Town Planner
Town of Boxborough, MA

Position Purpose
Performs professional, administrative, and technical support on land use issues for the Town, primarily through the Planning Board. Manages the Planning Department and provides technical assistance on all planning issues; reviews and coordinates all aspects of site plan review, subdivision review, special permits, and zoning by-law changes. Acts as the chief inter-board liaison on land use issues to other Town Boards including the Zoning Board of Appeals, Conservation Commission, Community Preservation Committee, Select Board and other Boards and Committees as required.

Supervision Scope:
Is responsible for all aspects of the development of job and task requirements, job and task completion for the Planning Department. Has responsibilities for job quality, personnel performance evaluation, and cost control.

Supervision Received:
Works under the general administrative direction of the Town Administrator within policies established by the Select Board. The Planning Board provides input and guidance on Town planning activities and statutory and regulatory land use matters. Establishes own work plan and completes work in accordance with statutory deadlines and established departmental policies and standards.

Supervision Given:
Directs the activities of the Administrative Assistant to land use boards. May direct and monitor other employees and consultants. Includes responsibility for service delivery results, personnel actions, workforce and job planning, budget administration and cost control.

Job Environment
Work is primarily performed indoors under typical office conditions and outdoors when site visits are necessary.

Distinguishing Characteristics
Coordinates long-range community and regional planning for the Town, including implementation of the Master Plan and preparation of the Open Space and Recreation Plan; coordinates and advises town boards on issues pertaining to open space preservation, economic development goals, affordable housing strategies, and land use regulation and permitting.
Supports a number of appointed and elected Boards, Committees, and Commissions, including the Select Board, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Housing Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Water Resources Committee, and other appointed Boards, Committees, or Commissions deemed necessary by the Select Board. Priority will be given to statutory requirements, including but not limited to special permits, site plan decisions, subdivision decisions, orders of conditions, variances, appeals and public hearings.

Contacts are with the residents, property owners, businesses, vendors, suppliers, contractors, Town officials, and State officials and require the explanation, discussion, and interpretation of work procedures and regulations.

Coordinates fulfillment of consulting engagements with applicable Town Boards.

Develops practices and processes to assist and guide the public in bringing permit requests before the Town to ensure smooth and open exchange of ideas, information, and awareness among the land use boards in the performance of their duties and in their delivery of services to the public.

Works collaboratively to ensure compliance with US-EPA MA MS4 General Permit. Serves as the Reviewing Agent for the purposes of administering and the enforcing the requirements of the Construction and Post-Construction Stormwater Bylaw and Stormwater Management Regulations. May also be tasked with other environmental permitting tasks as required.

Errors of omission or commission could result in financial loss to the Town, failure to meet established deadlines, inappropriate land use that could be irreversible, or loss of goodwill that may result in the Town being viewed as unfriendly to economic development.

**Examples of Work**

Reviews proposed development plans to ensure compliance with Town goals, subdivision rules and regulations, etc. Provides technical assistance in the development of plans. Makes recommendations for the acceptance/rejection of development plans. Interprets regulations for the various boards, developers, etc. as required. Reviews performance bonds submitted by developers.

Assists landowners, developers, and other interested parties seeking interpretation of the Town’s zoning bylaw and the rules and regulations of the Planning Board; provides technical assistance to Town departments in planning and community development matters.

Assists the Planning Board to develop an integrated land use policy, including but not limited to an open space preservation plan, economic development goals traffic and circulation plan consistent with current circumstances and community goals.

Recommends (to the Planning Board) legislative changes to the Zoning Bylaw and Subdivision Rules and Regulations that implement the town’s land use policy; ensures compliance with state law or improves efficiency regulatory control over development projects.

Reviews applications submitted to the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals for technical accuracy and provides comments and recommendations on all projects.
Communicates and coordinates with the Town Building Commissioner/Inspector on enforcement of zoning bylaws, environmental and wetlands protection bylaws, open space conservation, historic preservation, and public and private construction initiatives.

Provides background information and support to Town Counsel in matters of litigation by assisting in responses to Interrogatories and attending depositions; provide testimony at trial on behalf of the Planning Board.

Undertakes planning studies (e.g., traffic studies, demographic trends, aquifer boundaries, etc.) to identify existing and future land use issues; reports on projected “build-out” of the community for both residential and commercial land. Proposes possible solutions for land use issues identified in such planning reports.

Advises Town boards, officials, developers, and others concerning the applicability, interpretation, intent and purpose of town land use regulations.

Consults to the Planning Board concerning creative and innovative methods of treating land use issues, e.g., development phasing, planned unit development, and proactive open space preservation. Keeps apprised of state and federal legislation that could affect local planning programs and land development.

Consults with municipal planning officials in other communities, as well as with regional and state planning agencies to coordinate town planning and zoning programs. Participates in regional planning opportunities. Plays a proactive role to minimize negative impacts and maximize opportunities for Boxborough arising from development in adjoining towns.

Monitors the implementation of zoning, subdivision control, and other land use controls and related procedures; prepares proposed changes for Planning Board review and Town Meeting consideration.

Compiles statistics related to the Town’s growth and development and prepares a summary annual report for the Town’s Annual Report that quantifies and characterizes the Town’s growth and development based on census information, land use, tax base data, and occupancy rates.

Represents the Planning Board in meetings and discussion with the public, community groups, developers, and government officials.

Administers the subdivision control law, including the processing of preliminary and definitive plans (e.g., site plan review, special permits, scenic road hearings, etc.); prepares draft subdivision decisions for Planning Board review in conformance with state statutes.

Acts as project coordinator for town projects that require permitting.

Serves as the point-of-contact for all Town requests for GIS support. Provides GIS support as requested by town boards. Delegates GIS project assignments to in-house staff or outside consultants as workload dictates. Oversees all delegated project assignments. Assists other Town staff in developing their skills in the use of GIS.

Verifies Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) housing inventory. Prepares housing certification report. Identifies and monitors availability of parcels for affordable housing. Recommends proposals for affordable housing solutions. Identifies and pursues grants and
other forms of assistance in support of affordable housing development. Monitors legal and legislative developments related to affordable housing in Massachusetts. Participates in regional planning discussions for affordable housing goals.

Serves as project manager in studies and special projects related to a wide variety of Town planning issues, zoning by-laws, and sub-division regulations.

Performs other position related duties as required.

**Recommended Minimum Qualifications**

**Education, Training and Experience:**
The Town Planner’s duties require advanced knowledge and understanding of municipal and/or community planning, development, and zoning issues equal to a master’s degree and two years of related experience or a bachelor’s degree and five or more years of related experience or any equivalent combination of education and experience. American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) Certification is preferred.

**Special Requirements Examples:**
A valid Massachusetts Class D Driver’s License; attend evening meetings.

**Knowledge, Ability and Skills:**

*Knowledge:* Extensive knowledge of land use planning principles and practices, state and local land use legislation, procedures, codes, and standards. Strong working knowledge of statutes pertinent to zoning and land use, particularly MGL Ch 40A and 40B. Knowledge of land use/zoning, transportation planning, environmental planning, housing, historic preservation or economic development. Knowledge of principles and practices of research, data collection, and analysis. Knowledge of the principles of budgeting and finance.

*Ability:* Ability to analyze problems, prepare reports, and formulate recommendations concerning planning operations. Ability to read, understand, and interpret technical specifications, blue-prints, zoning, subdivision control, and other land use regulations and plot plans. Ability to perform a varied number of complex tasks requiring considerable exercise of judgement and initiative within the guidelines established by local and state laws related to land-use controls. Ability to create graphic designs, development strategies, and render site plans via sketches and/or computer graphics. Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with co-workers, town officials, and the general public.

*Skills:* Strong oral, graphic, and written communication skills, interpersonal skills and organizational skills. Aptitude and attention to details and accuracy. Adept in the use of computer programs and applications which may include Microsoft Office, Internet applications, GIS programs/applications, and database management.

**Physical Requirements:**
While performing the duties of this job, the employee is required to talk, listen and sit for extended periods. The employee is frequently required to handle or feel objects, tools, or controls. Occasionally requires walking, bending/stooping, reaching with hands and arms, and carrying/lifting (normally no more than 25 pounds).
The employee must be able to view computer screens and numbers and read reports and printouts for analytical purposes for extended time periods. Requires manual dexterity in combination with eye-hand coordination for efficient keyboard input, data entry, and filing.

The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

The duties listed above are intended only as illustrations of the various types of work that may be performed. The omission of specific statements of duties does not exclude them from the position if the work is similar, related, or a logical assignment to the position. This position description does not constitute an employment agreement between the Town and the employee and is subject to change by the town as the needs of the Town and requirements of the job change.

Position description received by: _______________________________ Date: ________