A wide variety of local event announcements are continuously shown on the Stow TV bulletin board and updated regularly based on requests from community organizations. Stow TV prides itself on displaying slides that are colorful and entertaining as well as informative.

About 30 "photo shows" were featured on the bulletin board. These included pictures of library programs for children, public and school concerts, school plays and programs, museum programs, parades, town festivities and memorials, scenes of Stow, and many other subjects and events. Photographs were contributed by Greg Troxel, Lew Halprin, Ann DeCristofaro, Jonathan Daisy, Paul Trunfio, Dick Luxner, Nancy Arsenault, Marika Barnett, Karen Benoit, and others.

Stow TV made its program schedules available to the public on the town web site, through publicity to local newspapers and school newsletters, email distribution lists, on the TV bulletin board, and posted at Randall Library, the Council on Aging, the post office, and other locations.

Stow TV volunteers produced, recorded, and edited the many shows seen on Stow TV, and helped with schedules and bulletin board slides. Volunteers included Lew Halprin, Linda Stokes, Mike Jordan, Kathleen and Colin King, Marika Barnett, and Valerie Pederson. Linda Stokes and Evan Cirioni recorded the Selectmen meetings. Lew Halprin and Mike Jordan recorded all the school committee budget meetings. Jerry Horne managed Town Meeting sound. Scott Glorioso assisted with some concert recordings and provided technical advice.

The volunteers held meetings and consultations to collaborate, plan, and teach one another. Technical Assistant Lew Halprin and volunteer Mike Jordan teamed up to help refine techniques and equipment. Volunteers became more knowledgeable, sophisticated, and adventurous in their use of equipment and video editing. The quality of video programs increased significantly as a result. Working with the volunteers, Stow TV acquired various accessories that made recording easier, more reliable, and better quality. LACAC member Bob Glorioso assisted the volunteers with equipment planning.

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 e-mail at stowtv@stow-ma.gov.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen Dungan
Robert Glorioso
Len Golder
Lisa Lavina

James Parr
Chris Funkhouser, Associate Member
Anne VanTine, Program 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 today to Comcast.

Around Aug 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.

The first step in this procedure was to place an ad in the paper requesting any company interested in providing video cable service to respond with a proposal for the Town to consider. Although only Verizon was expected to respond, other potential companies had to be notified that the Town was considering another cable license award in order to give them a chance to submit a proposal along with Verizon. This was done around Oct 2007, but surprisingly, no one responded, not even Verizon. Verizon indicating to the Selectmen that they needed to complete existing negotiations before starting with new Towns.

As a result, the year 2007 was a slow year for the Cable Committee since there were no terms of the Comcast license that were unresolved, and there were very few meetings of the committee.

However, around October, Verizon again requested that the Town provide it with a cable license. Again an ad was placed, but this time Verizon responded very quickly (Nov 7) with their proposal to provide video cable service to Stow.

The next step would be for the Cable Committee to respond to Verizon's proposal with a document that specifies what needs Stow has that were not addressed in Verizon's proposal, and wait for Verizon to submit a revised proposal. Then a series of negotiation meetings would be held to resolve any differences, followed by a public meeting and the Selectmen's approval of a television cable license for Verizon. These steps are expected to be completed by the end of this summer.

Verizon can then offer video cable service to residents of Stow, but when they will actually start providing the ability for Stow residents to sign up for their video service is determined only by

Verizon based on marketing and technical factors. An estimate of when Verizon will offer video cable service is by the end of 2008.

The Committee has no jurisdiction over the cost of cable services, nor the content of the programs offered on this service. Complaints in other areas should be directed first to Comcast Customer Service at (978) 568-9414. If service problems are not resolved by Comcast, contact the Stow Cable Committee who might be able to contact other departments of Comcast for problem resolution.

Respectfully submitted,

Lewis Halprin, Chairman
Arny Buckman

Robert Mong
George Scraggs
Patricia Crawford

FINANCIAL REPORTS

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Introduction to the Finance Committee

Every town in Massachusetts with a property valuation of \$1 million or more is required by state law to have a Finance Committee (sometimes called an advisory or appropriation committee) to “consider any or all municipal questions for the purpose of making reports or recommendations to the town.”¹ The Finance Committee’s primary responsibility is advisory. It closely examines all warrant articles, including the budget, that will be presented to Town Meeting and makes recommendations to the voters on the course of action that it believes the Town should follow. It also administers the reserve fund, set aside by Town Meeting to provide for urgent or unforeseen expenditures that might arise between town meetings. The Finance Committee also attempts to give the people of the town a clear picture of the financial condition of the town with some commentary about how we got in that condition.

In Stow, the Moderator appoints five voting and up to five associate members to the Finance Committee. Any voter registered in Stow is eligible to join. At the beginning of 2008 there were five voting members and two associate members on the committee.

Overview of Town Finances and the Fiscal Year 2008 Budget

The Town balanced the budget for the fiscal year 2008 (July 1, 2007 – June 30, 2008) without an override. However, the budget was balanced in part due to savings that will not be available in future years and revenue growth that will not be sustained. For example, the town used \$200,000 of Free Cash to pay for capital expenditures, and there was a small reduction in the assessment from the Minuteman Regional Vocational School District, due to the decreasing number of Stow students attending that school. The Town’s assessment for the Nashoba Regional School District increased by 5.0%, a rate that is comparable to the growth rate of property tax, 5.7%. Significantly, however, in fiscal 2008, income growth from new construction was less than in previous years, and state aid figures showed only modest growth, a trend that is likely to continue. Similarly, in fiscal 2007, the Town did not need an override to balance the budget because of a significant, one-time source of new revenue: an increase of approximately \$200,000 in state reimbursement for the Hale Middle School construction project due to the completion of a

¹ Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 39, Section 16

state audit. Thus, although overrides have not been necessary in the past two years to balance the annual budgets, this is not because of overall fiscal health.

Indeed, the constraints on our finances are unchanged from prior years: an undiversified tax base forcing the town to rely heavily on residential taxation, large amounts of land exempted or abated from taxes, and relatively low amounts of state aid. Future years may not enjoy the same freedom from overrides if revenue and spending patterns continue. Most importantly, the budget has not yet been impacted by large capital projects looming on the horizon, such as the proposed Center School expansion. In fact, even if the budget continues to grow at only its current rate, it is unlikely that revenues would keep pace with expenditures given the apparent slowdowns in new growth and state aid. With increased costs, particularly the cost of capital projects, Stow will likely require an override to balance the budget in many of the years to come. Thus, it is important to remember that the spending approved at Town Meeting directly controls the rate of growth of town expenses.

Town Meetings

Stow held two town meetings in 2007, the annual town meeting in May and a special town meeting in December. The annual town meeting approved the annual budget and various capital items, including approximately \$44,000 in renovations to the Town Building, approximately \$47,000 in security upgrades for the Hale, Center, and Pompositticut schools, and over \$100,000 in repairs to the Hale and Center Schools. Most notably, Town Meeting approved an amount not to exceed \$2.2 million to begin engineering and architectural work, and to retain an Owner's Project Manager, in connection with the proposed expansion of the Center School. The voters approved a debt exclusion of this amount at the ballot box \$50,000 was added to the Stabilization Fund from Free Cash.

School Budgets

The Nashoba Regional School District continues to represent Stow's largest budget category, 56% of total spending (including debt and special articles) in FY08 (\$12,097,908/ \$21,453,550). This is actually a slightly smaller percentage than in FY07 because of some large special article items. The School Committee requested a net total budget of \$39,279,372 for FY08, and this budget was approved by Town Meetings in all three district towns. Eliminating debt expense of \$1,098,366 (H.S. Building project and Deficit Bond) left an operations budget of \$38,181,006. This represented an increase of \$ 2,236,269, or 6.2%, over last fiscal year's operations budget of \$35,944,737.

For Minuteman Regional High School, the Town's assessment for FY08 was \$954,573, a decrease of 1.7% over the prior fiscal year's assessment of \$971,371. This unusual decrease, the second in two years, was caused primarily by Stow's student population at the school decreasing.

| | FY05 | FY06 | FY07 | FY08 | % Change FY07-FY08 |
|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| NRSD (incl. debt) | \$10,127,918 | \$10,848,015 | \$11,522,329 | \$12,097,908 | 5.0% |
| Minuteman | \$920,276 | \$987,068 | \$971,371 | \$954,573 | (1.7)% |
| TOTAL | \$11,048,194 | \$11,835,083 | \$12,493,700 | \$13,052,481 | 4.4% |

Town Expenditures

Total Stow expenditures increased 6.7% in FY08 compared to the prior year. This includes expenditures on capital items, which were funded in FY08 from the tax levy or Free Cash without borrowing, and spending from the Community Preservation Fund, which does not increase taxes but represents a reduction of savings available for future projects. These expenditures can be divided into two large groups: Municipal Government, which increased by 16.9% and Education, which increased 4.4%. Table 2 shows a comparison of total Stow expenditures for FY07 and FY08.

The growth in total Municipal Government was 16.9%. With respect to the two largest line items, Public Safety grew by 5.2% (1,833,309/1,742,086) while Debt Service actually fell by 11.5% (1,434,806/1,621,305) due to maturing debt. Debt Service remains an increasingly significant component of town expenses and would trend downward in the next few years if no new borrowing were added.

| | FY07 Voted | FY07 % of Total | FY08 Voted | FY08 % of Total | \$ Change FY07- FY08 | % Change FY07- FY08 |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| Municipal Govt | | | | | | |
| General | \$797,093 | 4.0% | \$813,184 | 3.8% | \$16,091 | 2.0% |
| Public Safety | 1,742,086 | 8.7% | 1,833,309 | 8.5% | 91,223 | 5.2% |
| Public Works | 776,249 | 3.9% | 815,548 | 3.8% | 39,299 | 5.0% |
| Human Services | 211,033 | 1.1% | 231,954 | 1.1% | 20,921 | 9.9% |
| Culture/Rec | 246,598 | 1.2% | 255,700 | 1.2% | 9,102 | 3.7% |
| TownWide Expense | 677,550 | 3.4% | 710,400 | 3.3% | 32,850 | 4.8% |
| Special Articles | 565,287 | 2.8% | 1,243,756 | 5.8% | 678,469 | 120% |
| Recap Items | 546,929 | 2.7% | 609,751 | 2.8% | 50,368 | 9.2% |
| Capital Spending | 415,728 | 2.1% | 452,661 | 2.1% | 36,933 | 8.9% |
| Debt Service | 1,621,305 | 8.1% | 1,434,806 | 6.7% | (186,499) | (11.5%) |
| Total Municipal Govt | \$7,184,130 | 37.8% | \$8,401,069 | 39.2% | 1,216,939 | 16.9% |
| Education | \$12,493,700 | 62.2% | \$13,052,481 | 60.8% | 558,781 | 4.5% |
| Grand Total | \$20,093,558 | | \$21,453,550 | | 1,359,992 | 6.77% |

Source: Town Administrator, Budget Report, Annual Town Meeting

--- Departmental operating budgets include wages and expenses.

Town Revenues

Town Revenue increased 7.3% in FY08. Table 3 shows a comparison of revenue sources for FY07 and FY08. Property Tax, the largest source of town revenue, increased 5.7% in FY08.

State Aid exclusive of reimbursement for the Hale Middle School project increased by a meager 1.62% in FY08; with the Hale reimbursement, State Aid decreased by 14.7% due (1,87,401/1,274,213) to a large, one-time increase in aid in FY07 stemming from a state audit. Local receipts stayed virtually the same, increasing by only 0.22% over the FY07 figure. Local receipts include excise tax, investment income, and fines collected by various departments.

| Table 3: Revenue Sources | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| | FY07 | FY07 % of Total | FY08 | FY08 % of Total | \$ Change FY07- FY08 | % Change FY07-FY08 |
| Property Tax | \$16,834,381 | 84.1% | \$17,796,480 | 82.9% | \$962,099 | 5.7% |
| State Aid | 1,274,213 | 6.3% | 1,086,812 | 5.1% | (187,401) | (14.7%) |
| Local Receipts | 1,440,281 | 7.2% | 1,443,500 | 6.7% | 3,219 | 0.22% |
| Savings and Other Funds | 232,138 | 1.2% | 263,895 | 1.2% | 31,757 | 13.7% |
| Override | | | | | | |
| Other (CPF) | 225,000 | 1.1% | 879,490 | 4.1% | 654,490 | 291% |
| Total | 20,006,013 | | \$21,470,177 | | \$1,464,164 | 7.3% |

Source: Town Administrator, Budget Report, Annual Town Meeting

Note: The above does not include action taken at the 3 Dec 2007 Special Town Meeting where the Town approved purchasing the Snow property by borrowing \$650,000 and spending \$749,000 from Community Preservation funds.

Town Savings

Town Savings increased only \$10,226 or 1.3% in FY07. Town Savings are “rainy day” accounts that are built up during good times and drawn down in bad times. Town Savings is a key determinant of the town credit rating and the credit rating will affect the rate the town would pay should it decide to borrow money for some future use. There are two major Town Savings accounts: Free Cash and Stabilization Fund. Table 4 shows the status of our Stored Assets.

Free cash is unrestricted funds from operations of the previous fiscal year. It is certified by the state before calendar year end 12/31. These funds are not considered to be a “luxury” and while the fund is available for appropriation it should also be maintained as a balance to unforeseen expenditures. For the past 2 fiscal years, the town has used Free Cash to fund certain capital articles.

The Stabilization Fund is designed to accumulate amounts for capital and other future spending purposes. A two-thirds vote of town meeting is required to appropriate funds to deposit into the stabilization fund. In FY06 and 07, respectively, Stow moved \$50,000 and \$100,000 from Free Cash to the Stabilization Fund, in part to help protect the town’s current bond rating.

Town Savings is about 4% of Stow’s total budget (\$807,102 / \$20,093,558). The Finance Committee would recommend that Town Savings be in the range of 5 to 10%. This would require an increase of between \$200,000 and \$1.2 million in total savings amounts.

| Table 4: Town Savings | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| | FY 05 | FY 06 | FY 07 | FY 08 | \$ Change FY07-FY08 | % Change FY07-FY08 |
| Free Cash | \$478,754 | \$573,586 | \$472,768 | \$410,218 | \$(62,550) | (13.2)% |
| Stabilization Fund | 170,407 | 223,290 | 334,334 | 354,047 | 19,713 | 5.9% |
| Total | \$649,161 | \$796,876 | \$807,102 | \$764,265 | \$(42,837) | (5.3)% |

*Balances at start of fiscal year (July 1)

Effect On Property Taxes

The average valuation of a single-family house in Stow is \$483,765. The effect of changes to the budget on your tax bill is shown in Table 5:

| Table 5: Effect on Property Taxes | | | | | | |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--|
| | FY 04 | FY 05 | FY 06 | FY 07 | FY 08 | % Change FY07- FY08 |
| Tax Rate (per \$1,000 of Valuation) | \$14.64 | \$14.36 | \$14.04 | \$13.82 | \$14.73 | 6.6% |
| Avg Single Family Valuation | \$388,311 | \$423,000 | \$457,435 | \$483,765 | \$471,013 | (2.6)% |
| Avg Single Family Tax Bill | \$5,685 | \$6,074 | \$6,422 | \$6,686 | \$6,938 | 3.7% |

Respectfully submitted,

Charles Kern, Chairman
David Walrath, Vice Chairman
Henry Hagopian
James Salvie
Gary Bernklow

Anthony Parrinello, Associate
Steve MacNeill, Associate

Elizabeth Tobey, Administrative Assistant

CAPITAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Capital Planning Committee is charged by the Town Charter to review and recommend, or not, any department request which is over \$10,000 and has a useful life of three or more years, as well as any land purchase.

For the fiscal '08 budget we reviewed the following departmental requests: Building Department - \$32,333 for a 3rd floor restroom in the Town Building, \$12,545 for workspace on the 3rd floor of the Town Building; Cemetery - \$18,500 for a well and electrics at Brookside Cemetery; Fire Department – Hurst Tool for \$19,000 and wireless F/A central receivers; Highway Department – \$60,000 for a six-wheel truck; ITAC – phone systems for the Police and Fire Departments totaling \$16,283, also a cruiser for the Police Department for \$30,000. Nashoba Regional School District requests for the Stow schools totaled \$160,800 to include Hale roof repairs, Hale window replacement, Hale locker replacement, Hale security system, Center floor and ceiling tiles, Center

security system, Center gym roof, Center classroom floor coverings, and a Pompo security system. The Committee spent a great deal of time discussing these requests both with department representatives and among ourselves. All of these items were recommended by Capital Planning to the Town Meeting and subsequently approved.

Several special articles warranted review by Capital Planning. The purchase of the Snow property for recreational use was not recommended by Capital Planning. The article did not pass at the Annual Town Meeting. Lake Boon weed control in the amount of \$77,000 was approved by Capital and passed. The Town voted \$1,900,000 for the School Building Committee for engineering and architectural services and for compliance with MSBA regulations.

At the fall Special Town Meeting, the Snow property was again brought before voters. Again, Capital did not recommend passage by the Town. However, the article did pass by the required two-thirds majority.

As we enter the '09 budget process, we welcome back Kathy Farrell who represents the Board of Selectmen. Ross Perry has been appointed by the Finance Committee as their representative. Again, thank you, Steve Jelinek, for your fine record keeping. Thanks also to Dave Arsenault and to associates Jim Medeiros and Myie Yvanovich . A terrific group!

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Lynch, Chair, Moderator's Appointee
Steve Jelinek, Moderator's Appointee
Davis Arsenault, Moderator's Appointee
Ross Perry, Finance Appointee

Kathy Farrell, Selectmen's Appointee
Jim Medeiros Associate
Myie Yvanovich, Associate

BOARD OF ASSESSORS

For the first time in many years, the Board of Assessors must report an overall decrease in the valuation of the Town, evidence of a weakening residential real estate market. The total assessed value for FY2008 is \$1,206,889,170, down from \$1,218,117,280 in FY2007, representing a 1% decrease. However, when new growth is factored out, the remaining total declines by 3.3% from last year. Residential property experienced a bit larger decrease, whereas the commercial sector and personal property both increased slightly. Land values have also dropped modestly, with the area in the southern part of Stow being most affected. The tax rate will increase when values decline, presuming that the town's overall expenditures either remain the same or increase.

The next certification year for the town of Stow will be in FY2010 when the Massachusetts Department of Revenue certifies that property assessments are uniform throughout town and are representative of the real estate market. However, the Assessors' office adjusts values every year to reflect the current market, as is now required by the Department of Revenue. This year, sales analysis required two years of data because of fewer sales throughout the town.

Seniors on fixed incomes can be particularly vulnerable to tax increases. A notebook at the Assessors' window contains information on the details of the various exemptions, deferrals, and other programs designed to help with taxes. The 41C tax exemption of \$1000 is available for those over the age of 65 that qualify with limited income and assets. The disabled veteran's exemption also increased significantly last year. In addition, an article was passed at Town Meeting increasing all exemptions by up to 100%. Lastly, the interest rate on Tax Deferrals has

recently been reduced to 4%. Do not hesitate to check with the Stow Assessor's office to see whether you qualify for any of these programs.

The Community Preservation Act (CPA) surcharge system continues to be administered by the Assessors' office. The total CPA surcharge raised during FY2007 was \$390,888 with matching funds received in September. Exemptions from the surcharge are available for certain income brackets. Please check with the Assessors' office for more information.

This year Dominick Pugliese was elected to the position left vacant when Wally Schwall completed his term. Our thanks to Wally for his service to the Board, and we wish him well in the future. We sincerely welcome Dom, whose talents in the area of commercial appraisal will be of tremendous value to the Board. From time to time, you may see the staff or a sub-contractor collecting data on property in Stow. We hope you will allow these representatives of the Assessors' office to do their job. Our property assessments are reliant on accurate data collection.

The Board of Assessors encourages taxpayers to ask any questions or discuss any matter that might help them better understand their assessments. The staff in the Assessors' office is available every day to assist the public.

Respectfully submitted,

John P. Bolton, Chairman
 John E. Smith
 Dominick Pugliese

Dorothy K. Wilbur, Principal Assessor
 Louise A. Nejad, Assistant Assessor
 Isabel Prokopovich, Assessors' Clerk

FISCAL 2008 TAX RATE RECAPITULATION

TAX RATE SUMMARY

| | | |
|----|--|-----------------|
| A. | Total Amount to be Raised | \$21,487,592.31 |
| B. | Total Estimated Receipts & Other Revenue | \$ 3,710,114.83 |
| C. | Tax Levy | \$17,777,477.48 |
| D. | Distribution of Tax Rates & Levies | |

| CLASS | LEVY PERCENTAGE | LEVY BY CLASS | VALUATION BY CLASS | TAX RATES |
|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|------------------------|--------------|
| Residential | 91.6484% | \$16,292,773.67 | \$1,106,095,200 | \$14.73 |
| Open Space | -0- | -0- | -0- | -0- |
| Commercial | 4.7506% | 844,536.85 | 57,333,900 | \$14.73 |
| Industrial | 2.1258% | 377,913.62 | 25,655,600 | \$14.73 |
| Personal | 1.4752% | 262,253.35 | 17,804,470 | \$14.73 |
| TOTAL | 100% | \$17,777,477.48 | \$1,206,889,170 | |

INSERT TREASURER HERE

INSERT TAX COLLECTOR HERE

INSERT COMBINED BALANCE SHEET HERE

INSERT COMBINED BALANCE SHEET HERE

INSERT CHANGES IN FUND EQUITY HERE

INSERT RANDALL LIBRARY TRUST FUNDS HERE

INSERT RANDALL RELIEF AND TOWN FUNDS HERE

INSERT HALE HIGH SCHOOL FUND HERE

EDUCATION

NASHOBA REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Our school district continues to achieve great success in its students, staff, and administrators. This past year, we have achieved academically, socially and financially in meeting and exceeding expectations in these and other areas.

| MCAS Tests of Spring 2007 | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|----------------------|-------|------------|-------|-------------------|-------|-----------------|-------|-------------------|----------|
| Percent of Students at Each Performance Level | | | | | | | | | | |
| Grade and Subject | Adv/Above Proficient | | Proficient | | Needs Improvement | | Warning/Failing | | Students Included | CPI - |
| | Dist | State | Dist | State | Dist | State | Dist | State | | |
| <u>GR. 3 - READING</u> | 21 | 14 | 47 | 45 | 27 | 32 | 5 | 9 | 266 | 88.2 |
| <u>GR. 3 - MATH</u> | 27 | 19 | 43 | 41 | 22 | 24 | 8 | 16 | 268 | 86.4 |
| <u>GR. 4 - ELA</u> | 8 | 10 | 57 | 46 | 29 | 34 | 6 | 10 | 245 | 87.8 |
| <u>GR. 4 - MATH</u> | 25 | 19 | 35 | 29 | 35 | 39 | 6 | 13 | 246 | 84.1 |
| <u>GR. 5 - ELA</u> | 23 | 15 | 53 | 48 | 20 | 28 | 4 | 9 | 229 | 92 |
| <u>GR. 5 - MATH</u> | 33 | 19 | 35 | 32 | 24 | 31 | 8 | 18 | 229 | 86.1 |
| <u>GR. 5 - SCIENCE/TECH</u> | 30 | 14 | 47 | 37 | 20 | 37 | 3 | 12 | 229 | 92.2 |
| <u>GR. 6 - ELA</u> | 15 | 9 | 74 | 58 | 9 | 25 | 1 | 7 | 239 | 96.4 |
| <u>GR. 6 - MATH</u> | 48 | 20 | 38 | 32 | 10 | 28 | 5 | 20 | 237 | 93.4 |
| <u>GR. 7 - ELA</u> | 15 | 9 | 73 | 60 | 10 | 23 | 2 | 8 | 259 | 95.5 |
| <u>GR. 7 - MATH</u> | 29 | 15 | 44 | 31 | 21 | 30 | 6 | 24 | 258 | 87.9 |
| <u>GR. 8 - ELA</u> | 19 | 12 | 67 | 63 | 10 | 18 | 3 | 6 | 253 | 94.9 |
| <u>GR. 8 - MATH</u> | 35 | 17 | 30 | 28 | 23 | 30 | 12 | 25 | 254 | 83.4 |
| <u>GR. 8 - SCIENCE/TECH</u> | 7 | 3 | 52 | 30 | 32 | 44 | 9 | 24 | 254 | 82.5 |
| <u>GR. 10 - ELA</u> | 41 | 22 | 49 | 49 | 9 | 24 | 1 | 6 | 219 | 96.5 |
| <u>GR. 10 - MATH</u> | 68 | 42 | 21 | 27 | 7 | 22 | 5 | 9 | 218 | 94.7 |

Data Updated on October 3, 2007

Academically, Nashoba Regional High School, to which Stow contributes over one third of its students, has been recognized as a Silver Medal Winner in the U.S. News and World Reports Magazine rankings of top high schools in the country. What makes this award that even more special is that at the root of it is that we have been recognized for our ability to meet all students' needs in a comprehensive way. This has been a goal since 2005 when we initiated our strategic plan and it is meaningful to be recognized by an outside source, completely independent of any local advocacy. Our high school was honored as a *Compass School* by the Department of Education last spring. This honor was based on our high school's strong improvement on MCAS scores.

The District continues to be financially sound. For the second year in a row our budget passed in all three towns without debate. Our school committee worked diligently with the three towns and their respective Boards of Selectmen and Finance and responded by making sure that the budget would not require a proposition 2 and ½ override in any of the communities. The budget grew by 5.92% for fiscal year 2008 (school year 2007 – 2008), this allowed for continued attention to the

facility needs of each school, our ability to maintain adequate class sizes and to address programmatic additions for health education (PK-12), consumer science (9-12) and a continuum of special education programming for PK – 12. The budget has been aided slightly by a leveling of enrollment throughout the district and especially in Stow.

The School Committee continues to maintain fiscal responsibility, and case in point is our excess and deficiency fund is nearing its maximum allowed by law, which is five percent of the current annual budget. This, along with retirement of our legislatively imposed budget amount for a reserve leaves us with a healthy financial picture for excellent bond ratings. In addition, for the second year in a row we have reduced the assessments for all three towns after the legislature finalized its budget in the summer.

The School Committee updated its District Improvement Plan in the fall of 2007. In the plan they recognized the progress we have made on our strategic plan and outlined six new or existing priorities in the next two year cycle.

- To design a systemic program to deliver foreign language instruction for PK- 12th grade;
- To develop a model for reporting standards in all curriculum areas;
- To conduct fund raising efforts for the Community Competition Complex at the High School;
- To explore Time on Learning and develop strategies to meet the goals of our learner outcomes;
- To communicate to teachers, parents and students, resources for students at risk of becoming disengaged in learning, school and being a contributing member of the school community; and lastly,
- To identify ways in which relationships can be formed, broadened and strengthened among students, parents, and staff in school.

Academically, our PK – 8 programs continue to perform well. Our students participate in the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) beginning in grade three and continue right through to grade eight and then again in grade 10. This past year we received results on a retooled grade three English Language Arts assessment and we received school-based results for social studies in grade seven. As you can see by the charts our students are performing well and are in good company. These assessments help us examine our practice and with new software now available we can analyze the data right down to the objective performance by each student. This is the information teachers can then use for instructional planning. In addition to the MCAS data we have our own internal data based on district wide benchmark testing that we have been piloting. Although our curriculum is based on the Massachusetts Frameworks, like all districts, we personalize it to our beliefs about teaching and learning. We then train our teachers accordingly, using the valuable early release time we have during the school year. The benchmark testing is in reading and mathematics and is in its infancy stage of development, but has already been a catalyst for rich discussions among the grade level teams across the district.

In the 2006 – 2007 year we entered into a partnership with Minuteman Regional High School and modeled what we had been offering in Bolton by offering a Science and Engineering class to fifth graders at The Center School. It has met with great success and our students continue to be excited by the trips to Hale Middle School Science, Engineering, and Technology Lab or by engaging in hands on science in the *Stone Building* science laboratory.

Despite a leveling of enrollment at Pompositticut and Hale, the bulge in our primary school is now at Center and this has put additional strains on the available space there. The *Stone Building* is now a multi purpose classroom for music and soon to be added is art. The good news is that the annual town meeting in May of 2007 approved funding for architectural and design costs to move forward on a proposed renovation and addition at the Center School site. In November of 2007 we learned from the MSBA that we are in the pipeline for projects but they want us to further look at regional solutions before our project can move forward. It is not clear what this means as of yet, but the Elementary School Building Committee is working hard on our partnership with the MSBA and hope to have more answers than questions by annual town meeting in May 2008.

Our schools are very fortunate to have groups in our community that support education for innovative projects. Pompositticut and Center School staff have authored a number of grants that have been awarded in the last year. Mr. Zina and Ms. Monahan wrote a physical education Grant for \$4000 awarded by the Alice Eaton Foundation to further children's interest in healthy habits for a lifetime. Ms. Cheryl Benson was awarded a \$2500 grant from Best Buy for video and voice equipment to record student work for portfolios.

In June 2007, we recognized the retirements of Kate Jenny, Sima Maitland, and Louise Peacock, longtime first grade, fifth grade, and school nurse in Stow. Collectively, they contributed over fifty years of experience in Stow schools alone. We wish them well in their future endeavors. In other recognitions, Mr. Donald Moulthrop was selected by the *School Band & Orchestra* magazine as the Massachusetts representative in the tenth annual "50 Directors Who Make a Difference" special report. Mrs. Morgan, Principal of Hale Middle School, was chosen to participate in a foreign exchange program for administrators and will travel to China in April 2008. She hosted, Mr. Zhang Yi from a middle school in China in October.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael L. Wood, Superintendent of
Schools

Lynn Colletti, Stow Representative
David Horne, Stow Representative

Brian Burke, Stow Representative

NASHOBA REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 2007

Dwight Jackson Hahn – President
Alicia Marie Maloney – Secretary *

Elizabeth Marie Hagermoser – Vice President
David Berg Lauritano – Treasurer *

Benjamin Donald Adams
Drew Russell Arvin
Melissa Anne Babb
Nicholas Michael Baczkowski
Courtney Anne Baker *
Ellen Marie Baldwin
Lauren Grace Balukonis
Warren Michael Barck
Lindsey Dawn Bartlett
Michael Edward Bashaw
Cheryl Marie Baylis
Daniel Gregory Bebernitz
Nicholas Alan Birse
Jocelyn Susan Blanton *
Jacob Nathaniel Bleier
Keith Joseph Bonneau
Kevin Gerard Bonneau
Jonathan Martin Bouvier
Arthur James Bowen
Christopher Robert Brazao
Larissa Ketty Brock
Hannah Elizabeth Brooks
Sophie Greta Brugger
Stephen James Buchanan
Sean David Busch *
Tracey Amanda Butler
Timothy Patrick Callahan
Brittany Elizabeth Camero
Madeleine Abigail Camp
Lindsay Alexandra Capone
Mary Ann Carville
Kristen Elizabeth Caviston
Kayla Anne Cecil-Bibeau
Britlin Perry Chapman
Lauren Ann Chase
Falon Chi Chow
Craig Patrick Clark
Nicole Leigh Clark
Nicholas John Cody
Courteney Mary Collier
Erek Parker Cook
Jacquelyn Frances Cook
Allison Maureen Coulter
Kaitlyn Adele Coulter

Kelly Ann Cozzens
Erinn Christine Dandley
Kenneth Edward Davis II
Jeremiah Agostino DeBenedetto
John Patrick Delaney
Lisa Anne Della Valle
Jared Christopher Detsikas
Louis Charles DiNatale
Emily Rebecca Douglass
Thomas Jay Ducharme
Matthew Clifford David Dunnells
Alyson Mary Durben
Suzanne Kelly Edmunds *
Peter James Farragher
Ellis Christopher Fiori
David John Flannery
Eric Phillip Fournier *
Rachel Marie Fournier
Joshua Fournier-Ellis
Elizabeth Michelle Fredrickson
Jeffrey Paul Galeski
Keith Alan Gilchrest Jr.
Matthew David Gilchrest
Alessandra Christine Gordon *
Stephanie Ann Grajales
Gina Nicole Gross
Ian Daniel Hannaway
Sarah Evelyn Harvey *
Emily Rose Harvie
Amal Elizabeth Hdayed
Lance Richard Healy
Jessica Lynne McGrath Hewitt
Rebecca Hjemdahl
Melissa May Houseman
Christopher Moore Howard
Sean Humphrey
Jennifer Lynn Hunt
Eric Steven Hvoslef
Gary James Innamorati
Nicholas Adam Izzo
Timothy Daniel James
Heidi Rachelle Jarvis
Jeffrey Scott Johnstone
Cameron Douglas Jones

**NASHOBA REGIONAL HIGH
SCHOOL CLASS OF 2007, continued**

Michaelson Picard Joseph
Philippe Emmanuel Joseph
Lea Indra Kalbhenn
Lindsay Lee Kallander
Henry Lewis Kammerer
Jackson Stephen Loughlin Keane
Shannon Lian Kearns
Mitchell Douglas Kelly
Shannon Mary Kelly
Mariel Avery Kennison
Tyler James Kerr *
Kaitlyn Samantha King
David James Kistner
Benjamin Robert Klouda
Whitney Allison Koch *
Meghan Lee Kreidermacher
Alysha Diane LaFountain
Robert Christopher Lam
Hannah Langberg
Heather Marie Lavallee
Alyssa Rose Lawrence
Nicholas William Leandres
Dana Michelle Lemelin
Kelsey Serena Liles
Colleen O'Shea Makary
Daniel Russell Mansfield
Ashley Elizabeth Marino
Robert Allen Marshall
Stephen Lee Maxwell
Elizabeth Lamson McCormick
Amelia Lee McCullen
Jane Tyndall McCullen
Julie Gloria McNally
Ana Isabel Mechlin
Brian Ronald Melanson
Steven Anthony Melanson
Justin Joseph Miakisz
Stephen Charles Miller
Sarah Mita
Allison Leah Monat
Erika Virginia Mong
Joseph Hershell Morgan
William Emery Morrison
Christos John Mpelkas
Dimitrios Andreas Mpelkas
Ryan Peter Mullin
Daniel Nathan Munger
Kerin Melone Murphy *

Nicole Alicia Nesman
Chelsea Elizabeth Newton
Maxwell Richard Nicoll *
John Curtis Niggl
Andrea Lee Nixon
Christopher Michael Nosek
Sean Patrick O'Brien
Laura Elizabeth O'Neil *
Tyler Francis O'Toole
Brianna Margaret Ordnung
Devon Amelia Ordnung
Lauren Marie Palette
Keith Jerome Palmer
Elizabeth Rocio Pane *
Katrina Elizabeth Papanastassiou
Victoria Grace Peacock
Amanda Nicole Pieper
Sarah Kathryn Pipich
Denise Marie Pollock
Adam Joseph Poulin
Matthew Hunt Powers *
Michele Marie Quinn
Vonia Mireille Quiros
Megan Jean Rheaume
Geoffrey Anthony Riccio
Kimberlee Ann Rich
Kirstin Leigh Richardson
Kylie Ricker
Edward Joseph Riley
Janice Jane Rios
Kimberly Elizabeth Robinson
Andrew John Roche
Peter Michael Rucinski
Christopher Robert Sargent
Alexander Henry Schab
Brittany Kate Schandelmayer
William Stephen Seuss
Oren Moshe Shapira
Alyssa Marie Shelales
Brenno Cesar de Haro e Silva
Alyssa Marie Siok
Catherine Lorraine Sivret
Bethany Anne Slade
Allison Leigh Slater
Katherine Loretta Slattery
David Michael Smart
Amanda Marquand Smith
Daniel John Smith
Joseph James Smith
Elizabeth Osmond Soule
Jennie Lynn Sousa

**NASHOBA REGIONAL HIGH
SCHOOL CLASS OF 2007, continued**

Lindsay Ann Stadtherr
Daniel Tyler Stefanis *
Daniel Joseph Stepien
Steven Andrew Sterling
Rebecca Ann Straney
Keri Anne Tarr
Kellan Campbell Thomas
Katrina Leigh Thompson
Scott Andrew Traylor
Lindsay Alexandra Trefry
Andrew Charles Udvare

Timothy Joseph Valente
Matthew Vitti
Nathan Samuel Walsh
Julia Anne Ware
Daniel Joseph Warila Jr.
Dana Lee Weatherbee
David Nathan Wellcome
Liam Christopher Whalen
Jonathan Arthur Wing
Jennifer Brooke Winters
Anna Zubko

* Denotes National Honor Society

MINUTEMAN REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL OF APPLIED ARTS & SCIENCES

Class of 2007 Graduate Achievement Highlights

- 98% of the Class of 2007 graduated into college, employed in their field of study or enlisted in the US military.
- 100% of the Class of 2007 successfully passed the state-required MCAS tests in English and Math.
- Commercial & Human Services graduates achieved 98% placement rate with 76% enrolled in college, 21% employed in their field of study, and 1% in the military.
- Science Technology graduates achieved 98% placement with 81% enrolled in college, 7% employed in their field of study and 10% enlisted in the US military with 100% of Electromechanical Engineering, Environmental Science, Office Technology and Graphic Communications students attending college.
- Construction-Trades graduates achieved 92% placement rate 35% enrolled in college, 49% entering the workplace in their field of study and 8% enlisting in the US military.
- 100% of Dental graduates passed the National Dental Board examination.
- 100% of Early Childhood Education graduates were certified by the Office for Child Care Services.
- 100% of Cosmetology graduates passed the state board examination to become a licensed hair stylist.
- Medical Occupations graduates achieved 100% placement in college.
- Gabriel J. Gerzon, a graduate from Concord, was honored as an Outstanding Vocational Student of the Year by the Minuteman Regional School Committee, the Massachusetts Association of Vocational Administrators and State Commissioner of Education, Dr. David Driscoll.
- Sam Rogers, a Biotechnology Academy student from Concord, graduated Valedictorian in the Class of 2007.
- Student speakers at the Class of 2007 graduation ceremony were Valedictorian Sam Rogers of Concord, Salutatorian James Michaels of Acton and Class President Rachel Forziati of Malden.

Student Performance Highlights

- Minuteman Regional High School sophomores had a 97% pass rate on the English Language Arts MCAS Test, a 94% pass rate in Math, 72% in Biology, and 100% in Chemistry taken in May 2007.
- Minuteman students on the Math Team competed strongly at all levels against academically diverse groups of area schools finishing the year ranked in first place in the state vocational conference for the third year in a row.
- A Latin course was expanded to serve the growing number of students interested in medical careers, biotechnology and science.
- The Minuteman Players, the school's drama students, produced and performed a full production of Matthew Barber's *"Enchanted April."*
- Faculty members from English, Math, Science and several vocational fields designed a series of MCAS Science curriculum standards for use throughout each of the school's 22 vocational majors.
- The first state-approved high school pre-engineering program entered its eighth year and graduated its fourth class of students, again with 100% attending college.
- Approximately 82% of the Science and Technology seniors graduating received certification in their respective area, while approximately 92% were planning to continue their education or training upon graduation.

- A Team of two Pre-Engineering students placed second in the “West Point Bridge Design” contest – A National Internet-based software design contest.
- Minuteman is now an authorized CertiPort Testing Center for Microsoft Office Specialist Certifications.
- Students in Carpentry, Electrical Wiring, Plumbing and HVAC completed construction of the single family home for the Lincoln Housing Commission in Lincoln, MA.
- Underclassmen created four scaled New England style homes for display at the New England Home Show in Boston. Minuteman was the only participating vocational high school in MA.
- Electrical Wiring students completely wired two residential units in Lexington.
- Environmental Science students were invited to attend the Secretary’s Award for Excellence in Environmental Education as an honorable mention. This award honors individual schools, teacher and students across the Commonwealth who have distinguished themselves in environmental education initiatives.
- For the third year in a row, Culinary Arts students won first-place in the annual culinary competition at Newbury College and in so doing earned \$7,000 in scholarships for enrollment at Newbury College.
- As a community service project a team of junior Graphic Communications students worked with the Lahey Clinic in designing and printing a 2007 calendar incorporating artwork drawn by elementary age students who are patients in the “young hearts” clinic.
- The Cosmetology Class of 2007 had a 100% success rate when taking the State Board Exams.

National Honor Society

The Minuteman Chapter of the National Honor Society proudly served the school and the community with thousands of volunteer hours maintaining a solid and diverse membership while inducting twenty-five new members.

Congratulations to the new recently inducted members: Thomas Andrews of Arlington, JonFanco Barretto of Medford, Nathaniel Bearg of Concord, Paul Blaszczynski of Arlington, Amanda Cabral of Medford, Hailey Callahan of Concord, Sean Chicosky of Acton, John Clark of Belmont, Ashley Cobuzzi of Lexington, Abigail Dornbusch of Needham, Katheryn Fontaine of Arlington, **Elizabeth Haberkorn of Stow**, Nicholas Hammond of Medford, Geoffrey Landskov of Arlington, Bradley Lowe of Boxborough, Tyler Manoukian of Carlisle, Molly Mullen of Cambridge, Christina Niccoloro of Cambridge, Alice Ofria of Medford, Michelle Pierre of Arlington, Nicholas Ritchie of Carlisle, William Roche of Concord, Rebecca Rowe of Arlington, **Christopher Sproul of Stow**, and Allison Walsh of Medford.

Minuteman Takes Grand Prize Award at MIT-Sponsored Competition

Three cross-vocational teams from Minuteman’s Biotechnology, Pre-Engineering and Robotics competed in a Design Challenge at the Museum of Science in Boston.

In this full-day design event, amongst teams from across New England, Minuteman’s Technology Division took home the gold medal -- winning the MIT-sponsored WINDY 500 Grand Prize Award. The teams were challenged with designing, building and racing wind-powered vehicles using only materials provided. The cars had to carry a single driver.

The Windy 500 is part of EurekaFest, a multi-day celebration sponsored by the Lemelson-MIT Program, a foundation dedicated to supporting and encouraging invention and innovation.

In preparation for the event, Minuteman’s teams competed against each other on design projects during the school day. They participated in team building exercises and analysis that was headed by Dr. Clarissa Sawyer, a corporate consultant in the field.

Members of the winning Minuteman team were freshman Ivy Smith of Medford, and Becky Cole of Arlington. The juniors were Paul Blaczynski of Arlington, Jeff Palma of Concord, and Robin

Weinstein of Weston. Students on the two other Minuteman competing teams were juniors Kevin Brown of Pepperell, Charlie Deakins of Carlisle, Chris Hansen of Medford, Dan Polansky of Dedham, Paramveer Pabla of Arlington and freshman Sean Keane of Arlington, Therese Gray-Gaudet of Medford, Eben Goldman of Lexington, **Kenny March and Torri Dodge of Stow**, and Eo Jin Hwang, a visiting exchange student from Japan.

The races were emceed by Ray Magliozzi, one of the Click n' Clack Brothers of National Public Radio's CarTalk. The Windy 500 is featured on the CarTalk website. As well, Nate and Deanne, from PBS Kids' Design Squad television program, served as the Windy 500 hosts for the day.

Overall School Highlights

A new Freshmen Exploratory program was designed and implemented as a means to ensure that members of the Class of 2011 have a full opportunity to experience each of Minuteman's twenty-two technical programs before choosing a major. This new exploratory program runs half of grade 9 and allows students to develop a better understanding of their talents and interests while exposing them to diverse careers.

- Minuteman developed a Nontraditional Exploratory Program for Girls for the Class of 2011 through which all female students learned about the viability and challenges of women in nontraditional careers, such as automotive technology, carpentry and construction, computer science and engineering. The freshmen girls learned about these careers through a series of hands-on exercises, guest speakers and alumni panelists and field site visits to industry partners.
- New and/or updated college articulation and advance credit agreements with numerous top colleges in over 78 different courses and programs at over 17 colleges and universities.
- Community Education services, including After School programs for middle school students, Adult High School services, Evening and Continuing Education courses and Summer School programs and camps, provided to member town residents continued at one of the highest participation and success levels in the state.
- The Facilities Management Department completed major campus renovation and facility improvement projects including a program of delivering "green" products to school services.

Minuteman Students Receive John and Abigail Adams Scholarships

The John and Abigail Adams Scholarship provides a tuition waiver for eight traditional semesters of undergraduate education at the University of Massachusetts, the seven state colleges, or fifteen community colleges. Students qualify for the scholarship when score in the Advanced category in either the Mathematics or the English language arts section of the grade 10 MCAS test; score in the Proficient or Advanced category on the second subject (Mathematics or English language arts); and have a combined MCAS score on these assessments that ranks in the top 25% in their school district. Congratulations to the thirty-six Minuteman Students Awarded!

The following students were awarded: Arthur Albuquerque, Sean Chickosky, Benjamin Howell and Arielle Shander of Acton; Colin Donogue, Geoffrey Landskov, John Scaduto, Jacob Smith, Patrick Cooney, Paramveer Pabla and Paul Blaszczynski of Arlington; Courtney Lindhorst of Belmont; Krysten Shedd of Boston; Bradlee Tower of Boxborough; Joel Cioffi of Burlington; Elizabeth Mullane of Cambridge; Charles Deakins of Carlisle; Nathaniel Bearg, and Jeffrey Palma of Concord; Daniel Polansky of Dedham; Brian Clough of Dover; Kristen Capen of Lancaster; Lily Altshuler of Maynard; Nicholas Hammond and Chris Hansen of Medford; Richard Harrington, David Kelly, and William Patey of Needham; **Collin Aucoin, Jonathan Evers, Elizabeth Haberkorn, Sarah Nichols and Adam Radl of Stow**; Michael Lavy of Watertown; and Joshua Kerti of Wayland.

Art and Literary Magazine Celebrates 22nd Publication

The ink is dry on the twenty-second edition of Minuteman Regional High School's Art & Literary Magazine, and as usual, the publication contains many outstanding examples of student-generated poetry and art. This year's magazine showcases 20 poets and 13 artists.

The winners of school-wide poetry and art contests provide the content for the magazine. This year, approximately 150 poems from about 80 poets were submitted. In the art contest, 40 artists submitted 70 pieces of artwork. Originality is the primary criteria used in selecting work for inclusion in the magazine, and selection committee members also try to ensure a mixture of styles.

"We really have quite an artistic community at the school," Mr. Donovan said. "We used to just get block printing, but now, it's quite a variety. We added photography to the art contest three or four years ago. This year, there are quite a few pieces of artwork done in anime style. "Anime has become very popular in the school," he said. "They had an Anime Club this year for the first time.

A third contest, open to juniors in the Graphics department, determines who designs the magazine's cover. Patrick Cooney of Arlington won this year's cover design contest. Patrick also did the magazine's entire layout.

Former Minuteman English teacher Denise R. Donovan served as the Copyright Editor, and the Graphics Coordinator was Graphics Department senior teacher Daniel Vardaro. The school's Office Technology department did the word processing. "The magazine is truly an integrated student effort," Mr. Donovan said. "By the time it's done, many students from all majors and departments have played a part in its creation."

The student artists featured in this year's magazine are Francis Gassert of Acton; Jared Bessett-Kirton, Paul Blaszczyński and Ashley Val of Arlington; Courtney Lindhorst of Belmont; Joseph Cusano of Concord; David Vaughan of Dorchester; Michael Hammond and Ivy Smith of Medford; Hilary Fox of Needham; Julia Repucci of North Andover; Marcela Ribeiro of Sudbury; and Michael Don of Watertown.

The student poets featured in this year's magazine are Sean Chickosky, Franci Gassert, Michael Mortis and Arielle Shander of Acton; Pat Cooney, Molly McDowell, Amy Rivera and Ashley Val of Arlington; Elizabeth Mullane of Cambridge; Nat Bearg and Jeffrey Palma of Concord; David Gagliardi and Aaron Granik of Lexington; Ivy Smith of Medford; Eliza Leahy and Matt Schlegel of Needham; Kevin Murphy of Peabody; **Libby Haberkorn and Erica Linstrom of Stow**; and Marcela Ribeiro of Sudbury.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas Markham, Assistant Superintendent
Alice DeLuca, Stow Representative

Minuteman Regional Class of 2007, Town of Stow

| | |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| Allyssa Cinquina | Cosmetology |
| Nicholas Delay * | Carpentry |
| William Doty | Landscape Management |
| Robert Fratto | Plumbing |
| Jonathan Gray * | Automotive Technology |
| Steven Hallet | HVAC |
| Jonathan Hatch | Automotive Technology |
| Avi Love ** | Graphic Communications |
| Matthew Magazu | Landscape Management |
| Carl Mahon ** | Biotechnology Academy |
| Kenneth Manning **:. | Biotechnology |
| Jason Qualitz * | Carpentry |
| Jonathan Sapienza * | Culinary Arts |
| Matthew Sproul * | Computer Programming |

* Denotes President's Award for Academic Achievement

** Denotes President's Award for Academic Excellence

PUBLIC SAFETY

POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Police Department continued to grow in areas similar to the previous year; new technology, changes in personnel, building repairs and training classes for our Dispatchers and Police Officers.

We continued our pursuit of federal and state grants. Grants awarded to the Police Department this year allowed for the purchase of protective bullet proof vests for Police Officers. Federal funds combined with matching State funds covered the cost of vests for half of our Police officers. Additional funding requests were sought and approved, to enable the remaining officers to receive their new vests in the early part of 2008. These vests cost about \$800 each. The Statewide 911 system offered communities the opportunity to apply for blocks of \$5,000 grants to pay Dispatchers and Police Officers to attend training classes, specific to duties associated with dispatching police, fire and medical personnel. The police department spent the first \$5000 grant, applied for and received another \$5,000 for a total of \$10,000. The Community Policing grant we received in the amount of \$11,200 was used to purchase one Mobile Data Terminal to be mounted in a police cruiser. A portion of this grant is used to pay for the activities held at Spring Fest by the Police Department. We also made a donation to the Boys and Girls Club in Maynard for the first time to help defray the cost for children from Stow attending summer activities. With matching funds from the Stow Police Association, we were able to donate \$1,000 to the Boys & Girls Club.

During the summer of 2006, the Police station air-conditioning system malfunctioned during extreme hot and humid temperatures. This set the stage for mold growth, which affected the entire building. The process of cleaning the entire interior of the building and contents, as well as replacing a portion of the ventilation system took us into the year 2007. The Town's Insurance Company (MIIA), Stow Board of Health and Building Inspector, responded quickly and efficiently out of concern for the health of our employees and building. When this project was complete, the total cost was \$35,000. The insurance company paid \$25,000 and a reserve fund transfer covered the remaining \$10,000.

The E911 telephone system was installed with the newest, most modern and updated system. This system allows the dispatcher to see where the caller is located. When calling 911 by landline or cellular phone the computer screen will show a map of Stow and the location of the caller, calls made on a cellular phone to 911 will indicate their location within a 300-foot range. Prior to the installation of this system, all cellular 911 calls went to the State Police Dispatch Center, where the State Police Dispatcher would obtain information from the caller and then transfer the call to the appropriate agency. This system knows where the caller is located and sends the 911 call directly to the 911 center that covers that specific area this saves time in a real emergency. Knowing the approximate location of the caller, speeds the response time when dealing with callers who do not know their location, a common occurrence when dealing with a person using cellular phone. This system also records all Police and Fire Department radio transmissions.

The Stow Police assisted by the Massachusetts Environmental Police and Lake Boon Commission patrolled Lake Boon checking boats for proper registration and safety equipment. The random patrols conducted by these agencies continued throughout the year to help keep everyone as safe as possible.

A committee was formed under the direction of the Town Administrator known as the Public Safety Committee, to investigate the need for an Emergency Notification system, and locate a company that could provide this service to our community. After years of research, this committee voted to contract with SwiftReach911 and with funding appropriated at Town Meeting; we obtained ours first

Emergency Notification System

All town departments now have the ability to send a message to a specific area of town in a matter of minutes. This system uses only phone numbers listed in the phone book. If your phone number is non-published or private, you will need to sign up if you wish to receive notifications. You can do this on-line; go to the Town of Stow web site, then Police and Fire Department's web page or send a note to the Police Department requesting to be added to this system. Your name, address and phone number are all we need.

Identity theft is on the increase, people whose identities have been stolen can spend months or years and thousands of dollars cleaning up the mess the thieves have made of a good name and credit record. Humiliation, anger, and frustration are among the feelings victims experience as they navigate the process of resolving their identity. In the event you become a victim, the following steps are advised, place a fraud alert on your credit reports, close the accounts that you know or believe have been tampered with or opened fraudulently, file a report with your local police or police agency where the identity took place, and lastly file a report with the Federal Trade Commission. Remember, when it comes to identity theft, you can't control whether you will become a victim, but there are steps you can take to reduce the likelihood.

Today just about everyone has a computer with internet access, and what seems to be an endless supply of information both good and bad. The good part is valuable helpful information, the bad is another way for criminals to steal your information. Criminals will often send e-mails and notices to users, stating that their personal information has been compromised, and to correct the problem the user must verify their information, hence, giving the criminal their personal information. Many individuals, especially seniors, fall for this scam. Some other crimes investigated involved threats by email. These types of crimes require specialized training classes to learn how to trace the source of the threat. All full time officers have basic training in this area; however one officer has been sent to advanced training classes and handles the majority of internet crimes.

Other frauds we have dealt with involve rental property, where a person claims to be interested in renting the property advertised. The suspect contacts their victim by phone or email claiming to be extremely interested and rushes to close the deal and sends a check with a request that it not be cashed right away. After a few days, a call comes asking that some of the money be sent back to the sender, this attempted theft was traced to Canada. Another common scam is done by postal mail. A letter arrives in your mailbox with a note indicating you have won a lottery and a check in an amount of several thousand dollars. In order to collect your winning amount, you're asked to send a money order to a specific location to pay filing and handling fees. Residents who fall victim to this scam lost their money, as it originated out of Africa. The Stow Police can do nothing to help you in these cases, where it originates in another country.

The Police Department's response to some of the house parties that took place during the year was to summons parents and underage kids to court for supplying or possessing alcoholic beverages. Many would agree that in most cases, these teenagers are good kids, good students, great athletes and come from good families. We also understand that some parents feel it is okay to allow underage kids to drink in their home, or as long as the kids hand over the car keys or have a designated driver all will be just fine. However, when kids leave a party impaired by

consumption of alcohol and are involved in a serious car accident resulting in serious injuries or worse, we hear complaints that the police knew about the parties and should have done something before this terrible accident happened. The legal age to possess an alcoholic beverage is 21 years; some of you might be surprised to hear the youngest intoxicated person at one of these residents was only 12 years old. The police are not always very popular when enforcing the law, so you must consider the risk of court action or civil litigation should you have a party of underage kids and supply or allow them to consume alcohol on your property. The Stow Police will take appropriate action in dealing with underage drinking of any kind, regardless of the opinions of those involved. We do request all parents to assist us in this enforcement, which will hopefully in the end keep our children safe and out of trouble with the police and the court system.

In closing, I wish to thank the Board of Selectmen, the Town Administrator, the ITAC Committee, and all other departments. Most importantly, I wish to thank members of the Police, Fire and Highway, and Public Safety Dispatchers for their continued support of the Police Department. Last, but not least, a special thanks to the residents of Stow for their continued support throughout the year.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark H. Trefry, Chief of Police

Rachel R. Belanger, Admin. Assistant

Full-time Officers:

William L. Bosworth, Sgt.
Ralph Marino, Sgt
Timothy J. Lima, Sgt.
Steven B. Sturtevant, Detective
Gary P. Murphy, Prosecutor
David J. Goguen
Kimberly H. Doughty
Darren J. Thraen
Sean M. Collins
Michael Sallese

Special Police Officers:

Robert E. Blanton
John Connor
John Fantasia
James F. Finneran
Lee Heron
Sherry J. Morton-Pelly
Enrico F. Maldari
Jonathan Butler
Michael Smith

Police Matrons:

Deborah L. Richardson
Rachel R. Belanger
Darlene D. Trefry

POLICE DEPARTMENT STATISTICS

| <u>Activity</u> | <u>2007</u> | <u>2006</u> | <u>2005</u> | <u>Activity</u> | <u>2007</u> | <u>2006</u> | <u>2005</u> |
|----------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Accidental 911 Calls | 112 | 82 | 108 | | | | |
| 911 Calls | 1718 | 960 | 721 | Domestic Disturbances | 6 | 6 | 11 |
| Alarms | 196 | 165 | 205 | Found/Lost Property | 53 | 39 | 48 |
| Animal Calls | 170 | 84 | 121 | General Complaints | 426 | 415 | 455 |
| Annoying Calls | 9 | 5 | 7 | House Checks | 1568 | 2173 | 2253 |
| Assaults | 14 | 3 | 6 | Larcenies | 29 | 45 | 38 |
| Assist Citizens | 323 | 334 | 440 | Medical Calls | 295 | 288 | 326 |
| Assist Other Agency | 227 | 193 | 171 | Missing Persons | 8 | 8 | 10 |
| Auto Theft | 2 | 1 | 2 | MV Accidents | 132 | 150 | 187 |
| Burglary | 11 | 11 | 9 | MV Stops | 2737 | 2886 | 2105 |
| Bylaw Violations | 20 | 39 | 38 | Suspicious Activity | 267 | 270 | 286 |
| Citations | 1289 | 1885 | 1058 | Threats | 6 | 1 | 7 |
| Disturbances | 26 | 27 | 30 | Vandalism | 37 | 32 | 39 |
| Disabled MV Calls | 105 | 102 | 127 | | | | |
| | | | | TOTAL CALLS FOR | | | |
| | | | | SERVICE | 14,710 | 14,833 | 11,395 |

FIRE / RESCUE DEPARTMENT

The Fire Department continues to support the Town of Stow with emergency fire and EMS services. The dedicated individuals of this department work tirelessly, around the clock to respond to a variety of emergency calls.

The year 2007 was again a very busy year for the Fire Department. The department responded to 788 combined fire and medical calls. Some of the major calls we answered are as follows; four structure fires, with quick response all fire were kept to minimum damage, six motor vehicle fires, 98 motor vehicle accidents, three of the Motor vehicle accidents required Life flight transport for life threatening injuries, in all of patients are recovering. The Fire Department also responded to two statewide strike team activations one requesting the ambulance for the Boston Marathon and the other for a fire engine to respond to Uxbridge for the Mill fire.

Fire Prevention was once again a major focus for the Fire Department in the year 2007. The Fire Department completed 333 inspections for smoke detectors, wood stoves, oil burners and propane tank installation for both new construction and existing homes being sold. Our department also issued 439 Open Burning Permits.

The Fire Department continues to upgrade the education program for the children of Stow. During Fire Prevention Week, the Fire Department, in conjunction with the S.A.F.E. program, visited schools and day care centers to teach the children about general safety. At other times during the year, again working with the S.A.F.E. program, we perform other educational events (such as an open house) where the children learn about fire prevention. The Fire Department members also conduct many tours and safety educations throughout the year.

Training for our emergency personnel continues to be a major focus. As the scope of our jobs continue to change and broaden, it is essential that the Fire Fighters and E.M.Ts be properly trained in all areas of Firefighting and E.M.S. services as well as Hazardous Materials, Confined Space Rescues, Auto Extrication, Firefighter and E.M.T. Safety and Survival, and Water and Ice Rescue. Members of the department conduct drills monthly and on many weekends. We also attend classes offered by the Massachusetts Fire Academy and the National Fire Academy.

Apparatus and Equipment

We continue to provide maintenance to the equipment and current apparatus in-house whenever possible. Firefighter Greg Vogel has continued to do an excellent job of maintaining our equipment along with the assistance of other members.

In May 2007, at the Annual Town Meeting the town voted to purchase a new Extrication Hurst tool, which has proven to be a vital asset in saving lives within the community.

Thanks From the Acting Chief

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the members of the Fire Department and to David Soar for your help and support during this year. Your dedication, commitment and professionalism make a department that we can all be proud of.

I would also like to thank all the residents of the Town of Stow, the business community, the Town Administrator, the Board of Selectmen, and all other town departments for their support of the Fire Department. I would also like to thank the Police Department and the Highway

Department for all your help during the year. The State Fire Marshall, Steve Coan also deserves special thanks for his help and support over this past year.

Thank you for your continued support of the Stow Fire/Rescue Department.

Respectively submitted,

John Paul Benoit, Acting Fire Chief
David B. Soar, Fire Chief (resigned)

Lisa McNiff, Administrative Assistant

Full-time Firefighters:

John Paul Benoit, Lt.
Gregory A. Vogel
Mark W. Guerin
Lisa McNiff

Call Firefighters:

Charlie Boyle
James Byrne
Christopher Camelio
Kristin Clayton
Christopher Devoe
David Doucette
Rene Doucette
Scott Dwinells
Richard Ellis
Jeremy Fiorvanti
Michael Gallagher

Tim Gray
Becky Hagarty
Ray Hegarty
Peter Holman
Scott Landry
Stephen Landry
Christopher Lazuka
Lisa McNiff
Tim Neuffell
Tom Neuffell
Paul Nevala
Liana Pratt
James Rodgers
Michael Scimera
Suzanne Siewierski
Larry Stafford
Larry Stafford
George Taylor
Michael Trioli
Eddie Warren
Christopher Whitley
Shawn Whitney

2007 FIRE / RESCUE DEPARTMENT SUMMARY

TOTAL INCIDENTS = 788

Accidents

MVA 98
Motorcycle 5
Aircraft 1

Fires

Structure 4
Car 6
Chimney 3
Brush 4
Illegal Burning 9
Oven 2
Transformer 4
Dumpster 2
Tree 1

Assists

Police 2
Public 2

Municipal Fire Alarm Boxes Rec'd

Fire 20

Investigations

Alarm 78
Carbon Monoxide 18
Electrical 6
Natural Gas/Propane 9
Odor 9
Outdoor Smoke 40
Smoke in Bldg 2
Suspicious Package 1
Arcing Wires 3

Medical Emergencies

Incidents 264
Strike Team 2
Lift Assist 11
Life Line Activations 6
Mutual Aid Amb Rec'd 18
Well Being Checks 13
Walk In 9

Hazmat

Incidents 3

Missing Persons

Incidents 2

Mutual Aid Given

Medicals 56
Motor Vehicle Accidents 11
Station Coverage 17
Structure Fire 4

Rescues

Animal 2
House L/O 7
Ice 1

Details

Assist Fire Marshall
Fire Works

Tree/Wires Down

Tree Down 3
Wires Down 9

Special Service

Incidents 2

Water Emergencies

Incidents 14

Non-Emergency Incidents

Inspections Performed 333
Open Burning Permits Issued 439

Other Statistics

Life Flight 3
MA Ladder Truck
ALS Intercepts 79

FOREST FIRE WARDEN

The Stow Fire Department responded to 13 Brush Fires, and handled many complaints and investigations of illegal burning permit fires as well as outdoor smoke calls in the year 2006.

The Town Forest and other conservation lands were patrolled regularly for down trees and limbs that block the fire roads. Brush cutting was also performed where required to keep the roads open for Fire Apparatus.

The open burning season was once again very busy for the Fire Department. Four hundred and thirty nine (439) burning permits were issued, with over 1,000 calls for authorization to burn were issued from January 15 until May 1. Those who wish to burn brush must come to the Stow Fire Station to obtain a burning permit for each open burning season. You must also call the Fire Department on the day that you wish to conduct burning before you begin (after 9:00am). The number to call is (978) 461-1400, the state allows burning between 10:00 am and 4:00 pm. Authorization to conduct open burning is dependent on staffing and weather conditions.

I would like to thank the State Forest Fire Division and the Sudbury Fire Tower for all their help in locating and extinguishing some of these fires.

Respectfully submitted,

John Paul Benoit, Acting Fire Chief

SPECIAL COMMITTEES

MASTER PLAN COMMITTEE

Year 2007, saw the committee working to finalize the draft of the proposed Stow Master Plan for presentation to the town boards and the public. Work was slow at times due to business commitments of committee members necessitating cancellation of meetings. However, we did persevere and felt that the final draft would be ready sometime during the start of 2008.

We focused our efforts on four elements of a vision for the town. These included open space, the villages, community, and housing. Each of the four elements received recommendations which were ranked as an A, B, or C with A being the most important and C the least important at this time. We studied current town zoning, Chapter 61 use, smart growth plans, and affordability in housing units which would encourage a multigenerational mix of residents.

In the fall of 2007 we presented an initial overview of the plan to the Selectmen and since then we have been working to complete the plan for presentation in 2008. Once the draft plan is ready, there will be a joint boards meeting to discuss it and then a public forum to allow further discussion. The plan will then incorporate the input received at these meetings and will then be presented to the Planning Board for acceptance.

Citizen input is always welcome and we encourage residents to share their thoughts and ideas, both pro and con for this draft.

Respectfully submitted,

Ernie Dodd, Planning Board
Greg Jones, Associate
Karen Kelleher, At Large
Charles Kern, Finance Committee

Becky Mattison, Conservation Commission
Roy Miller, At Large
Marcia Rising, Chair, Board of Health

STOW ASSABET RIVER RAIL TRAIL COMMITTEE

The Stow Assabet River Rail Trail Committee, appointed by the Selectmen, held its first meeting in early October. The Committee's objective is to complete the Rail Trail through Stow. The Committee reviewed several possible routes that had been suggested by previous informal Rail Trail groups to connect the present trailhead at Wilkins Street in Hudson to Maynard's part of the rail at the White Pond Road bridge.

The Assabet River Rail Trail began in 1992 when two Hudson residents envisioned a rail trail from South Acton through Maynard, Stow, and Hudson to Marlborough on the rail bed of the former Boston & Maine Railroad's Marlborough Branch. The five communities supported a feasibility study of the trail in 1995. Marlborough purchased the former railroad land within its borders in 1997, and the other communities received a shared Federal award of \$668,000 for trail acquisition. The first section of the trail opened in Marlborough in 2001, and the entire trail from Marlborough through Hudson is now completed to the Wilkins Street parking lot with the exception of the Route 62 highway bridge area. The Maynard-Acton end of the trail is under design.

The Boston & Maine sold all of its land in Stow to four private owners. Two are willing to sell trail easements, and in fact Stow already has an easement on 1½ miles along the river. The owners of Honey Pot Hill Orchards have compelling arguments that a trail through their property would greatly affect their operations. The other family owns a strip from Marlboro Road into Hudson, behind their family business.

The Committee is studying routes around Honey Pot Hill Orchards as proposed by earlier groups. They include: 1) use Gleasondale Road to Sudbury Road to so-called "Track Road", 2) continue in Hudson on the old Central Mass railroad to Bruen Road or the railroad roadbed that served the former ammo dump, then cross Hudson Road (Sudbury) into the Assabet River Wildlife Refuge to White Pond Road, 3) use the former Central Mass railroad to West Street or other access to Barton Road, then Barton Road to Sudbury Road. The Committee is also studying two other routes to connect from Gleasondale to Sudbury Road: A) use the former railroad land from Marlboro Road to the Assabet River, then cross the river onto a parcel that is currently for sale, approved as a subdivision in 1972 but never built, up to Sudbury Road across from Robinwood Lane, B) use the Town-owned Kane parcel to get to the river and then to the subdivision parcel noted above. The Selectmen applied for a state grant to study the feasibility of a route through the 1972 subdivision.

We will continue to explore the advantages and disadvantages of each route, and then recommend a route to connect the Hudson and Maynard parts of the trail.

Respectfully submitted,

Donald Rising, Chairman
Scott Arsenault
Ralph Fuller

Ross Perry
Kirk Teska
John Sangermano, Associate

SCHOOL BUILDING TASK FORCE

The School Building Task Force fulfilled its responsibilities by bringing two proposed building solutions to the Stow voters at the May 2007 Town Meeting. The Board of Selectmen discharged the School Building Task Force following Town Meeting.

The Task Force wanted to include the following letter in this annual report because it contains their recommendations to the next building committee.

To: Stow Selectmen
From: School Building Task Force
Ellen Sturgis, Chair; Gary Bernklow, Treasurer; Bill Byron, Pete Rhoads, Lynn Colletti, Tom Ryan, Sara Kilkenny, Lisa D'Alessio, Norm Farris, Steve Quinn, George Nisotel, Michael Wood (ex-officio).
Re: Recommendations to the next Building Committee
Date: May 28, 2007

On May 15, 2007, nearly 75% of voters casting ballots supported the one site solution, which was comprised of a major renovation of Center School and an addition that would house all of the pre-k through 5 student population. This vote concluded 14 months of hard work, research, outreach and consensus building by the School Building Task Force. The approved option represents a strong signal that the Town has found a solution it can agree on and is ready to move forward. In today's dollars, the estimated cost is about \$30 million, based on traditional construction methods and the conceptual design laid out by our architectural consultants, SMMA.

This letter is to ensure that the lessons learned during the process are not lost and are included in the work of the next Building Committee.

All of the Task Force members had voted this our preferred option for the following reasons:

- Center of town location
- Ongoing efficiencies in one school
- Value of having "schools within a school"; small learning environments yet all students and staff under one roof
- Best use of current school (Center)
- Expands the school campus arrangement with Hale
- Pompo could be turned over to Town for municipal uses, of which there are many
- Lowest construction time of all final options (30 months, based on traditional construction)
- Construction period requires less student disruption

- Minimize need to rent modulares during construction

The final Master Plan report submitted by SMMA covers a majority of the work the Task Force has completed and will not be repeated here. That report should be considered an integral part of our recommendations to the Selectmen and the Town of Stow.

We understand that the design proposed by the architect is conceptual in nature; and premature/preliminary, given the limited information of site restrictions. However, there are parts of the proposal we believe should be maintained if at all possible:

- Two parking lots to split up the traffic flow and reduce use pressure on Rte. 117
- Maximize use of existing field space, both for school day and after school activities
- Use the existing building for Grades 4-5: the classroom walls would not need to be changed in order to meet size requirements for older elementary classrooms
- Separate out the gym and cafeteria spaces: each have heavy demands especially with six grades sharing one building
- Save the existing gym building if at all possible albeit with potentially different uses: the gym's exterior design and physical presence adds to the look and feel of Stow's Town Center.
- Expansion potential: the conceptual design shows space for additional 4/8 classrooms if needed into the future. This is critical to avoid more costly changes in the future, if enrollment exceeds projections

Alternative construction

The Task Force has discussed both pre-cast/modular construction as well as steel buildings throughout our tenure. We had committee members who did research on this, visited buildings that were modular construction and arranged for a guest speaker to speak to the committee about construction options. Many of us are of the opinion that this could be a straight forward way to reduce the total project cost to the town: it has the potential of shortening construction time by up to one full year and it could reduce actual construction costs by 10-15%. There are some possible constraints, given Massachusetts' bid laws, but with the use of Construction Management at Risk, we believe modular construction could be feasible. We strongly urge the next Building Committee to research this at the outset of their work; if it meets with school construction and regulatory guidelines, it should be included as part of the bid process when looking for a design firm as it is integral to its success to start early. A number of resource materials on this subject can be found in our committee files.

Green/sustainable design

In this area as well, a number of committee members did separate research, visited schools that had incorporated green/sustainable design into both school renovation and new construction projects. There are incentive points available from the MSBA for incorporation of green concepts to any building project, so we encourage the Building Committee to consider this in the final design. Unfortunately, as Stow has a municipal power company, we are not eligible for the Mass. Technology Collaborative grants which have funded much of this work in other schools; however, we do believe there are standard design features that can be incorporated to both make us eligible for the MSBA "perks" as well as reduce operating costs going forward. A number of resource materials on this subject can be found in our committee files. Alternative funding and financial support mechanisms (with the Mass Technology Collaborative, Hudson Light and Power, etc) should continue to be investigated as project development proceeds.²

² Examples: wireless laptop initiative (<http://www.mtpc.org/institute/berkshire.htm>); MTC green school funding solar panels, etc (http://www.masstech.org/renewableenergy/news/clip_5_10_07_green_school.html)

Offsetting the cost of the project

One aspect of our charge was to consider the cost of the project and the impact on the taxpayers of Stow. We tried throughout our deliberations to see where the difference of wants and needs were and to find a balance in our final outcome. Residents approached us with suggestions for fundraising to offset the costs to the taxpayers. Though we ran out of time on this, we encourage the Selectmen to support these efforts. Professional fundraisers believe there is strong potential to raise significant dollars. Additionally, the possibilities of corporate underwriting should be explored to the extent practicable as synergies can be found between school system needs and possible corporate interests.

Hale School needs

Though not part of our original charge, we asked the architects to investigate the future needs of the Middle School in case there was a potential for a joint venture that would address all the needs of our Stow schools. Though we ultimately proposed no action on Hale at this time, there is key information in the SMMA report which should be noted. Need for additional classrooms is expected though not extraordinary; the more challenging project will be the expansion of the cafeteria which is already overcrowded, due to changes made in the previous renovation project. The selectmen should note this need and direct appropriate staff to investigate possible solutions before it gets to be a critical need. Possible building re-design options have been considered for Hale and are outlined in Task Force proceedings as well as the Master Plan report submitted by SMMA.

MSBA guidelines

It is imperative that the Selectmen and potential/future members of the Building Committee get a complete knowledge of the new guidelines for reimbursement as these are dramatically different than the past SBAB. It is interesting to note, for example, that there are incentive points available, not only for green construction but for a number of the topics raised here:

- Incentive Points (963 CMR 2.18)
 - 3% Innovative Community Use
 - 2% Energy Efficiency
 - 0-8% Maintenance of Other Buildings
 - 0.5% match for every 1% privately raised....
 - 4% “Alternatives to Construction”
 - 0-5% for Renovations:
 - 5% Reno
 - 4% Major Reconstruction
 - 0% New

The MSBA is just officially opening for business as of July 1, 2007 and is overwhelmed with the number of Statements of Interest submitted and the number of towns interested in applying for assistance. But we have now experienced what the value of direct communication with them can do for our work going forward, and are confident we can work with them to make sure Stow can make the most of state reimbursement while moving forward on our need to solve our overcrowded schools.

Continuity

Finally, we acknowledge that, given the amount of research and learning we have experienced over the last year, it would be beneficial if there were some continuity in membership from the SBTF to the next

building committee. This will have to be weighed alongside the requirements of the committee makeup as outlined by the MSBA.

The Task Force was a new model in addressing a complex subject; the Selectmen proposed a creation of a committee that included essentially all sides of a decade's old discussion that had yet to create a successful proposal. We represent long time and relatively new residents, families with kids in the schools currently as well as those that are more focused on their grandchildren: and everything in between. But we have been able, over these last fourteen months, to come to the table and acknowledge the different and at some times opposing goals and yet found a compromise that we were happy with. We encourage the Selectmen to have a further discussion on the value of this type of committee and its potential for solving other tough issues in town.

OUR HERITAGE

HISTORICAL COMMISSION

The Historical Commission continues to work to provide historical information, protect local sites, research and document local information and increase local awareness of our town's history.

Two challenges continue to concern us. First, a warrant article for the Annual Town Meeting to provide the Town Hall with a sprinkler system has carried forward because of technical problems and our difficulty dealing with some of them, especially the bidding process. But a good deal of the groundwork was completed through the heroic efforts of Liz Painter and the professional expertise of Charles Sauta.

Second, the future of the Larsen Blacksmith Shop is still unclear as we search for a use that would provide it with a source of funding for its upkeep should it be restored. Susan McLaughlin has been pursuing the possibilities of its reuse. To highlight this problem, the Historical Commission sponsored an open house at the shop during Spring Fest. Dean Rantz, an accomplished professional blacksmith, shared his knowledge and skill with all.

The Town of Stow received a very special grant through the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation in conjunction with the Freedom's Way Heritage Association to extend the scope of the 2006 Heritage Landscape program to study one of the most at-risk Heritage Landscape Sites. The site selected was the Lake Boon Cottage Neighborhoods. Through the work of Gretchen Schuler of Wayland, an extensive report with significant documentation was prepared.

The Historical Society, the Ancient Documents Committee and the Historical Commission cooperated in providing a special juried exhibition of paintings and photography capturing the beauty of Stow. The exhibit was held at Town Hall during Spring Fest in May 2007. We thank Barbara Sipler for being the force behind this exhibit.

The Commission labored to prepare groundwork for an archeological study to be done on the Pine Bluffs area in preparation for its proposed use for athletic fields. At this time there are no immediate plans for aggressive development so the archeological study is on hold. We appreciate the expertise of Bob McDonald in keeping us informed on this topic.

Our rekindled interest in archeology led us to sponsor an informative public program featuring the president of the Massachusetts Archeological Society, Tanya Largy. This event was hosted jointly by the Historical Commission and the Historical Society.

Work on the parking lot at the Stow West School using Community Preservation funds was continued in the spring of 2007 by the Highway Commission. The entrance to the parking lot is now gated. Additional work to create a ramp to the front door should be completed in the spring 2008.

The Stow West School had a successful summer season with four Sunday afternoon events, two visits from students of Steppingstones School, and a visit by seniors coordinated with Stow's Council on Aging. Brownie Troop 2527 designed and planted a shade garden of native plants at the school house. The scouts also gave the Schoolhouse a good scrub down prior to the opening program. Special thanks are due to Holly Kuovo and Janet Kresl Moffat, the leaders, and the girls of Troop 2527. A desk and chair and other school-related objects were generously donated by Jo Langley.

The Stow West School inter-generational programs included a program on the Shakers with a presentation by singers led by Meredith Marcinkewicz, an exhibit of 100 years of aprons, an old fashioned ice cream social featuring the music of October Rose, and the perennial fall program, "Back to school" hosted by our costumed school mistress, Jennifer Hofmann. These programs were made possible by a generous grant from the Stow Cultural Council and the Massachusetts Cultural Council. A similar grant will allow us to provide four programs in calendar year 2008. We express our thanks to Bill Byron and Dick and Ann Luxner for their help with these events.

The Historical Commission continued to work with the Community Preservation Committee on exploring new projects. We supported the work of the Cemetery Commission and GH Gledhill to repair the historical walls at the Lower Village Cemetery. The project was approved at the Annual Town Meeting.

Susan McLaughlin prepared a grant application for a new inventory of historic properties, which was much needed, since information and techniques are available which were not available twenty-five years ago. While there were more applications than available funding and we did not receive a grant, we will be pursuing this again in the future.

The Commission meets on the first Thursday of each month at 7:30 PM in the Commission's office in the Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

John Makey, Chairman
Karen Gray, Vice-Chair and Secretary
Liz Painter (to Aug 2007), Treasurer
Wayne Fletcher
Joseph Mishley
Susan McLaughlin (from Aug 2007)

Ruth Delmonico, Associate
Carol Dudley, Associate
Lew Halprin, Associate
Jennifer Hoffman, Associate
Robert MacDonald, Associate
Doug Moffat, Associate
Janet Kresl Moffat, Associate

ANCIENT DOCUMENTS COMMITTEE

The Ancient Documents Committee continues to work through 300 plus years of town records in the Town Vault by organizing and cataloging each entry. This effort enables researchers to find records more easily. Much progress has been made on creating computer inventories of old maps, church records, photo collections, newspapers, war records and miscellaneous collections. A gift of priceless Gleasondale records from a former resident has been inventoried and computerized.

Items were donated to the Vault by John Makey, Jayne Merrick and Ralph Case. One of the most interesting tasks is researching requests for genealogical information. This year requests were received for the following names: Jonathan Hall, Catherine McGinnes, Mary Shepard, Jacob Robinson, Eveleth family, Whitney/Farr, William Stow family.

The two-day Heritage Landscape Art/Photo Show held in May during Springfest was the work of the Stow Historical Society, Ancient Documents Committee, Stow Historical Commission and Studio 380 of the COA. More than 100 entries were received for the two-day show at Town Hall which opened with a reception for the artists. In a popular vote, Pilot Grove Farm won the most votes in both the painting and photograph categories. The winning watercolor print of the old Pilot Grove barn by Bruce Davidson will be hung in the Warren Room in the Town Building. The photo entries, now in the Vault, are a welcome addition to the photo collection.

Another feature of the Springfest show was a display of Colonial flags made by Cadette Troop 864, Barbara Hill, leader. The flags had been shown in previous town celebrations and are now in the Town Vault.

A complete computer record of all town officers, listed in Town Report was compiled by Jody Newman. The committee meets the first and third Fridays, October through June. New researchers are welcome.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Sipler, Chair
Karen Gray
Karen Green
Lew Halprin
Bob Walrath
Linda Hathaway, Ex-officio

Bill Byron, Associate
Bill Clack, Associate
Ralph Fuller, Associate
Dick and Ann Luxner, Associates
Liz Moseley, Associate
Jody Newman, Associate
Dorothy MacDonald, Genealogist

INSERT TOWN CLERK HERE