

NEW TOWN PLAN

After several years of work, the Planning Commission is pleased to have finished its revision of the Town Plan. **The Planning Commission's Public Hearing on the draft Town Plan will be held on June 16 at 5 pm in the Town Office.** There will also be a Selectboard hearing later in the summer, which is the final step before the Plan is adopted.

The Planning Commission is required to write a new Town Plan every 5 years (the current Plan expires in August 2009) and was fortunate to receive a state Municipal Planning Grant to help with this latest round. The grant money bought us assistance from the Windham Regional Commission, allowing the Plan's data and maps to be as accurate and current as possible. The new Plan is streamlined, updated, reorganized, and the beneficiary of substantial input from the Town's Conservation Commission, Housing Committee, and Energy Committee. Many of the chapters contain vision statements, which are derived from the information gathered at such community events as Dummerston Y2C, Town Meeting, Planning Commission workshops, and the Housing Forum. Overall, we think the new Plan is a user-friendly, comprehensive, and consensus-based template for Dummerston's future.

Although revisions occur throughout the Plan, some of the most prominent are in the Land Use chapter. Changes to this chapter tend to make folks jumpy, because Land Use serves as a foundation for the Zoning Bylaw. It is important to remember, however, that the Plan contains no zoning provisions and will not result in any changes to our current zoning.

The Land Use revisions are the outcome of an extensive community process on how best to maintain Dummerston's rural character. For those of you who read our booklet *Planning for the Land We Love*, mailed out to every resident in spring 2007, there won't be any surprises. The proposed Future Land Use districts realign the existing districts, encouraging growth in certain areas and conservation in others so as to preserve traditional settlement patterns, open landscapes, and the natural resources we all appreciate. We propose adding Mixed Density as a type of land use district, and creating a Dummerston Center Historic District. In recognition of Dummerston's varied topography and development, the Land Use chapter now details eight focus areas to better describe the different parts of our town. There are new Goals, Policies, and Action Steps at the end of the chapter to guide the Town over the next five years.

As stated above, the Planning Commission's public hearing will be on June 16 at 5 pm in the Town Office. The draft Town Plan is posted on the town's website, www.dummerston.org, where your comments can be posted as well. There are also a few paper copies available for review at the Town Office. We encourage you to read the Plan and give us your feedback, either on the web or at the hearing. We believe that the ideas in the Plan will be good for the Town, but only if they are understood and supported by you and your neighbors. Thank you for your input!