

DATE: APRIL 2015

JOB GRADE: I22

## **LAND USE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR**

**REPORTS TO:** Town Manager

**SUMMARY:** Under the general direction of the Town Manager, the Land Use and Economic Development Director provides administrative and professional support to the Town Manager. This position performs highly responsible, professional and administrative work, while exercising considerable independent judgment relating to land use and economic development issues. This position may also receive requests from Land Use and Economic Development related Boards and Committees as needed. The Director provides professional, technical, administrative, and supervisory work in organizing and coordinating the Acton Land Use Departments. This includes long range planning; project review processes in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws; interpreting local zoning and local regulatory bylaws of the town; following all other applicable rules and regulations such as the Massachusetts Building Code. The Director is responsible for carrying out a wide range of research and representational activities requiring good judgment, analytical ability, diplomacy and confidentiality.

**SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITY:** This position supervises and participates with the recruitment, employment, and evaluation of the Building Commissioner, Planning Director, Health Director and Natural Resources Director. Also supervises and coordinates the work of consultants as needed.

### **DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS OF POSITION:**

**Supervisory Controls:** Supervisor provides assignments, indicating generally what is to be accomplished, setting priorities and deadlines.

**Guidelines:** Specific, detailed guidelines covering most aspects of the assignment are provided. Employee adheres to the guidelines, Town of Acton Personnel Administration Plan and major deviations must be authorized by supervisor.

**Complexity:** Work consists of duties that involve mostly complex-related steps and processes. Employee must recognize differences among a few easily recognizable situations and make decisions based on various choices.

**Scope and Effect:** Work requires the assessment of a variety of conditions and situations, formulating solutions, making judgments, and evaluating the effectiveness and quality of the completed project. Errors in judgment could seriously affect the accuracy, reliability, and acceptability of department operations and service, poor public relation outcomes and significant legal repercussions.

Personal Contacts/

Purpose of Contacts: Works primarily with the Town Manager and town staff, Boards and Committees and other ad hoc land use and economic development related committees.

Physical Demands/

Work Environment: Average physical effort required to perform duties. Ability to operate a computer and view a computer screen for extended periods of time. Ability to hear, talk, walk, sit, bend, reach, and grasp. The ability to operate video display terminals, calculator, telephones, office machines and other office equipment.

**KNOWLEDGE, SKILL AND ABILITY:**

Knowledge - Extensive knowledge of the principles and methods of land use planning, project permitting and economic development. Thorough knowledge of municipal principles, practices and procedures, preferably in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, including intergovernmental relations, municipal grant administration, budgeting and finance, personnel management, economic development, public involvement. Knowledge of real estate terminology, laws, practices, principles, and regulations.

Skill: Excellent oral and written communication skills, including writing reports, memos, completing applications, editing, preparation of technical reports, and the presentation of information to the Town Manager, staff, boards, government entities, and various public and private entities.

Ability - This position requires a high degree of professionalism, and extensive administration abilities, including budgetary and financial oversight of Land Use Departments along with the ability to verbally communicate effectively – both to individuals and in public forums. Ability to interact with a broad range of individuals, coordinate activities, and resolve conflicts. Ability to interpret and apply municipal policies and procedures, town ordinances and federal and state statutes. Ability to plan, organize, supervise and inspect the work of professional, technical and support personnel; ability to delegate responsibility; ability to prepare and present technical and statistical reports; ability to negotiate and resolve disputes effectively; ability to exercise creativity and initiative in resolving town problems and issues and in carrying out administrative responsibilities. Ability to work as a team member, and establish and maintain effective working relationships with employees, town officials, the business community, the general public and state, regional and federal officials. Ability to understand and manage high-profile, sensitive or controversial political situations; strong problem-solving and negotiation skills. Ability to maintain confidentiality when required.

**MINIMUM ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS:**

Master's degree in urban planning or a related field with a minimum of 7 years of progressively responsible management experience; of which 4 years in a supervisory capacity. Comparable combination of education and experience can be substituted. Preference may be given to applicants possessing qualifications above the minimum.

**PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS:** Certification as a Town Planner by the AICP

**SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:** None

**JOB DUTIES:**

- Act as Ombudsman to develop and implement short and long term economic development strategies, public/private partnerships for development, and business assistance programs for existing and prospective businesses
- Meet with developers to review alternatives for achieving the desired outcomes such as timely regulatory review, enhanced project feasibility, accessibility, environmental protection and aesthetic appeal
- Serve as liaison between the Town and the Acton Business Association, Middlesex West Chamber of Commerce and other public/private non-profit groups
- Research the availability of, aggressively seek, apply for and administer grants to achieve adopted goals and objectives
- Provide input to budgetary process and monitor all funds in area of responsibilities
- Maintain detailed knowledge of real estate market and current trends. Keep abreast of land owner circumstances in which the town has a vested interest
- Develop and implement coordinated approaches and creative solutions to land-use management issues in the community such as open space preservation, land acquisitions, historic preservation, affordable housing and economic development
- Provide technical support to non-regulatory boards and committees as needed, including but not limited to the Historic District Commission, Historical Commission and Commission on Disabilities
- Oversee the Land Use Departments' staff in their role of reviewing development applications, including subdivisions, special permits, variances, comprehensive permits and site plan approvals
- Work in consultation with Town Manager's office, Town Counsel and the Land Use and Economic Development Boards/ Commissions/Committees regarding land use litigation and legal matters
- Evaluate and keep abreast of Land Use and Economic Development related legislation and applicability to department projects and programs
- Recommend adjustments in programs, activities, policies and procedures to further economic development goals and permitting processes
- Coordinate efforts related to town-owned land. Work with GIS office to prepare maps as needed to supplement land use departments' activities
- Utilize tools necessary to establish and promote the Commonwealth's Economic Bill for the Town of Acton

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Department Head/Town Manager Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **Land Use and Economic Development Director**

### **Summary job description**

*Starting in 2011, the Board of Selectmen, during its annual Goal Setting meeting, charged the Town Manager to reorganize Acton's separate permitting departments into a unified and transparent Land Use Department to produce a more efficient and productive customer service relationship with citizens and businesses.*

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- Work in consultation with Town Manager's office, Town Counsel and the Land Use Boards/ Commissions regarding land use litigation and legal matters
- Evaluate and keep abreast of Land Use related legislation and applicability to department projects and programs
- Recommend adjustments in programs, activities, policies and procedures to further economic development goals and permitting processes
- Coordinates efforts related to town-owned land. Works with GIS office to prepare maps as needed to supplement land use departments' activities
- Utilize tools necessary to establish and promote the Commonwealth's Economic Bill for the Town of Acton

### **Benefits of Creating a Land Use and Economic Development Director**

- With the creation of a Land Use and Economic Development Director, there is the opportunity to reduce Town Counsel costs due to current duplication of work effort, problems and inquiring about the same or similar questions
- The creation of a Land Use and Economic Development Director will reduce the number of staff reporting directly to the Town Manager while simultaneously pulling Land Use personnel and Boards together, ultimately bettering customer service
- The creation of a Land Use Department, headed up by a Land Use and Economic Development Director, will maximize the use of staff; staff will be cross-trained to support work efforts among the Departments
- Comparable Communities are trending towards a combined Land Use Director function and an Economic Development Director function (e.g. Agawam, Natick, Dighton, Fitchburg, Plymouth)
- A Land Use and Economic Development Director will mediate issues among the Land Use Department Heads and bring the group to consensus
- The change in the physical space of the new Town Hall North Wing will encompass a centralized filing system, the intention and the value is to increase communication among Departments and external entities with the ultimate goal of consensus