

CCAPA 2012 Planning Awards

Citizen Planning: Mark Summers, President of CNC Software, Tolland, CT

This award recognizes a citizen or a group of citizens who work in a non-compensated capacity to make a significant contribution to planning here in Connecticut. This is one of our perennial favorites and have had worthy nominations for several years now.

This year, the award is presented to someone who by assuming a leadership role made significant contributions in energy conservation and sustainability to Tolland, the Capitol Region and State of CT.

Mark Summers, the President of CNC Software in Tolland, has worked tirelessly as the Chair of the Tolland Energy Task Force, has participated on a climate change committee of experts on energy and environmental issues at the Capitol Region Council of Governments, worked with consultants on the development of Regional Sustainable Land Use plan and even had a starring role in a CRCOG/DEEP Energy Conservation Video.

Mark's company in its own right has become a showcase for energy conservation and renewable energy. Under his direction CNC encourages its employees to embrace a healthy lifestyle by providing bike racks and walking trails on the property. Employees are even given places to store their running shoes. There is a community garden and a chicken coop onsite. Surplus food from the garden goes to a local soup kitchen.

As chair of the Tolland Energy Task Force, Mark was a valuable resource and technical advisor to staff and commissions as the task force promoted a geothermal retrofit of Tolland Town Hall. This involved the preparation of posters, flyers, and website information, power point presentations to the Town Council and public and participation in interviews, thermal scans and well testing. The \$3.5 million town hall geothermal referendum was easily approved by the Town.

Good planning today requires highly technical issues such as sustainable development and energy conservation be incorporated into community and regional plans and made understandable to the public. It is critical for planners to collaborate with professionals to avail ourselves of their knowledge and expertise.

Mark is an inspirational champion of energy conservation and sustainability, he leads by example, is generous with his time, and he continues to contribute to the public benefits of planning in CT.

Public Service: Connecticut Environmental Conditions Online – CLEAR & CTDEEP

With this award, our Chapter recognizes a group or an individual who by acting in a public capacity has promoted or applied sound planning principles or played a significant role in a specific planning project.

Connecticut Environmental Conditions Online, or CT ECO, is a highly advanced internet mapping site that provides access to the state's natural resource data. CT ECO was developed and is maintained as a partnership between the University of Connecticut Center for Land Use Education and Research (CLEAR) and the CT DEEP (the Connecticut Department of

Energy and Environmental Protection).

Thanks to this effort, the state's most comprehensive and authoritative collection of natural resource and related data is now right at our fingertips! This includes natural resource data from CTDEEP, soils information from the Natural Resource Conservation Service along with spectacular high-resolution imagery. CT ECO is regularly used by a variety of agencies, private sector firms, municipalities, academia, nongovernmental organizations and the general public for a multitude of purposes. For Connecticut communities, CT ECO provides geospatial information for use in their open space, economic development, climate change adaptation, watershed and comprehensive plans. CT ECO also played an important role in critical community operations during the response to Hurricane Irene in 2011.

In the past year, over 21,000 individuals visited CT ECO about 38,000 times.

We as planners are indebted to CLEAR and CTDEEP for having the foresight to develop this invaluable tool.

Community Development: Newhall Neighborhood Remediation – Town of Hamden & CT DEEP

This award is given in acknowledgement of a project, program or initiative that bolsters the welfare of a neighborhood or community.

As many of us know, the Newhall Neighborhood down in Hamden has been seriously impacted by the discovery that entire neighborhood had been built over contaminated landfill. How could this happen?

Well, from 1900 to about 1950, public health officials in Hamden believed that by filling in low, marshy areas with refuse, the issue of malaria-carrying mosquitoes could be addressed and the growing challenge of dealing with waste disposal could also be handled. Some of the waste dumped in the neighborhood came from the Winchester Repeating Arms Factory located in nearby New Haven. Several areas were filled in and subsequently became residential neighborhoods.

In 2000, during the planning of an addition to the middle school on Newhall Street contamination was uncovered. Shortly afterwards the Department of Environmental Protection spearheaded an extensive investigation of soil and groundwater conditions that led to a 2007 plan to remediate the neighborhood.

The Town of Hamden and the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection were faced with a daunting challenge of cleaning up and restoring an 100 acres and 240 properties. As a result...the Newhall Remediation Project is Connecticut's largest superfund project in history. To date \$30 million has been spent.

Recognizing the social context of this work was the key ingredient to the success of the clean-up efforts. After all...these were people's homes. Residents were deeply concerned. Communication and on-going dialogue was paramount. The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (now called the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection) partnered with the Town of Hamden to comprehensively develop effective tools in keep residents informed and also dealing with the myriad of

hurdles that continued to surface.

One of the serious concerns residents had was the effect of having Environmental Land Use Restrictions placed on their property deeds as a result of the contamination. Attachment of an ELUR could negatively affect property values. To resolve this issue, Hamden Planning Department worked with DEEP as its new zoning code was enacted in 2010. The new code designated the Newhall Design District with an extra layer of oversight for obtaining building permits involving excavation below four feet (for a pool or an addition, for example). Should a property owner need to dig below four feet and encounter contaminated fill, proper removal and disposal of waste fill would be paid for with Town-administered money from a \$2 million fund established by DEEP. The new zoning regulation, coupled with the fund to pay for safe handling of fill, meant the public would be fully protected without the need for an ELUR.

The Hamden Economic Development Corporation took the lead in working with homeowners to assess and repair structurally damaged homes resulting from accelerated settling from being built over unstable soils. Residents were allowed access to housing programs providing mortgage assistance and low interest loans renovations and. Unemployed workers received job training in deconstruction – a skill that was put to use at homes that were damaged beyond repair and had to be torn down. Building materials were recycled through coordination with the Urbanminers, a locally owned company with expertise in sustainable building deconstruction.

Remediation was completed just a few months ago though a number of homes remain to be demolished. The Newhall neighborhood has survived what some had thought was the end of this older established neighborhood. The physical and the social resilience of this neighborhood is nothing short of remarkable thanks to the efforts of the DEEP and the Town.

The neighborhood has also undergone somewhat of a renaissance. Properties on every block, sometimes entire blocks, have new landscaping, driveways, fences, sheds, sidewalks, decks, patios – all elements that were replaced once contaminated waste fill was removed. This facelift has given the neighborhood renewed hope.

The CTDEEP and the Town of Hamden are this year's recipients of the Community Development award for their commitment to this neighborhood, for working creatively and collaboratively to bolster the social and economic welfare of the Newhall neighborhood while addressing a serious threat to the public and the environment.

Public Program: I-84 Viaduct Study-Hub of Hartford Committee

Like many similar highway structures of its era, Hartford's I-84 Viaduct is nearing the end of its useful life. Built in 1965, this $\frac{3}{4}$ mile long section of elevated highway runs from Sisson Avenue to the edge of downtown Hartford. It is the state's highest volume roadway with daily traffic volumes of approximately 175,000 vehicles.

While the Viaduct plays a critical transportation role, it also casts significant blight on the urban environment. The former Park River lies buried underneath it. It is a major barrier separating neighborhoods from each other and from the downtown; a wide swath of bleak "no man's land" through the heart of the city. These factors and others limit Hartford's

economic vitality and detract from the City's cohesiveness and identity.

So it should not surprise anyone in this room that when the Connecticut DOT proposed back in 2006 to replace the aging structure with a similar one at a cost of approximately \$1 billion dollars, the people of Hartford were not happy. In the words of Hartford Courant columnist and supporter of all-things-related-to-planning Tom Condon, "a group of citizens rose up and said, in effect, "Keep this monstrosity in place for another 20 or 40 years? Are you nuts? We'd like our city back. Let's think of something else."

A grassroots group came together to demand a wider study of the replacement options – and to consider the social, economic and environmental costs of a "more of the same" solution. This became known as the I-84 Viaduct Study.

The group, coined HUB of Hartford, was appointed by the City of Hartford to be the steering committee for the broader study which they had championed. Chaired by local resident Dr. Robert Painter, the Committee was a broad cross-section of project stakeholders. In addition to representation from the City and ConnDOT, the committee included leaders of the Frog Hollow and Asylum Hill neighborhoods, the West End Civic Association, and participation by Aetna, the Hartford, the Hartford BID and Hartford Preservation Alliance.

The study process involved three phases: an examination of the existing viaduct; a review of the wide range of possible replacement options; and a detailed analysis of the most promising options. Extensive public input from hundreds of residents and businesses was solicited through public workshops, presentations and open houses, as well as coverage on television, through website, blogs and print media. Through this input a hybrid option was wholeheartedly endorsed that would provide an opportunity to develop over 1 million SF of mixed-use, transit-oriented development in the heart of downtown adjacent to a newly-accessible Bushnell Park. The option reconnects Hartford's now-bisected neighborhoods at a cost comparable to replacing the existing viaduct.

Thanks to the HUB Committee, the process of identifying a viable option based on more than road specifications became a reality. It is a model that should become DOT's standard template.

The Chapter wishes to express its gratitude to all of the members of the appropriately-named Hub of Hartford Committee.

[Bruce Hoben Distinguished Service Award: Mark Pellegrini, AICP](#)

This year, the Chapter chose to honor Mark Pellegrini Director of Planning and Economic Development for the Town of Manchester, Connecticut for his efforts leading CCAPA, as its President, an Executive Committee member with the Chapter and as a mentor to many Connecticut planners and leaders.

For 28 years, Mark has served as the Director of Planning and Economic Development for the Town of Manchester. During his tenure, the Town and its residents have benefitted immensely from Mark's knowledge, professionalism and desire to do what is best for Manchester and its citizens. Mark has worked on everything from small subdivisions to super regional shopping centers, and from neighborhood zoning disputes to Downtown Revitalization. He has guided countless boards, commissions, agencies, committees and

groups with great dedication and persistence, and lovingly guided and mentored all members of his staff.

Mark's leadership style, professional acumen and personal ethics have made him both a respected leader in his home town, and a recognized face of the Connecticut planning community. In his many interactions with public agencies and citizens, Mark has exemplified the qualities of a professional planner and the style that Bruce Hoben embodied.

Mark has unquestionably provided thoughtful leadership in trying times and has championed the planning profession and the professional organization.

CCAPA 2011 Planning Awards

STUDENT RECOGNITION AWARD: Nick Iannacito

This year, the Chapter dedicated its citizen planner award for a student who has worked to make a major contribution to planning in Connecticut. **Nick Iannacito** worked tirelessly and voluntarily for seven months to redesign sign regulations for the town of Torrington. Mr. Iannacito worked collaboratively with several of the town's boards and commissions and with the business community in order to draft regulations that were fair and effective. In preparation for writing these regulations, he created and conducted a business survey, researched American Planning Association best practices and met with other local stakeholders. Mr. Iannacito then presented the proposed regulations at a public hearing, at which the regulation passed unanimously, and then reached out to the business community once again to ensure owners understood the new regulations. Mr. Iannacito recently graduated from the University of Connecticut and is considering pursuing a Master's Degree in Urban Planning.

SUSTAINABILITY AWARD: Stop & Shop (Ahold USA)

The Chapter recognized Stop & Shop for its recent construction of a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)-eligible store in Torrington. The new building includes: A 400-watt UTC fuel cell which provides 90% of its electricity; high efficiency lighting, refrigeration and other building systems throughout including LED lighting for frozen food cases, dimmable fluorescents for store lighting, reduced HFC refrigerants, and daylight harvesting; and site design that incorporates low impact development elements for storm water management; it is awaiting final confirmation of this coveted goal.

IMPLEMENTATION AWARD- Town of Simsbury Zoning Commission

The Chapter recognized the Simsbury Planning and Zoning Commission for its innovative development of a form-based zoning code. In response to several divisive development proposals, the Commission hosted a 6-day charette in September 2009 in order to form a vision for the town center's future. Its major objective was to heal the significant rifts and existing divides in the public's confidence in the land use planning process. The charette was a major success and was attended by over 600 residents. Input was used to create an Illustrative Plan that would evolve into what has now become the Simsbury Center Form Based Code. Through work and discussion with the Town Board of Selectmen and various other town boards, the Commission created significant and creative mechanisms to implement the code, including a low impact storm water module and the creation of a consent agenda, in which projects of under 25,000 sf can be approved without discussion if they meet code requirements. Design Guidelines for the town center are currently being developed and will eventually be incorporated into the FBC review process.

PUBLIC SERVICE: Manchester Redevelopment Agency

The Chapter presented this year's public service award to the Manchester Redevelopment Agency for its work in creating and implementing the Broad Street Redevelopment Plan. For the past 18 years, the Manchester Parkade, a 250,000 square-foot, '60's era shopping center located on 18 acres in the center of Manchester, sat vacant and became the town of Manchester's most prominent and controversial blighted property. In 2008, the Board of Directors expanded the town's redevelopment agency and charged it with developing a plan for redeveloping the Parkade and the Broad Street area.

With assistance from the University of Hartford Design Center and town planning staff, the Agency organized a design charette and developed a vision for a compact, pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use neighborhood. In September 2009, the Agency and the Board of Directors adopted the Broad Street Redevelopment Plan outlining that vision and steps necessary to achieve it. In large part due to the public presentation and outreach by the Agency, the residents approved an \$8 million bond to implement the plan later that year.

Since the plan's adoption, the town has acquired the shopping center property, and is in the process of demolishing the vacant structures. The Agency is in the process of designing a greenway and park expansion, in partnership with town staff, the Planning and Zoning Commission and a consultant team have drafted a form-based code scheduled for hearing in February. Additionally, the Town has received \$3 million from the state to reconstruct Broad Street itself. The Chapter recognizes the Agency for its hard work, its dedication and the countless hours devoted to this transformative project.

SPECIAL CHAPTER AWARD: Bruce Becker

The Chapter conferred one Special Chapter Award this year to Bruce Becker for his demonstrated vision and leadership in integrating Planning, Design and Development.

A registered architect, a certified planner and a LEED certified professional, Mr. Becker co-founded two non-profit organizations to create innovative affordable housing project: Common Ground Community, developer of the Times Square Hotel Supportive Housing;

and Under One Roof, developer of The Marvin Intergeneration Child Care and Congregate Housing in Norwalk, CT. Mr. Becker's most recent success here in CT is 360 State Street in New Haven, the recipient of several awards for smart growth and sustainable development. The state's first LEED Platinum residential project, this 700,000 SF mixed-use, transit-oriented development includes a fuel cell, extensive building efficiency mechanisms, electric car charging ports and a green roof. Units are designed for green living, resulting in half the carbon footprint and utility costs of a conventional unit.

Another example of Mr. Becker's focus on community planning is the historic rehabilitation and adaptive re-use of the 1855 Wauregan Hotel in Norwich. He created the development concept and put the financing in place to convert this once gorgeous structure into 70 units of moderate income housing, with 4,000 SF of retail space, ballroom restoration, and 100-space parking garage. In this public-private venture, he met community and economic development needs while revitalizing the gateway to Norwich's historic downtown.

Being a developer is not easy and comes with inherent risks. But these are but two projects where Mr. Becker took the risk, while keeping true to his values.

BRUCE HOBEN DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD: Dan Tuba

This year, the Chapter chose to honor Dan Tuba for his exceptional dedication to the Chapter and service to its members. Over his career, Mr. Tuba served as CCAPA president, on the Executive Committee and as state coordinator of the Southern New England planning conference. He has served as a mentor to countless planners and has strengthened the knowledge base of planners throughout southern New England. The longtime Town Planner in Monroe, Mr. Tuba worked to champion the planning profession, CCAPA and its membership. The Chapter thanks Mr. Tuba for his efforts and his career of distinguished service.

2010 Awards

CITIZEN PLANNING AWARD: Ruth Skovron

Ms. Skovron has worked tirelessly over the last four years to bring professional planning support to rural communities in the northwest corner of Connecticut. She has devoted over 2400 hours of her time to raise money, educate citizens and build consensus. Her tenaciousness and vision have been rewarded through the creation of the Northwest Connecticut Regional Planning Collaborative and raising over \$400,000 to address issues

such as affordable housing and economic revitalization of village centers. The letters of support included in the nomination reflect deeply on not only her remarkable achievements but on her benevolence and her inclusive approach.

PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD: Waterbury Greenway Advisory Committee (Ron Napoli-Chair accepted the award)

In 2008, 17 individuals from diverse sectors of the Waterbury community were tagged to serve on a committee to assist with planning a 7.1 mile paved greenway along the Naugatuck River. Since that time, the Committee held monthly meetings, spearheaded public outreach, supervised the consultant, conducted visioning exercises and helped form a non-profit fundraising arm, the “Friends of Waterbury Greenway”. Members walked and kayaked the study area and conducted guided tours for the public and participated in developing a “Corridor Driving Tour” for the Federal Highway Administrator, Congressman Chris Murphy and other visiting dignitaries. The active interest of all of the members of the Greenway Advisory Committee and their obvious embrace of collaborative planning that truly reflects the needs and desires of its citizens will ensure successful implementation.

COMMUNICATIONS: HousingUs and Kevin Litten

The Chapter recognized two recipients for communications awards this year. The first represents communications related to raising awareness of the need for affordable housing. **HousingUs** is a tri-state collaborative effort of nonprofit organizations and community leaders promoting broad-based affordable housing options in towns throughout the northwest corner of CT as well as parts of New York State and Massachusetts. The Women’s Institute for Housing & Economic Development based in Middletown participated as the Northwestern Connecticut contingent. The coalition launched a multi-media campaign including a website, direct mailings, an insert in four local newspapers, radio interviews and two billboards. The media campaign put a human face on the need to provide affordable housing for members of our communities. The newspaper insert which also served as direct mail piece was particularly poignant, featuring residents of Salisbury, Norfolk and Canaan. The insert begins, “They are firefighters and school teachers, farmers and carpenters, plumbers and bank tellers and artists. They are our neighbors and friends, our grandparents and grandchildren. They are US.”

Kevin Litten

The second communications award recognizes the individual effort of a reporter for his ongoing coverage of planning and development issues. It is rare to find coverage much less in-depth educational coverage of local issues but **Kevin Litten**, a reporter for the Republican American, has devoted countless hours toward educating himself and delving into the issues and details of Planning and Zoning, Wetlands, and ZBA discussions in the City of Torrington. He artfully and accurately articulates these details in informative and

educational articles. He has closely followed Torrington's downtown revitalization efforts and was instrumental in getting the word out and providing coverage of the update of the Plan of Conservation & Development. A few examples of his articles include the application of smart growth principles to the approval of a Lowe's entitled "It's a Big Hello to Lowe's"; "River Revival" about Torrington's efforts to transform the Naugatuck River which included informative sidebars on the river's history and efforts to control invasive species; and coverage of the city's struggles with foreclosures.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: Route 6/Hop River Corridor Plan (Eric Trott, Town Planner for Coventry, accepted the award on behalf of the participating towns)

This year, the Chapter recognized the unique effort of an inter-regional collaboration of four small towns—Andover, Bolton, Coventry and Columbia. Regionalism is a word that makes many towns here in the land of 169 fiefdoms bristle, but the towns participating in this study recognized the power of unified, focused attention on balancing the natural assets and rural context of the Route 6 Corridor with growth and development. Putting aside parochial interests, the towns created a common vision for growth that sharply contrasts with the existing land use patterns of sprawl and inconsistent character. The Hop River corridor Plan puts forth an innovative approach for small rural towns in that it recommends that the Route 6 Economic Development Commission evolve into a Regional Economic Development Agency for the purpose of implementing infrastructure improvements and coordinating development at four nodes. The Plan also recommends the creation of common zoning regulations and design guidelines to be adopted by the respective town commissions. Hopefully, this plan will spur legislative recognition of the wisdom of applying these planning tools across the state.

SUSTAINABILITY AWARD-Danbury Branch Improvement Study (Floyd Lapp, Southwestern CT RPA accepted the award)

All of us are familiar with the level of traffic congestion from New Milford through Danbury and down into the Norwalk area. There have been numerous recommendations coming from endless studies and virtually all of them focused on making roads wider or creating new ones. Now through a federal grant, the region is looking to more sustainable approaches by improving existing commuter rail service and attracting more commuters to transit. As part of the Danbury Branch Improvement Study, an environmental Impact statement and alternative analysis served as a backdrop to expand the public's understanding of transit-oriented development as a means of guiding growth and mitigating congestion. The study evoked collaboration among a broad range of stakeholders including the public, elected officials, local representatives, the regional planning agency, the Department of Transportation and the federal government. The work products were exceptional –going above the standard report format—to include an informative video to educate stakeholders and a creatively formatted document presenting the alternatives.

PUBLIC PROGRAM AWARD-AGvocate (Jennifer Kaufman, AGvocate Program Coordinator accepted the award)

The name of the program in and of itself AGvocate is a perfect play on advocacy for agriculture. For a state like ours, who has essentially lost its agricultural economy and rural context, this Program has broaden support to towns and businesses by providing land use recommendations, implementing tax exemptions, promotional outreach and education and incorporating agriculture into local economic development strategies. Ashford, Brooklyn, Canterbury, Eastford, Franklin, Hampton, Sterling, Thompson, Windham and Woodstock participated in the Program, which has been funded through a Farm Viability Grant from the CT Department of Agriculture. Municipal leaders, agricultural producers and supportive citizens have come together to implement tools and create actions plans to support agricultural viability. AGvocate has created a voice for agriculture.

SPECIAL CHAPTER AWARD: Marcia Banach, AICP

Marcia Banach, AICP recently retired as South Windsor's Town Planner. She has been a hard working, knowledgeable, dedicated and creative planning professional, providing valuable guidance and leadership to the Town in all facets of community development and preservation. Marcia has been a very active member of CCAPA and also served the Capitol Region Council of Governments in various capacities. In making the award presentation, Fran Armentano noted that Marcia's stellar reputation "has helped demonstrate to the public the unique talents and great value that planners bring to Connecticut's cities and towns." He also noted the primary role she has played in the Chapter's social planning network and credits Marcia in bringing about the camaraderie that our membership enjoys. He suggested that the annual awards luncheon become an event where retired planners can annually re-connect with their colleagues.

Michelle Lipe, who has served under Marcia for her entire career at South Windsor, also participated in the presentation. She pointed out that Marcia's 25-year career marks a time of tremendous growth in town and she handled issues and challenges with professionalism and a high degree of ethics. Michelle is grateful to have benefitted from Marcia's depth of knowledge and nurturing management style and Marcia should be proud of her accomplishments as both a planner and a leader in her community.

The entire Chapter extends best wishes to Marcia as she pursues her next career—retirement!

BRUCE HOBEN DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD: John Pagini, AICP

The Bruce Hoben Distinguished Service Award was created by the Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association to recognize distinguished service to the Chapter and the planning profession. Bruce served the Chapter in many roles and was a friend and mentor of many Connecticut planners. The Bruce Hoben award was established in 2009.

This year's recipient, John Pagini, AICP, has exhibited a tremendous amount of energy and acumen in serving as the Chapter's Professional Development Officer (PDO). As PDO, John challenged planners to excel through on-going education efforts and programs and worked with national leaders to recommend adjustments to the AICP Certification Maintenance program. He has also established a high standard for what the role of the PDO can be.

John's leadership, and countless hours of volunteer effort truly rise to the level of this Award and the Chapter is proud to name him as the second recipient.

John is currently a land use consultant. He has been an active planner since 1974 and has worked for numerous communities in Connecticut, and also worked for Robinson and Cole as a Land Use Analyst. John later worked in Nantucket, Massachusetts, for ten years. John is also the Conservation Coordinator for the Joshua's Tract Conservation and Historic Trust.