

# CONNECTICUT PLANNING

Summer 2020

A publication of the Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association



American Planning Association  
**Connecticut Chapter**

*Creating Great Communities for All*



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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Welcome to summer and the second half of this remarkable year. I hope that this issue finds everyone in the Connecticut planning community healthy and safe.

I want to relay a hopeful conversation I had recently with a young woman who is exploring the field of urban design and planning. She was recently laid off, had a background in commercial design by training and profession, and a strong social work influence from her family. She had reached out to ask typical questions about the profession, academic programs, and the like. She was inspired by recent news articles she had seen on potential zoning reform seeking to promote equity, diversity and inclusivity. She was inspired to consider how she could play a part in designing neighborhoods that work for *all people*.

What inspired you to become a planner? And, how can that original inspiration help in this time of momentous change?

While we are not all bound to the *AICP Code of Ethics*, I want to remind you of the following aspirational provision within it:

*We shall seek social justice by working to expand choice and opportunity for all persons, recognizing a special responsibility to plan for the needs of the disadvantaged and to promote racial and economic integration. We shall urge the alteration of policies, institutions, and decisions that oppose such needs.*

A lot of work lies before us. May we all hold tight to our individual inspirations and our collective aspirations.

To that end, CCAPA leadership has been participating in the [Desegregate CT](#) efforts to introduce legislative reform aimed at achieving the development of more diverse housing throughout the state. I hope that you will support the effort by helping to educate and advocate within your local communities.

I look forward to hearing from you and working with you on these important issues in the rapidly changing world in which we operate right now. Please feel free to reach out at any time at (203) 271-1773 or [raugur@mminc.com](mailto:raugur@mminc.com). 📧

— Rebecca Augur 

On the cover: COVID-era dining on Main Street, West Hartford. (Photo: West Hartford Department of Community Development)

## CONNECTICUT PLANNING

is published quarterly by the Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association. Contributions are encouraged. Submissions must include the name and contact information of the contributor. Material may be edited to conform to space or style requirements. Please address submissions to Executive Editor Amanda Kennedy, AICP (contact information below).

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## FROM THE EDITOR



Well! When our last issue of *Connecticut Planning*, “Public Participation in the 2020s,” came out in February, we were contemplating taking baby steps towards more virtual participation. Just six weeks later, planners had to reinvent their entire workflows to accommodate lockdowns, work-from-home, and social distancing. Planners have been called on to figure out how to move in-person public meetings to the virtual world and have had to create new processes to fast-track the relocation of indoor business activities to converted outdoor space. Many Connecticut planners have been tapped to help mobilize solutions to meet increasing needs for food and housing as layoffs increase economic vulnerabilities. And most recently, the killing of George Floyd and subsequent protests has put a renewed spotlight on the role planning has had historically in creating and reinforcing segregation and the role it often still plays in limiting economic opportuni-

ties for minority residents. At no time in recent memory has Connecticut’s planning community been more tested, and at no time has the CCAPA Chapter been more crucial in supporting planners and planning in Connecticut. My thanks to CCAPA President Rebecca Augur for leading us through this time, to our Government Relations Co-Chairs for working with partner organizations on Executive Order issues, and to our program and professional development chairs for pivoting learning experiences to new platforms. And thank you to all the CCAPA members who have been helping one another as we move through this tumultuous time.

Don’t miss this issue’s feature introducing some of our student members, attending or recently graduated from programs at Trinity, Yale, the University of Vermont, and the University of Southern California. Know a student interested in planning? Remind them that student membership is FREE and a great way to learn about the profession. 📖

— Amanda Kennedy, AICP 



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# A Role for Planning in the New World of Public Health

by Michael Piscitelli, AICP

**The global pandemic reached Connecticut in March, but let's be clear that we are responding not only to a virus, but also to the broad range of socio-economic challenges that is now tearing through the fabric of our communities.**

Nearly every person in our six departments has been able to work through the Stay Home, Stay Safe period. In between mask giveaways, small business focus groups and endless Zoom calls, we have not missed a land use commission meeting.

From a public health standpoint, New Haven has been very aggressive in its efforts to control the spread of the coronavirus. As of July 1st, Connecticut has had 4,300+ fatalities, a per capita rate that is three times the national average. The virus has been particularly acute in cities, perhaps because of demographic composition, perhaps because of access to health care, overcrowding, or simply the fact that many low-income workers are the very essential workers in food processing, nursing homes and in-home health care. These are not the high-profile positions as perhaps in hospital settings, nor are they the favored recipients for donated supplies, but these are our neighbors and friends. They take the bus. They work multiple jobs. They are housing insecure.

At the beginning of our local health emergency, on the afternoon of March 15, 2020, our team went to work on a wide-ranging plan of action, soon-to-be-named the Together New Haven initiative. We organized into work groups focused on COVID-specific response efforts, like supporting small businesses with grant applications or going to a take-out format, and also on economic resiliency as we look to reopen and grow out of the pandemic. As part of this process, we are holding weekly check-in meetings with all of our partner organizations, from workforce agencies to the small neighborhood commercial districts. This helps us organize our response without undue overlap of services. It has also helped identify gaps in service so we can immediately respond and assist. This was certainly the case with hair salons and barber

shops. We did not even have a good list of businesses to even begin supporting them through an intense and challenging set of reopen rules.

One of the most inspiring aspects of Together New Haven is the opportunity to feature home-grown creative talent and products. Local BBQ master Ricky D was one of the first restaurants to install plexi-glass protection at the take-out counter and we were honored to feature him as one of 50 Together New Haven local brand posters.

Nearly every person in our six departments has been able to work through the Stay Home, Stay Safe period. In between mask giveaways, small business focus groups and endless Zoom calls, we have not missed a land use commission meeting. This has allowed projects of national significance like the Neuroscience Campus at Yale New Haven Health to stay on its permitting schedule. The 101 College Street development was approved in early July with an inclusive growth program that will connect New Haven Public School students to careers in the biosciences, generate construction jobs for city residents, and support innovation transfer from Yale University to start ups, with room to grow. On the housing side, New Haven issued a state high of 44 new start permits in April bringing our total for the year to 389. More importantly, it will help unlock a housing crisis that has gripped our market with 41% of New Haven households with housing insecurity.

Our "Civic Space" platform was launched on May 18 with five panel

*(continued on page 5)*

## A Role for Planning, cont'd

discussions intended to lead us beyond reopening to the longer haul journey of social and economic recovery. Panelists discussed the architecture behind a healthy workplace, tactics for economic development and, notably, community wellbeing in a time of crisis and tension.

And then on the weekend of May 30th, our cities were home to large protests and the universal condemnation of the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis. While the media stories and images are searing reminders of the work still to be done to create a just society, as planners we also understand the underlying challenges from affordable housing, to access to health care to the digital divide in education all of which have been exacerbated by the pandemic.

According to St. Louis Fed modeling data, over 8,000 New Haven households are at risk this year because of dramatically worsening economic conditions. These are people who are not essential, are not salaried, and definitely cannot work from home. So, in some respects, the Together New Haven initiative has worked well to manage the immediate needs of the public health crisis. Moving forward, we are far from “together” and the death of George Floyd and subsequent protests are stark reminders for planners to look beyond the headlines and take action to address the inequities, racism, and lack of access faced by our residents most in need. ■

— Michael Piscitelli, is the New Haven Economic Development Administrator, resident of the city's Fair Haven Heights neighborhood, and past president of CCAPA.

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**ANY ONE, ANY AGE CAN GET THE VIRUS.**

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Renee Griffin  
Trac House Salon

*Together New Haven's "Mask Up" Campaign features local residents and business owners.  
(Source: Together New Haven)*



TOGETHER NEW HAVEN 

**CUALQUIERA, A CUALQUIER EDAD PUEDE CONTRAER EL CORONAVIRUS.**

**Mask Up**

New Haven COVID19 Linea De Emergencia: 203.946.4949

Juan Castillo  
94.3 WYBC

# Forging a Path to Long-Term Recovery in Connecticut

by Martin J. Connor, AICP

*“Responding to a disaster is shared responsibility; it calls for the involvement of everyone — state government, local government, and a wide range of community partners. By working together, we can help our residents and our communities meet their urgent needs and bounce back from the COVID-19 crisis.”*

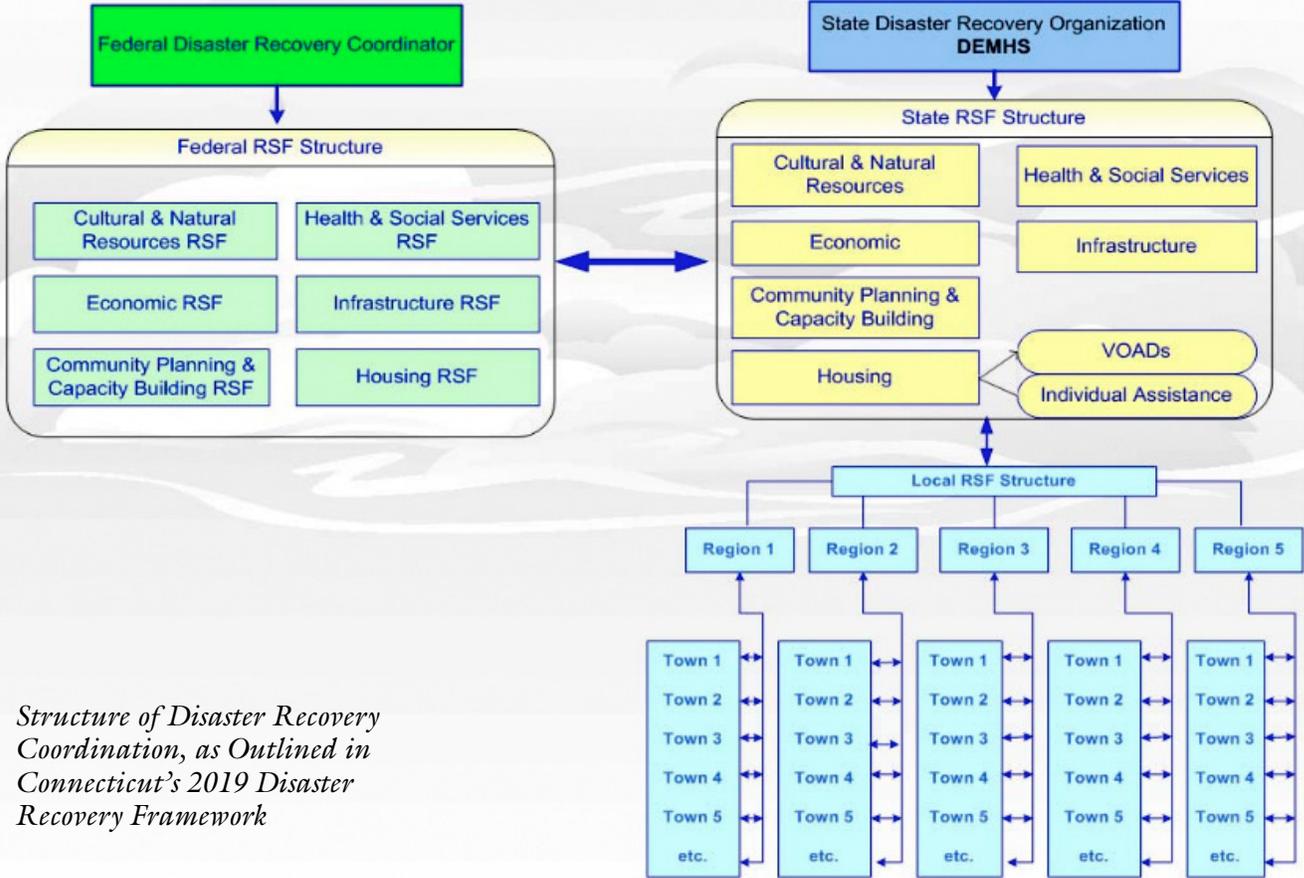
—Governor Ned Lamont

In a weak moment in 2013, I agreed to volunteer to be the Long-Term Emergency Management Coordinator for the Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) Region 5, encompassing 43 towns in primarily the northwest part of Connecticut. As a former police officer, volunteer firefighter, and local fire commissioner, I am very familiar with emergency management and

thought that combined with my 30 years of land use planning I could contribute as a volunteer. My thought at the time was should there be a tornado, as occurred in the northwest corner in 1989, my land use experience would be helpful in the long-term recovery efforts after the immediate emergency was handled. Never in a million years did I expect a pandemic

*(continued on page 7)*

## FEDERAL AND STATE RECOVERY SUPPORT FUNCTIONS



*Structure of Disaster Recovery Coordination, as Outlined in Connecticut’s 2019 Disaster Recovery Framework*

## Long-Term Recovery, cont'd

that would affect all 169 cities and towns in CT. My responsibility, now, is to chair the DEMHS Region 5's Long-Term Recovery Steering Committee recently formed and members approved by the Governor's office.

### State-wide Recovery Framework

Here is how long-term recovery efforts are organized under the State's Emergency Response Framework:

Under the joint leadership of the Department of Economic and Community Development, the Connecticut Department of Insurance, and the Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, the Connecticut Long-Term Recovery Committee is planning for long-term economic recovery across the state. This statewide committee, led by Lisa Tepper-Bates of the Governor's office and David Lehman, Commissioner of the Department of Economic and Community Development, will be identifying

unmet needs and working with partners to respond. Long-term recovery activities focus on meeting the unmet needs of individuals and on returning communities to pre-disaster conditions.

Each of the Five Regions has appointed a Steering Committee that will identify any/all unmet needs in their regions that are a direct result of this pandemic. The Long-Term Recovery Coordinator in each Region will serve as the Chairman of the Steering Committee and will work with State and Local partners to accomplish their goals. Communications will flow up and down through the Local, Regional and State Long-Term Committees.

Materials describing Connecticut's Long-Term Recovery approach can be viewed on the ct.gov site at <https://bit.ly/2VQFOo8>. The Emergency Support Function (ESF) #14, Long-Term Recovery and Mitigation, is an important part of the State's Response and Recovery Framework (SRF) as described on the DEMHS/DESPP [website](#).

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**Under the joint leadership of the Department of Economic and Community Development, the Connecticut Department of Insurance, and the Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, the Connecticut Long-Term Recovery Committee is planning for long-term economic recovery across the state.**



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## What's going on?!

Stay current with CCAPA happenings! Bookmark our online events page at <https://ct.planning.org/conferences-and-meetings/> so you don't miss out!

## Long-Term Recovery, cont'd

The Statewide emergency response is most effective when the State-level Recovery Team works together with coordinated recovery efforts in our local communities. Each community needs to identify a Town Long-term Recovery Coordinator (*this should be someone who is not a first responder*). It must be someone who is plugged into the community. The Coordinator will build a Committee to identify their local communities unmet needs. Some of the smaller communities may decide work together collaboratively and form larger more regional committees. Local Long-Term Recovery Committees (LTRCs) are an important way that communities can make sure local resources are pulling together most effectively to meet the needs of residents –so that every ounce of energy and every dollar spent in each community has maximal impact. At the same time, Local Long-Term Recovery Committees are an important way that local communities can identify gaps and develop a comprehensive understand-

ing of which members of your community might need more support in the recovery process. Finally, the Local Long-term Recovery Committee is an important and effective channel to communicate to the Regional Steering Committees and the State Emergency Management Team the major gaps/needs that may require a State-level response.

### Local Long-Term Recovery Committees should bring together:

- Local government
- Voluntary agencies
- Community and faith-based organizations
- Philanthropy
- Private sector partners

The participating organizations must work together cooperatively according to their respective missions and guidelines. Diversity and community representation is crucial.

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## Long-Term Recovery, cont'd

The Regional Emergency Planning Team (REPT) in each DEMHS region has a Coordinator and a Long-Term Recovery Coordinator (see chart).

It is essential that our CT Chapter of the American Planning Association members be involved in these Local Recovery and Regional Steering Committees. Our planning knowledge and understanding of our local community needs are crucial in recovering from the COVID 19 Pandemic emergency. Please contact the Regional Coordinator or Long-Term Recovery Coordinator in your area to see how you can be involved. 🏡

— *Martin J. Connor, AICP is the City Planner for the City of Torrington as well as Town Planner for the Town of Goshen. He serves as the DEMHS Region 5 Long-Term Emergency Coordinator.*

Region 1	Robert Kenny	DEHMS	Region 1 Coordinator
	Michele DeLuca	LTRC R-1 Norwalk	Long Term Recovery Coordinator Region 1
Region 2	Jacob Manke	DEHMS	Region 2 Coordinator
	Richards, Bill	LTRC R-2 Milford	Long Term Recovery Coordinator Region 2
Region 3	William Turley	DEMHS	Region 3 Coordinator
	Laurie Whitten	LTRC R-3 Enfield	Long Term Recovery Coordinator Region 3
Region 4	Mike Caplet	DEHMS	Region 4 Coordinator
	Michael Licata	LTRC R-4 Colchester	Long Term Recovery Coordinator Region 4
Region 5	John Field	DEHMS	Region 5 Coordinator
	Martin Connor	LTRC R-5 Torrington	Long Term Recovery Coordinator Region 5

*Recovery Coordinators for the Five DEMHS Regions.*

*Source: State of Connecticut*

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# Can In-Person Meetings and COVID Co-Exist?

by Dwight Merriam, FAICP

As the state of Connecticut begins to reopen, it is time to consider how land use meetings will be held. The experience with online meetings has generally been good with some benefits, including increased public participation and accessibility. The online formats can be awkward and much is lost in terms of body language, expression, and the interaction that is often at the heart of our meetings. Still, as we transition to more in-person meetings, it is likely that we will continue to conduct meetings in a hybrid approach, with some people attending in person and others participating at a distance. This is happening now with 5 or 10 people allowed in the hearing room and the rest online.



Much planning needs to be done now, nearly all of it specially adapted to the spaces that we have for our meetings and the access to and from them. **Here are just some of the considerations that must be given:**

■ **Personal protective equipment.** Nearly everyone should be required to wear cloth face coverings when accessing and being in the meeting room. Those exempt from such requirements include children younger than two years old, anyone who has trouble breathing, and those who have difficulty in removing a face-mask from their own face.

Not everyone remembers to bring their face covering with them, so consider having a supply of face coverings for distribution as necessary.

Hand sanitizer should be available at entry and exit points as people should sanitize hands before the meeting and as they leave the meeting.

■ **Managing entry.** It's important to stop people from coming into the meeting who may be sick. That can be done by posting a sign prominently at the entrance warning people if they do not feel well or think they may have a temperature that they should not enter the room and instead follow the meeting online. Boxes of wipes should be located at the entrance with a sign indicating the people are welcome to take them to wipe down their chairs before they sit. Many people are



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## In-Person Meetings and COVID, cont'd

concerned about the condition of these hard surfaces and having the wipes available can help reduce anxiety.

It may be that you want to ask everyone in attendance to voluntarily give their names and contact information even if they are not speaking so that you can inform them if anyone who attended the meeting is later diagnosed with COVID-19. The three keys to limiting contagion are social distancing, widespread testing, and tracking. Tracking is only possible when people who were potentially exposed can be identified and notified. To that end, you want to determine a way to know who was in your meeting.

■ **Ventilation.** Energy-efficient buildings often have HVAC systems that allow limited exchange of outside air. Consideration should be given to adjusting those systems to increase the circulation of outdoor air as much as possible to reduce the amount of potential virus in the air. Sometimes this can be done mechanically by simply opening windows and doors. If you're using fans, they should be directed away from people so that you're not blowing air from one person to another.

■ **Water fountains.** Because of the limited risk of touch transmission, most public water fountains should be secured. Instead, consider have cases of bottled water. Remind people to bring their own water.

■ **Toilets.** Paper towels only. Air dryers can be accidentally brushed. Have a sign to remind people to use a paper towel to open the door, both sides (have paper towels on a table outside).

■ **Cleaning protocols.** It will be necessary to clean and disinfect any of the public restrooms in the meeting spaces after each meeting. The CDC has guidelines for these cleaning and disinfecting protocols for both hard surfaces and soft services and they should be consulted as you develop a plan for that. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) "Cleaning and Disinfection for Community Facilities."

■ **Elevators.** To be avoided. Too close for social distancing and you need to touch buttons. Maybe you should post a sign "no more than one person at a time on the elevator."

■ **Modified room layouts.** This is a significant issue requiring careful thought and planning. Go to any big box store or supermarket and do what they do. One way traffic and taped social distancing on the floors.

Generally, if you can avoid cloth using cloth chairs, you should; and stay with the hard surfaces. Inside the meeting rooms if chairs can be physically set up in a proper distance from each other, that will provide adequate social distancing. Two chairs with a space between and one-way aisles on each side is one approach. Otherwise, the seats will have to be marked off and secured in ways that indicate where people may sit. Computation of the room's capacity with proper social distancing should be made and the number of people who can participate in person so limited. Fairbanks, Alaska's new rules for reopening public meetings limits capacity to 25 in one of its meeting rooms that normally handles 153.

Many towns have small rooms with limited options to move to larger places. It may be necessary to take reservations in advance and have those who cannot appear in person join online. Whether public meeting requirements which have been eased with the Governor's executive orders will be extended or not, and to what degree, is yet to be seen. However, some relief may be necessary going forward simply because of the lack of adequate space to accommodate everybody in person while maintaining social distancing.

It will be problematic to have people sign up to speak from a single clipboard and pen. An alternative might be to have a staff member wear gloves and hand out index cards and a pencil or pen to everybody who wants to sign up and then collect the cards and use those to call on speakers.

Anything that creates a line or queue of people should be avoided, such as having speakers line up behind a microphone in the middle of the room, unless you can stake out six-foot separations for those in line.

It will be nearly impossible for those participating in the meetings to roll out plans and go over them on the commission's table. Instead, it will be essential to have increased capability of using display stands and video coverage of maps and plans to make sure that they are accessible to all in the room and those online.

We as planners have a lot of work ahead of us in this transition back to something resembling pre-pandemic meetings. ■

— *Dwight H. Merriam has practiced law for four decades. He represents land owners, developers, governments, and individuals in land use matters. Dwight is a Fellow and Past President and of the American Institute of Certified Planners, a former Director of the American Planning Association, and a former chair of APA's Planning and Law Division.*

# Get to Know CCAPA's Student Members

*Editor's Note: At the top of CCAPA's list of goals for the past few years has been for the chapter to more proactively support the next generation of planners. Let's get to know them.*

## Gabby Nelson

**School/Degree:** Trinity College, Graduate Program in Public Policy, Class of 2021

**Hometown:** Norfolk, CT

I am the program coordinator at the Center for Urban and Global Studies at Trinity College. This summer, I am researching the impact of community development corporations (CDCs) on neighborhood stability in CT cities. Long-term, I could see myself going in a few directions. I enjoy working in higher education and may end up staying in higher education, but could see myself working for a CDC or a similar organization on community engagement or research. I became interested in planning after the first urban studies class I took as an undergrad at UConn. One of my favorite places I've visited is the Baishizhou urban village in Shenzhen, China. In 2014 the Shenzhen government announced it would demolish and redevelop Baishizhou. The demolition was on hold, but it will soon resume. The next time I have a chance to return to Shenzhen, the vibrant urban village will likely be gone. Closer to home, Hartford is a favorite place of mine. I grow a flower and vegetable garden at Knox's main urban farm in Hartford and love visiting the community gardens around the city.



## Emily Persico

**School/Degree:** Yale School of the Environment – Master of Environmental Management, Urban Environmental Justice Specialization, Class of 2020

**Hometown:** Fort Lauderdale, FL

I want to work at the local level to inspire sustainable and equitable community development in the NE or Great Lakes Region. I hope to spend my career working for municipal government and nonprofits with a focus on environmental justice. One of my favorite places and a place I will soon return is Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. After spending the two years prior to graduate school in Pittsburgh, I returned for my required summer internship in Summer 2019. As a Food Policy Planner with the Department of City Planning, I worked alongside city planners to develop Healthy Food Priority



Areas using GIS Analysis, disseminate findings from a report on food insecurity, and support the city's Adopt-A-Lot Program. I quickly fell in love with Pittsburgh's rolling hills, three rivers, and multitudes of culturally distinct neighborhoods. Much of my first hand knowledge of environmental justice, segregation, and gentrification come from my experiences in Pittsburgh and New Haven, and digging into their histories of urban renewal and zoning decisions in my independent study "Power and Organizing in the City" was particularly insightful. I will soon join PennFuture full-time as a Policy Analyst.

## Gioia Montana Connell

**School/Degree:** Yale School of the Environment & Yale School of Architecture – Dual Masters in Environmental Management and Architecture, Class of 2020

**Hometown:** Branford, CT

I hope to build a career in climate adaptation, with a particular focus on participatory design and creative financing for community ownership. I am currently seeking jobs that will build my technical design expertise, while keeping an open mind to a future in governance and policy.

I became interested in planning slowly, through both personal and professional experience. As a coastal Connecticut native, Sandy and Irene made me acutely aware of the need for climate resiliency planning a few years before I started my career. My first job out of college was at a brownfield redevelopment consultancy. While I studied sustainable design in college with a focus on international relations, economic geography, and management, it was working with municipal clients that made me realize the extent to which cities are primary agents in the holistic design work that I was leaning towards. Gathering and translating community inputs around distressed sites helped me to recognize the role of planners as facilitators to promote community voices in the planning process. The intersection of toxic site cleanup, economic development, and coastal resiliency is something that I have continued to work on in my time at Yale. I've also worked with colleagues at the School of the Environment and the School of Architecture to create a project finance company to fund and install a community-owned solar array on the university's Jim



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## CCAPA's Student Members, cont'd

Vlock Annual Building Project two years in a row. The project generates clean and affordable energy for our homelessness non-profit partner, Columbus House. This intersection of innovation and public works taught me a lot about creative partnerships spurred by both the opportunities and the limitations in energy planning. Right now I am applying to jobs, replacing my father's porch, and working on Justin Farmer's State Senate Campaign volunteering and writing energy policy briefings.

### Regina Harlig

**School/Degree:** Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies – Master of Environmental Management. Class of 2020

**Hometown:** Bloomington, IN with 10 years working in Washington, D.C.

I want to help cities to develop strategies to be more sustainable, resilient, and equitable. I'm really interested in the intersection between affordable housing and the environment, specifically, ensuring that city greening efforts don't lead to the displacement of current residents. Prior to my first year of grad school, planning wasn't something that had really been on my radar, but I took a class on land use planning and realized that it combined a lot of the things that I was interested in, like affordable housing, historic preservation, and the environment. My interest in planning was cemented last summer, when I interned at the CRCOG as a Sustainable CT fellow. I worked with different municipalities within the Capitol Region to apply for sustainability certification, and I saw that planners were doing a lot of interesting work, approaching sustainability from many different angles. In school, I had the opportunity to work with a few different clients on planning-related projects: I reviewed the actions within New York State's climate certification program, Climate Smart Communities, for potential unintended impacts on social equity and public health; I worked on a project in a suburb of Providence, RI to understand barriers to urban forestry, which included identifying tree-friendly zoning ordinances and requirements for new developments; I also researched housing segregation in Rochester, NY, to help a community land trust identify solutions to racially restrictive covenants which are still on the books there. I've been lucky to see a lot of New Haven because my student job —planting free trees for residents and businesses — took me all over the city. As I go around New Haven, I can almost always point to a tree and say, "I planted that!"



## "What are your favorite websites/tools/blogs?"

Recently, I'm really interested in Sara Bronin's work at [www.desegregatect.org](http://www.desegregatect.org). — **Emily Persico**

I have been working through a [reading list](#) put out several years ago by CityLab writer Brentin Mock about urban design and racial justice. The article has a wealth of resources that are really critical to the function of planning, design, space, and urban life. — **Gioia Montana Connell**

I have always loved reading the "Housing Complex" section of the Washington City Paper. While it's very DC-focused, I recommend it for anyone who's interested in planning. I also recommend reading the work of journalist [Brentin Mock](#), who writes about racial equity, economic inequities, and environmental justice for CityLab, and the Curbed podcast "Nice Try: Utopian," about failed utopian communities. — **Regina Harlig**

I really like the [Untokening](#) website, which focuses on mobility justice principles that can be used in planning. This is highly important especially as more individuals and organizations move towards implementing anti-racism into their work. — **Leo Goldsmith**

The website [www.clmigration.org](http://www.clmigration.org) documents some of the really challenging planning and ethical decisions that communities are making in high-risk areas experiencing climate-related hazards, like wildfires or sea level rise. — **Katie McConnell**

I recently discovered the ability to make custom maps on [Google My Maps](#). For simple projects, it is so much easier than ArcMap. I love how user friendly it is and how quickly I can map data. — **Gabby Nelson**

[Gigi the Planner](#) runs a podcast and blog to promote the career of urban planning to inspire young planners, especially people of color. — **Mark Landolina**

### Leo Goldsmith

**School/Degree:** Yale School of the Environment, Master in Environmental Management, Class of 2020

**Hometown:** Home is where community is. Currently, for me, that is New Haven, Connecticut.

My interest in planning first occurred after I took two courses called "Urban Political Ecology" and "Racializing the City" at Oberlin College. It was my introduction to how planning has an immense effect on how areas within cities are designated and shaped across lines of race, sexuality, gender identity, and ability.

In the summer of 2019, I was selected for the Environmental Fellows Program out of the University of Michigan School for Environment and Sustainability. I was funded by the McKnight Foundation and worked with the [Environmental Justice Coordinating Council](#),



*(continued on page 14)*

## CCAPA's Student Members, cont'd

a council made up of residents of North Minneapolis, a primarily low-income Black neighborhood. They are collaborating with the City of Minneapolis, First Avenue Music Venue, and United Properties to provide community guidance and input into the development of the Upper Harbor Terminal Project. I was grateful to assist in an effective community engagement process built on deliberative democracy principles to effectively plan a development that will prioritize anti-gentrification, climate resilience, honoring North Minneapolis culture, providing economic opportunities, and affordable housing for the community. Currently, I am in a part time research summer fellowship position with the Michelle Bell Lab at the Yale School of the Environment, researching academic literature around health disparities in the LGBTQ population to explore if this population has disproportionate environmental exposure burden based on location. I am also a volunteer with Sunrise New Haven and am on the advocacy council for the Connecticut Chapter of the US Green Building Council. I am currently looking for full-time employment and my career aspirations are to work for a non-profit or sub-national government agency in the United States working on climate adaptation and resilience planning on a sub-national level.

*(continued on page 15)*



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## “How Does Planning Need to Change?”

Zoning needs to change radically. In an ideal world, I think we would scrap what we have completely and start over. Minneapolis’ ban on single family zoning is a good start, but I think we need to go much further to systematically root out classist and racist policies. I don’t have faith that municipalities will do this on their own and think that we need to approach solutions from a state or even national level. This is one reason why I find Sara Bronin’s [desegregate CT] work hopeful. —

**Emily Persico**

I think that both planners and designers benefit from reflecting on the history of our professions, thinking critically about the present nature of our fields, and exercising self-awareness about our role. Actively centering and recognizing the voices of color that have long been assets to the profession is critical, and will ultimately require restructuring how planning and urbanism is taught and practiced. — **Gioia Montana Connell**

I’m excited to see that in some cities, planning departments and other agencies are starting to hire for positions related to equity and racial justice. My hope is that in the near future, these positions will no longer be needed, because anti-racism and equity will be the backbone of all planners’ work. — **Regina Harlig**

There needs to be a stronger representation of the community in those that make the decisions. More women, more minorities, and more youth representation are ways to change the make-up of planning. —

**Marissa Yanez**

Planning needs to change to always incorporate anti-racist, anti-misogynistic, anti-homophobic, anti-transphobic, and anti-ableist principles as the field has a history of exclusion. This will require an active dismantling of the policies and institutional discrimination that creates the environment for that to occur in the first place. We need to look to those who are the most marginalized and take their direction. This requires active conversations, collaborations, and shifting of power. — **Leo Goldsmith**

I firmly believe that Connecticut needs stronger regional governments. This is the first step, in my mind, toward creating a more economically viable and integrated state. We have to educate our fellow community members about the harm and waste that having 169 separate towns causes. It is an economic and equity problem. It would be better for everyone if our towns could be more integrated. — **Gabby Nelson**

A more ambitious approach to planning here can include an accredited university degree program, more regional planning power, stronger community education/participation and more long term visioning efforts through a 20-30 year POCD. — **Mark Landolina**

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## CCAPA's Student Members, cont'd

### Katie McConnell

**School/Degree:** Yale School of the Environment, pursuing PhD in environmental sociology

**Hometown:** Boise, ID



I recently co-chaired the environmental committee of Boise's new mayor's transition team, where I helped develop recommendations for policy changes around climate adaptation and environmental equity. At Yale, my research focuses on the impacts of wildfires, which are a major issue in the Western United States. I think there are huge planning and policy questions around this issue that I hope to contribute to – How do/should governments protect homes in the wildland urban interface? Should communities be having a conversation around retreat from high fire-risk areas, as many already are about sea-level rise? Which communities are most vulnerable to wildfire impacts? I've also worked as an intern at NASA's Goddard Institute in NYC, where I used satellite data to model urban heat maps for larger planning efforts in Gowanus, NYC and Northwest Connecticut. I am currently working on a team which uses this heat modeling technique to

## "Why did you join CCAPA? What do you like about being a member?"

When I decided to move to Connecticut just two years ago, I knew very little about the state. By joining CCAPA, I was able to get familiarized with local issues and stay plugged in to the latest developments in the field.

— **Emily Persico**

I like the broad spectrum of resources and activities that the CCAPA supports. From email reminders about actions on important bills to webinars to the magazine, CCAPA has been very useful for learning about best practices as well as statewide and regional work. — **Gioia Montana Connell**

I joined CCAPA because I find it a great space to learn about what professionals are doing in the field and opportunities available. I really like being able to keep up with topics that are relevant to state of Connecticut.

— **Leo Goldsmith**

I joined CCAPA to be more connected to planners around the state. I enjoy reading the CT Planning Magazine to keep up with current topics in planning in the state and got a lot out of attending SNEAPA this past fall.

— **Gabby Nelson**

evaluate the ability of green roofs to reduce land surface temperature in Chicago. In the future, I hope to work in a setting where I can bring science into policy making, maybe for a federal agency or NGO.

*(continued on page 16)*

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## CCAPA's Student Members, cont'd

### Marissa Yanez

**School/Degree:** University of Vermont, Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources, majoring in Natural Resource Planning with a minor in Green Building and Community Design, Class of 2021

**Hometown:** Orange, CT

At the University of Vermont, I had the privilege to take a course called Sustainable Community Development. This course piqued my interest in what it means to be a planner and opened the door to the large scope of what planning could be. I then was able to shadow a day with the City of Burlington's Urban Planner. After that, I knew that I wanted to be in the field. Currently, I am studying to become LEED Certified and am working in an internship surveying the impacts of COVID-19 on mobile home parks across the State of Vermont in a partnership with the Housing Foundation Incorporation and the University of Vermont. This survey's intention is to not only identify residents' experience with COVID-19, but to also identify emergency preparedness practices within the parks. This has only increased my passion for community resilience planning.

*(continued on page 17)*



## "How can practicing planners in Connecticut better inspire and support young people to pursue planning careers?"

I am really grateful that Pittsburgh City Planning had a well-developed and supported internship program. Paid internships/fellowships are an especially great way for young people to gain some initial experience and exposure in planning while also knowing that their work and opinions are valued. — **Emily Persico**

Connecticut has some of the most intimate and active communities working in the spheres of housing, transit, environmental protection, coastal resiliency, energy equity, and the arts. Members of these local advocacy groups have been the most inspiring to me over the years, and are the ones that keep me interested in planning. Working across fields, across civic groups, and across levels of government is both exciting and rewarding—and the next generation is more than willing and more than capable to craft a bright future. — **Gioia Montana Connell**

When I was a Sustainable CT fellow at CRCOG, I got to see a lot of the work that planners did at the regional level, as well as in the towns that were applying for sustainability certification. The experience really helped me to understand municipal governments in Connecticut. — **Regina Harlig**

More opportunities! I was not backed by a Connecticut University, so I was unable to access any of the connections and relationships that may have existed, but as a Connecticut resident I would have loved to learn more about my home town and state. — **Marissa Yanez**

Exposing young people to the field in engaging ways will help support young people pursuing planning careers. This is especially important for those who come from marginalized backgrounds or may not see themselves in those who are in the planning field. For example, I am a queer Latinx transgender man, and I do not know of anyone in the planning field with that background. Partnering with local public schools to create a day or a few hours to engage youth in a small project will go a long way. — **Leo Goldsmith**

I think that many people in my age group (millennials) are very concerned about climate change, as this will be one of the central societal issues that our generation must respond to. Planning already plays an important role in responding to climate change impacts — this work can be foregrounded. — **Katie McConnell**

If we are able to develop a full fledged graduate program in planning in the state (or an accredited undergraduate program, for that matter), it will (hopefully) make planning more visible to students in CT. We are working on it at Trinity and now have a graduate certificate in urban planning. It's a small step toward addressing the gap in planning education in CT, but we have to start somewhere. — **Gabby Nelson**

It really comes down to raising awareness and excitement. The best way to introduce the field to inspire young planners is through the K-12 curriculum. Planners can help be spokespeople for planning in the community and in our school systems to help inspire community engagement and young planners. — **Mark Landolina**

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**CCAPA's Student Members, cont'd**

**Mark Landolina**

**School/Degree:** University of Southern California, School of Public Policy (online) – Executive Master's of Urban Planning, Class of 2021

**Hometown:** Tolland, CT



I work for the Town of Coventry as the Planning Technician/Zoning Enforcement Officer. On a daily basis I work on zoning applications, and also helped work on the recent POCD and other efforts to improve resiliency, equability and housing in Coventry through plans and policies. My college professor at Keene State College inspired my planning career. I am also inspired by Jane Jacobs. She brings in many parallels between environmental studies and urban planning that resonate with me. I hope to ultimately become a city planner, developer, or planning consultant. 🏡



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# Meet Connecticut's Planners

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## Rachel Bright

Visual Communication Specialist  
Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc.

### What is your current position?

I am a Visual Communications Specialist at FHI. In this role, I design graphics, create branding packages, and develop and execute marketing campaigns for a variety of planning, community engagement, and environmental projects. I also lead branding and marketing initiatives for communities to help them reach their economic development goals. I am passionate about utilizing high-quality design to engage and communicate with the public and to promote communities and their assets.

### What is your hometown?

That's a tough one! I was born in small town Ohio, grew up in rural Central Florida, and have spent my adult years "up north," first in New York City, and now in Connecticut. Having lived in rural, urban, and suburban areas, I have a great appreciation for downtown revitalization and other community planning efforts to improve livability and sense of place.

### What are your favorite places (cities, towns, neighborhoods, etc.)?

Favorite large city: Paris. I also enjoy exploring new places closer to home, and my favorite things to discover are historic, revitalized downtowns (recent discoveries include Corning, NY and DeLand, FL). I also love the mountains, particularly the Blue Ridge of Virginia and Smoky Mountains of Tennessee.

### What made you decide on a career in planning?

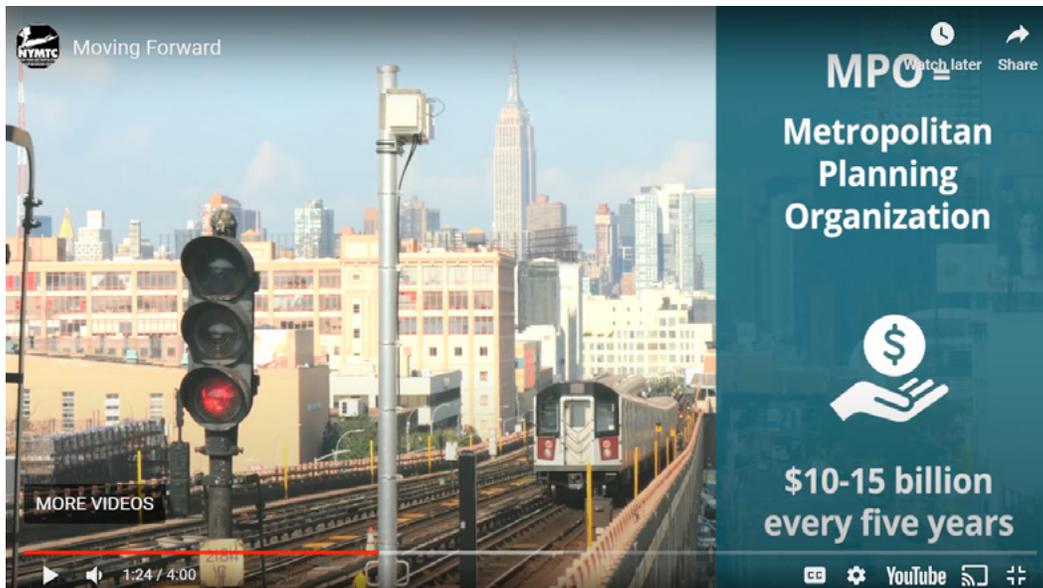
I was interested in planning and design before I knew it was a thing! While other kids were perusing comic books or magazines, I was studying road maps, drawing house plans, and mapping my own imaginary cities. I studied architecture and urban design as an undergrad, but after taking



**Now that all community engagement has shifted to virtual, my work has become increasingly focused on digital communications, such as graphics for social media, informational and promotional videos, and interactive websites. Community engagement was already moving into the digital domain, but recent events have accelerated that trend.**

some planning classes and interning at an architecture firm, I realized that I preferred the "big picture" of planning over the details of architecture. That led me to get a Master's Degree in planning and start my career as a planner. Over the years, I found that I most enjoyed the creative aspects of planning, and now, as a Visual Communications Specialist, I have the opportunity to utilize my creativity and passion for design on planning projects that help build strong, livable, vibrant communities.

*(continued on page 19)*



*Explainer videos — such as this one produced by FHI for NYMTC's Regional Transportation Plan — are a great way to engage stakeholders and the public in this era of virtual-only outreach. This video can be viewed at [nymtc.org/planmovingforward](http://nymtc.org/planmovingforward).*

## Connecticut Planner Profile: Rachel Bright, cont'd

### Why did you decide to be a planner in Connecticut?

Well, primarily because I was a planner who had moved to Connecticut and needed a job! Beyond that, I love Connecticut and believe that our state has enormous potential. I am grateful that my job gives me the opportunity to contribute to making our state thrive.

### What projects/initiatives are you currently working on as a planner?

I am currently working on a public outreach campaign for a Regional Transportation Plan for the NYC metro region. This includes branding the project, creating a website, interactive online platform, and promotional videos, as well as developing a social media marketing campaign. The goal is to inform the public about the project and elicit participation and feedback to inform the Plan. I am also working on a communications campaign for the town of Middlebury, VT that includes developing maps, flyers, wayfinding signage, storyboard installations, and a branded bus wrapper — all to improve pedestrian access and promote the vibrant downtown business district while roads are closed due to a multi-year rail construction project. In addition, I recently led a rebranding and marketing initiative for the Town of Windham, CT. This project was near and dear to my heart because it was part of the Town's ongoing efforts to revitalize downtown Willimantic and create a positive community identity.

### Why did you join CCAPA/What do you like about being a member?

I joined CCAPA to stay connected with the planning community in Connecticut and keep myself informed about planning initiatives and opportunities around the state.

### How have you had to adjust your work practices or focus in the last few months?

Going virtual has certainly impacted my work! While FHI has long utilized digital tools for community engagement, before the current public health crisis, much of my work involved creating communications materials for in-person public meetings and events (boards, banners, flyers, branded giveaways, etc.). Now that all community engagement has shifted to virtual, my work has become increasingly focused on digital communications, such as graphics for social media, informational and promotional videos, and interactive websites. Community engagement was already moving into the digital domain, but recent events have accelerated that trend. With the exception of a few hiccups (zoom-bombed public meetings come to mind), the transition has been pretty smooth. Despite the challenges our state and region are currently facing, I am grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the long-term vitality of our communities by helping keep planning projects and initiatives moving forward.

### Do you have any favorite websites/tools/blogs that relate to planning and/or your job that you'd like to share?

I'm currently spending a lot of time beefing up my technical skills in video editing and motion graphics. I use a variety of online resources for inspiration and tutorials. One of my go-to sites is [www.creativebloq.com](http://www.creativebloq.com). I am also a member of the American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA), and their e-newsletter is a great source for design inspiration ([www.aiga.org](http://www.aiga.org)). ■

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by Christopher J. Smith, Esquire, Alter & Pearson, LLC

## Nonconformities and Variances — The Adolphson Exception to Legal Hardship Reaffirmed With A Twist

Generally, one needs to establish “legal hardship” for variance approval. Over the past few years, we have had a number of Connecticut court decisions addressing legal hardship.



However, there is an often-overlooked exception to establishing legal hardship for variance approval that was recently addressed by the Appellate Court in *Turek, et al. v Zoning Board of Appeals for the City of Milford*, 196 Conn. App. 122 (2020). The exception provides that the reduction of an existing nonconforming use to a “less offensive” nonconforming use may constitute “an independent ground for granting a variance.” For example, changing a nonconforming aluminum casting foundry to a nonconforming automobile repair shop was found to be a valid substitution for having to establish legal hardship for variances in *Adolphson v. Zoning Board of Appeals*, 205 Conn. 703 (1988).

The exception also provides that the reduction of a nonconformity, such as a setback from the mean high tide line, may justify the approval of a variance for the reduced setback to accommodate new construction. This occurred in *Hescock v. Zoning Board of Appeals*, 112 Conn. App. 239 (2009).

In summary, the change of one nonconforming use to a less offensive nonconforming use, or reduction of a zoning setback nonconformity, may serve as a substitute for having to es-

tablish legal hardship for a variance of the subject nonconformity. This legal concept is often referred to as the *Adolphson* exception. The rationale for this exception is that it encourages the reduction or elimination of nonconformities, which is a goal of zoning.

In *Turek*, plaintiffs’ home was destroyed by Hurricane Sandy. Now, for those of you working in “inland” communities who may be hardened to hear about more litigation involving variances to accommodate post-Sandy new construction on our Connecticut shoreline, please don’t stop reading — *Turek* has a more universal application (trust me).

In *Turek*, plaintiffs’ lot and pre-existing residence had numerous nonconformities. However, not one of these nonconformities involved height. Plaintiffs desired to rebuild their destroyed two-story 1500 square foot residence with a three-story (not counting the garage level) 1600 square foot residence. Because of certain state and federal elevation requirements, you guessed it, plaintiffs needed a height variance. Plaintiffs claimed legal hardship. Plaintiffs also proposed to reduce other nonconformities associated with the property, including setbacks, as an independent basis for the height variance, as provided by the *Adolphson* exception.

The Board denied the application. The Board found that plaintiffs lacked legal hardship. The Board also found that the height requirement, and state and federal elevation requirements, apply similarly to numer-

ous other properties along the shoreline and, therefore, were not unique to plaintiffs’ property.

Plaintiffs appealed and the trial court reversed the Board’s denial. The trial court found legal hardship, and that the reduction of the non-height related nonconformities justified an independent basis for the height variance, as provided by the *Adolphson* exception.

The Board filed a petition for certification to appeal that was granted by the Appellate Court. The Appellate Court reversed the trial court’s decision effectively reinstating the Board’s denial.

First, the Court agreed with the Board that plaintiffs lacked legal hardship. Apparently, the Court felt that plaintiffs could reconstruct their residence without exceeding the height requirement. Perhaps, two floors, as opposed to three, would meet the height requirement. Therefore, the request was premised on convenience that doesn’t constitute legal hardship.

The Court then addressed whether the Board should have approved the requested height variance since plaintiffs were reducing other, non-height related, nonconformities.

The Court recognized that the *Adolphson* exception to establishing legal hardship involves either the reduction or elimination of the nonconformity that is the subject of the requested variance. However, the Court noted that plaintiffs proposed to create a new height nonconformity where one had not previously existed.

*(continued on page 21)*

## From the Bench, cont'd

The Court stated that “plaintiffs have provided this court with no authority suggesting that the board *was required to grant* the requested variance from the height limitation, *which would create a new non-conformity*, on the basis of a proposed reduction or elimination of other nonconformities and compliance with flood regulations.” (Italics in original; underlining added.) The Court concluded that the exception does not apply, and reversed the trial court’s decision reinstating the Board’s denial.

Question: would the Court have deferred to the Board if the Board *approved* the variance finding that the reduction of the non-height related non-

conformities justified the requested height variance by making the property and residence “more conforming” or “less offensive”?

For full disclosure, I’m involved in a pending appeal where this issue is involved. I’ll let you know what happens. In the interim, the State Supreme Court denied plaintiffs’ petition for certification to appeal. *Turek* is the law based upon its facts. ■

— Christopher Smith is an attorney with Alter & Pearson, LLC. He can be reached at (860) 652-4020 or [csmith@alterpearson.com](mailto:csmith@alterpearson.com).



## Good Readings

APA’s digital library at [www.planning.org/library/ebooks/](http://www.planning.org/library/ebooks/) gives APA members online access to a selection of hundreds of planning e-books and audiobooks that can be downloaded and accessed immediately from anywhere in the world. Newly added: *So You Want to Talk about Race* and *Soft City: Building Density for Everyday Life*.

## Member News

**Susan C. Cullen, AICP, PhD** is now the Director of Economic & Community Development for the Town of Stonington. Susan was formerly a planner with the Town of Groton.



**Matthew Tyksinski** is now Transportation Planner in the Bureau of Public Transportation at the Connecticut Department of Transportation. Matthew was formerly with the Yale Office of Sustainability and the Town of East Windsor.



**Christopher Schaut, AICP** is now Land Use Analyst with Robinson+Cole. Christopher was formerly Assistant City Planner for the City of Bristol.



**Joanna Wozniak-Brown** has joined the Connecticut Institute for Climate Resilience & Climate Adaptation (CIRCA) as Assistant Director of Resilience Planning. She was formerly a Regional Planner with the Northwest Hills Council of Governments.

To submit member news, email [ctplanners@gmail.com](mailto:ctplanners@gmail.com). (Photos: LinkedIn)

# The 2020 Legislative Session — When “Steady Habits” Just Didn’t Cut It

by John Guskowski, AICP, CCAPA Government Relations Co-Chair

By the end of this year’s legislative session, we (over in the boisterous CCAPA Government Relations Clubhouse) fully anticipated that we’d be toasting our numerous successes, and perhaps drowning a few sorrows for bits of public policy that slipped through our fingers. In any event, we certainly figured we’d be able to be in the same room.

The somewhat positive news from Rep. McCarthy-Vahey, Planning and Development Committee House Chair, is that our efforts to establish a statewide GIS standard will continue out-of-session.



The CT General Assembly’s Regulation Review Committee met outside the Capitol on May 26th to establish rules enabling the Committee to hold virtual meetings. Source: CT-N.

As with many things, the story of the 2020 legislative session — as of now — is the story of COVID-19. What had begun with the promise of one of CCAPA’s most active legislative years ended in a disappointing state of suspended animation. A few legislators snuck back into the Capitol in early May to formally gavel out the session, but everything had pretty much ended as of the third week of March. There were no major pieces of relevant legislation passed, let alone any of the key initiatives championed by CCAPA this year.

By early March, CCAPA had testified on several legislative proposals that were set to advance out of the Planning & Development Committee, including [HB 5132](#), An Act Concerning the Reorgani-

zation of the Zoning Enabling Act and the Promotion of Municipal Compliance; [Proposed Bill 258](#), An Act Concerning Certificates of Approval for the Location of Motor Vehicle Dealerships and Repair Shops; and [Proposed Bill 5303](#), An Act Concerning Training for Certain Planning and Zoning Officials. The first two of these were high-priority CCAPA initiatives that stood a very good chance of advancing to the floor.

A third priority bill, [HB 5476](#), An Act Establishing a State-Wide Geographic Information System Task Force, never made it to its scheduled hearing on March 16th, which was also the fate of an interesting and potentially very controversial proposal, [HB 5473](#), An Act Concerning the

*(continued on page 23)*



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## Legislative Update, cont'd

Granting of Variances by Zoning Boards of Appeals. All of these will have to be revisited, in one form or another, next session.

The somewhat positive news from Rep. McCarthy-Vahey, Planning and Development Committee House Chair, is that our efforts to establish a statewide GIS standard will continue out-of-session. CCAPA worked with members of the CT GIS User Network to put together the proposal that became [HB 5476](#), which would establish a task force to advance the creation of a statewide GIS system that would better enable the collection, use, and sharing of geospatial data. Rep. McCarthy-Vahey has identified this as an urgent issue and has stated that she would push this initiative forward, even without formal legislation. Taking a cue from former P&D Chair Rep. Lemar, who convened working sessions on Fair Housing in between legislative sessions, Rep. McCarthy-Vahey has promised to bring key stakeholders (including CCAPA in a leadership role) together this fall to move this concept forward to a point where we could craft some meaningful legislation on GIS in advance of the 2021 session.

At the risk of burying the lede, the implications of COVID have, in the last few weeks, been overtaken by perhaps an even more significant movement. The deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and many others have forced a reckoning with racial and social injustice across the country that we have not seen in five decades. Apart from (but not entirely unrelated to) the conversation around police behavior, the social justice discussion has generated renewed urgency in Connecticut to address the systemic zoning and other regulatory processes that have created and reinforced one of the most racially and economically segregated land use patterns in the country. All of a sudden, a “steady habits” approach and the incremental steps that were outlined in [HB 5132](#) did not seem to be nearly enough.

Into this environment stepped a coalition of attorneys, planners, architects, land use commissioners who have

*(continued on page 24)*



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## Legislative Update, cont'd

coalesced around an agenda called “Desegregate CT.” This agenda argues that the time is now to fundamentally restructure the way our communities provide for a *supply of housing, diversity of housing, and process improvements*. Spearheaded by CCAPA member, UConn Law Professor, and Hartford PZC Chair Sara Bronin, the proposed legislative policies of Desegregate CT have been worked on and supported by CCAPA leadership, including Government Relations Co-Chairs. Many previous legislative proposals that CCAPA has worked on, including the substance of [HB 5132](#), are included in the agenda. As of this writing, the hope is that the agenda can be advanced as a whole and acted upon in a Special Session of the legislature before the 2021 Session.

Finally, the fact that the legislature was closed for business didn’t mean that the Government Relations team was idle. Thanks to Sara Bronin and the Land Use Section of the CT Bar Association, CCAPA has been an active contributor to discussions on some of the Executive Orders coming out of the Governor’s office in response to the COVID-19 crisis. We were very involved in the recently-issued [EO 7MM](#) concerning outdoor dining and retail display, as well as being active in informing our membership and the greater public on other EO provisions concerning land use application deadlines and virtual meetings.

Thanks to Sara Bronin and the Land Use Section of the CT Bar Association, CCAPA has been an active contributor to discussions on some of the Executive Orders coming out of the Governor’s office in response to the COVID-19 crisis.

Many thanks to Co-Chair Jenna Montesano and the membership of the Government Relations Committee, as well as Amanda Kennedy, Rebecca Augur, Mike Piscitelli, Chris Smith, and Sara Bronin for their excellent leadership and collaboration in this most unusual of times. The Committee will continue to work through the summer and fall to keep our key initiatives on the minds of our legislative leadership. As always, we welcome questions, concerns, and offers of support at [ctplannersgovrel@gmail.com](mailto:ctplannersgovrel@gmail.com).

— *John Guskowski is a senior planner with CHA’s Planning and Landscape Architecture Group based in Storrs, CT. John’s work has spanned numerous sectors of planning, including work as a regional planner with CRCOG, a full-time staff planning director in Woodstock and Thompson, a consulting planner for the Towns of Essex, Clinton, and Hampton, lead planner for special studies in Wethersfield, Manchester, Derby, Brooklyn, and Putnam, and a project manager for numerous private development projects across southern New England.*



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