

## WEST CONCORD TASK FORCE



rear from left: Gary Kleiman, Phil Adams, Chair; David Holdorf, Gary Clayton, Don Hawley; front from left: Barbara Brennan, Jimi Two Feathers, Sue Felshin, Betsy Stoeke, Nancy Carey; not pictured: Chris Sgarzi

The West Concord Task Force (WCTF) was appointed by the Board of Selectmen after 2008 Annual Town Meeting to “seek ways to maintain and enhance the village scale and historic identity of West Concord village, improve traffic circulation and public transportation, and protect and promote the enjoyment of natural resources.” The goal of the WCTF is to maintain West Concord as a pleasant, lively, and affordable place to live, work, play, shop, and own a business. Over the course of three years, There have been many initiatives during the tenure of the WCTF, among them: *Master Plan*: In consultation with the WCTF, the Planning Division hired a consultant to create a Master Plan for West Concord Village to provide a comprehensive map for the village’s future that addresses traffic, parking, wastewater infrastructure, design guidelines, land use, and natural resources in a single document. The Task Force coordinated a two-day West Concord Village Community Design Workshop attended by 230 people, indicating the importance of the village future to Concord residents. The WCTF held a public forum for comments on the final version of the Master Plan that has been generally well-received and is lauded for its breadth and detail. The Master Plan has been forwarded to the Planning Department with an addendum reflecting citizen comments.

*Design Guidelines*: One of the components in the Master Plan, also recommended by several previous Town planning efforts, is a set of design guidelines for the West Concord Business and Industrial districts. Although

they are non-binding and do not have the force of law as zoning bylaws do, design guidelines provide property and business owners with guidance on what the community would prefer. Compliance with the guidelines could simplify the review/permitting process for applications submitted to the Planning Board or Zoning Board of Appeals. In consultation with the Planning Board, the WCTF, and the Master Plan consultant, the Planning Division prepared a set of design guidelines which were sent to the Planning Board for their review and adoption.

*Formula Business Bylaw*: The WCTF recommended that the Planning Board create a Formula Business Warrant Article for the West Concord Business District. At Town Meeting, the Article fell 13 votes short of the required 2/3 majority. However, the Board of Selectman were impressed by the significant interest represented by the narrow defeat and remanded further consideration of a Formula Business Bylaw to the Planning Board, removing it from WCTF purview. The Planning Board has determined that West Concord is the area where a Formula Business Bylaw could make sense and has drafted two Warrant Articles for consideration at Town Meeting 2011.

*Business District Zoning*: There has been significant effort to review current Business District Zoning regulations in light of the Master Plan recommendations and considerable input from citizens, merchants and property owners. The recommendations for the Business District have been taken up by the Planning Board and several Articles have been drafted for Town Meeting 2011. The recommended Articles do three things: 1) create a “Village District” to preserve and encourage first floor retail on Commonwealth Avenue beginning at the 99 Restaurant and ending just before the former Chrysler dealership on the West/South side and just before the Nashoba Brook Parking lot on the East/North; 2) define size limits for retail, grocery and restaurants in both the Village and Business Districts; and 3) make a variety of dimensional and use changes consistent with a pedestrian shopping experience and village character as envisioned in the Master Plan.

*Industrial District Zoning*: Another significant effort was related to the Industrial District. During our deliberations, the property owner of 50 Beharrell

Street approached the Task Force to seek input on a proposed mixed-use industrial-residential redevelopment. Redevelopment of this area could support the implementation of several Master Plan initiatives. The Task Force worked with the developer to shape the project to more closely align with the Master Plan and invited the development team to present the project at two WCTF forums. Initial recommendations were made to the Planning Board regarding use changes to the Industrial District, and an overlay process to enable mixed residential-industrial uses. The Planning Board is further considering these recommendations and has asked the Board of Selectman to consider a Special Town Meeting within Town Meeting to take up potential articles related to the Industrial District.

Closing: As the WCTF completes its third and final year, we would like to note that the work of this Task Force has been a collaborative effort. We recognize the support and guidance we have received from the Planning Department, Planning Board and Board of Selectmen. We are especially appreciative of the significant amount of interest and input we have received from citizens, merchants and property owners. People filled out surveys, came to workshops and forums, attended our meetings, emailed us, and stopped us in the street to share their perspectives. Our work has been informed and improved by your passion.

## COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE



*rear from left: Valarie Kinkade, Jack Clymer, Jack Finigan, Dean Banfield, Elisabeth Elden, David McKenna;  
front from left: Toby Kramer, Peggy Briggs, Lynn Huggins*

In its fifth round of Community Preservation Act (CPA) funding since Concord's adoption of the CPA in 2004, the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) recommended that Town Meeting appropriate \$1,106,100 for projects involving community housing, historic preservation, recreation and open space. The CPC presented its proposed recommendations for CPA funding at the Finance Committee public hearing and Annual Town Meeting subsequently approved the following appropriations which address a variety of Town-wide priorities:

### *Community Housing Projects:*

- Concord Housing Authority - \$500,000 to preserve the existing affordable housing use in the Peter Bulkeley Terrace building by converting the shared living environment into 29 studio and one bedroom units for senior and disabled adults.

### *Historic Preservation Projects:*

- Concord Free Public Library Corporation - \$375,000 for the Fowler Library Restoration project which will complete handicap accessibility improvements and restore the exterior facades of the historic ca. 1930s Colonial Revival style structure.
- Concord Scout House, Inc. - \$10,000 to complete an Historic Structures Report which will guide the future restoration and preservation of the historic Concord Scout House.
- Drinking Gourd Project - \$60,000 for the preservation and relocation of the Caesar Robbins House from its current site to a location closer to its original location.

### *Open Space Projects:*

- Open Space Reserve Fund - \$87,925 to be put in reserve for future Open Space projects.

### *Open Space/Recreation Projects:*

- Town of Concord - \$43,175 for the completion of a Watershed Management Plan for Warner's Pond.

### *Administration:*

- Town of Concord - \$30,000 for administration of the CPA.

In addition to the funding recommendations noted above, the CPC also worked with Town Departments on two additional initiatives presented at Annual Town Meeting. The first was to establish a conservation restriction at 335 Walden Street, a parcel of land purchased by the Town with CPA funds in 2009 for the joint uses of Community Housing and Open Space protection. The CPC brought forward a Warrant Article to grant a conservation restriction to the Concord Land Con-