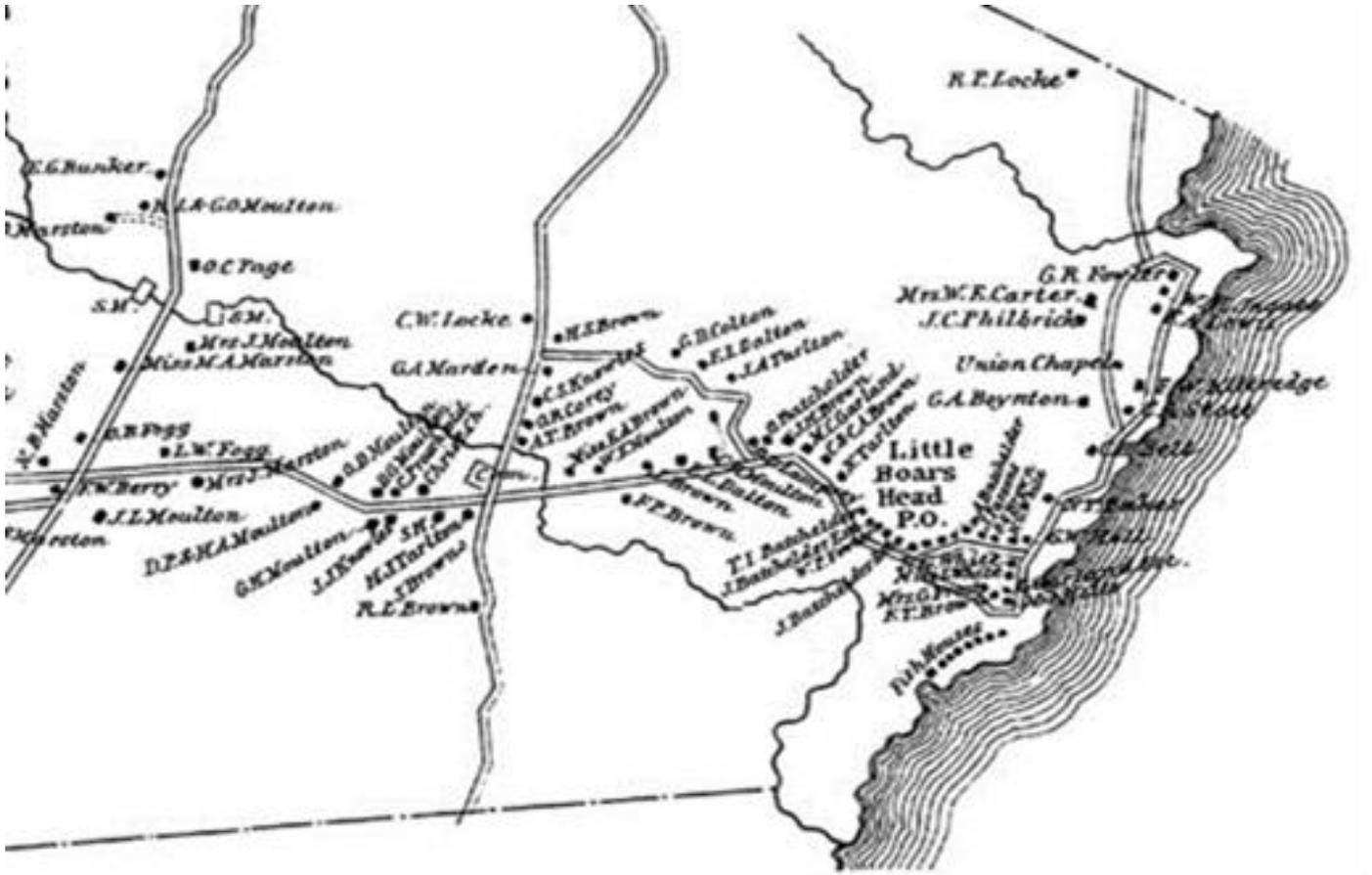


The Village District of  
**LITTLE BOAR'S HEAD**



**MASTER PLAN**

2015 REVISION

## **Introduction:**

New Hampshire is a Home Rule State, that is, municipalities have a right to govern themselves as they see fit – but only to an extent. Master Plans are required by the State only if a Municipality (Village District) has adopted or is adopting a Zoning Ordinance. The State also prescribes what elements are required to be in a Master Plan in NHRSA §674:2.

NHRSA §674:2. II. (a) and (b) are the only two REQUIRED sections of a Master Plan, addressing the community's vision, and its land use objectives.

This Statute further suggests 15 topics that may be included in a Master Plan ranging from transportation, natural resources, recreation, neighborhood plan and energy. Because the Little Boar's Head Village District has no authority to oversee matters beyond land use, these topics will only be addressed to the extent that there is a relationship to the District's Zoning Ordinance and/or their governing authority.

Because the District adopted zoning (in 1937), it must have a current Master Plan. The most recent Master Plan was adopted in 2000; NHRSA 674:3 II recommends that Master Plans be revised every 5-10 years. The 2014 Master Plan revision was prepared 14 years after the previous Plan was adopted, but during this period, the District experienced very little development. The timing of this Master Plan revision, while beyond the 5-10 year horizon recommended statutorily, is reasonable.

Finally, the Master Plan must meet statutory requirements as well as review by the judicial system. Often times, when a land owner is unable to do what they want with their land, they review the Master Plan to make sure that there's a rational nexus between the Master Plan and the Zoning Ordinance. For instance, if a municipal Master Plan states that it is important to encourage a diverse housing stock which offers opportunities for people from all economic strata to own a home, yet the Zoning Ordinance requires two acres for an individual house lot Town-wide, the relationship between the master Plan and the Zoning Ordinance would likely be deemed contrary. Ensuring that Zoning Ordinance is consistent with the Master Plan is therefore very important.

This Master Plan is short, concise, and easily amendable by future Planning Boards. Many Municipal Master Plans in New Hampshire are filled with demographic, economic, housing and other data that is either not available for Little Boar's Head, or is not within the District's regulatory purview. While most Master Plans are shelved upon completion because they are often too wieldy and overwhelming for Planning Boards to review and revise regularly, this Plan is not.

Little Boar's Head is one of eight (8) (should be 9, as the Kearsarge Lighting Precinct, which has an adopted Zoning ordinance, was not included by NH OEP) Village Districts/Precincts that have adopted Zoning ordinances according to NH OEP as of November, 2013. While there are many NH communities that have not adopted Zoning Ordinances, there are none in Rockingham County.

The Village District of Little Boar's Head was established in 1905 in order to provide potable water to the residents, which at the time numbered 14 legal voters. The District consists of approximately 587 acres in the Town of North Hampton, County of Rockingham, New Hampshire, lying adjacent to the Atlantic Ocean. The District comprises approximately 6% of the Town in terms of land area.

Little Boar's Head adopted its first zoning ordinance in 1937, predating the Town of North Hampton Zoning Ordinance by seven years, which has left the District virtually untouched by the commercial development which dominated other portions of the NH seacoast, including neighboring Hampton. Little Boar's Head was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in June of 1999.

Demographic data is not available for Little Boar's Head; however, the data available for the Town is rather interesting. From 2000 to 2010, North Hampton's population increased by 1 person – from 4300 to 4301, statistically, almost zero growth. However, out of 221 towns statewide, North Hampton ranked 83 in terms of population. The Town of North Hampton is comprised of 13.9 square miles in area, of which .5 square miles is classified as inland surface water, translating into 309.1 people per square mile or 8896 acres with approximately .5 people per acre. North Hampton's population is also old: in 2010, it was the 4th oldest Town in the State, with a median age of 50.3 vs. 41.1 in NH and 37.2 in the US. It is very evident that over time, North Hampton will continue to lose ranking in terms of population compared to other NH Towns, as there is very little land available for residential growth, and almost no land suitable for development in Little Boar's Head.

These statistics are not alarming, but simple evidence that Little Boar's Head is a place that people stay after retirement, and/or move to upon retirement. The lack of land area both within the District and Town-wide will constrain future growth, and the development pattern throughout the District has long been established, and it has resulted in a micro community that is a very desirable place to live. This Master Plan will only strengthen the District's desire to maintain the current pattern of development and character that comes with it.

The Village District undertakes the following governmental responsibilities:

- a. Sidewalks
- b. Streetlights
- c. Parks and commons
- d. Rural beautification
- e. Planning and zoning

The District doesn't have other general governmental responsibilities and has no control over roads, police or fire protection, public health, sewer or septic systems, water supply, beaches, education, libraries or other related facilities. All of the above are the responsibility of the Town of North Hampton or the State of New Hampshire.

Because Little Boar's Head is but a small portion of the Town of North Hampton with a limited grant of authority, it cannot be expected to either address every land use, or accommodate every land use. The District will oversee its own regulations and ordinances, but there must be recognition that the Town of North Hampton's Master Plan and land use regulations will address the full range of issues required by a municipality. The District Master Plan therefore incorporates by reference the Town's Master Plan so far as those governmental functions are concerned.

## **Community Vision:**

Because Little Boar's Head has many seasonal residents, it is very difficult to obtain input from property owners. No survey was performed as part of this Master Plan, rather input from elected officials who have a good sense of the Districts' needs and wants formed the basis for this vision, and it advances the same vision as the 2000 Master Plan.

The Village District, when formed in 1905, was predominantly an area of farms and seaside dwellings. It is now a seaside neighborhood of dwellings which are built for year-round use with a very small amount of vacant land suitable for development. Most of the new homes built in the District replace older existing homes, but land is subdivided to create new lots and lot line adjustments can occur to create room for additional dwellings.

The overarching objective of the Village District is to plan for the orderly development of our residential community, compatible with the existing land use and existing dwellings. Wherever possible, regulations and ordinances should strive to enhance our historic and scenic character.

Unlike most municipalities, the Village District does not, and need not, provide non-residential (commercial, community facilities, excavations, aircraft take-offs and landings) land uses. These services may be provided for in either the remainder of the Town of North Hampton or in the surrounding area. The District wishes to remain residential in character.

Most communities in New Hampshire develop Master Plans, Zoning Ordinances and Regulations centered around economic development. Many Towns encourage commercial development as a means to reduce their overall tax burden. Little Boar's Head's economic strategy is the exact opposite: maintaining the historic residential development pattern and preserving the natural resources (salt marshes, wetlands, open spaces and ocean views) is the Community's Vision, and will preserve property values and increase the tax base for years to come. Poor land use decisions, allowing commercial development or reducing dimensional requirements set forth in the Zoning Ordinance would all have a deleterious effect on the District, and should be prevented.

Beautiful, well-planned residential areas attract new people, requiring the adoption of rules and regulations for the guidance of additional growth. For that reason Zoning Ordinances were first adopted by the District in 1937, and are revised and updated continually to reflect changes in NH Statutes and guidance from NHDES, NHOEP and other State Agencies. These regulations govern lot size, placement of single family residences, setbacks from sidelines, signs, unsightly storage, and other land uses. These regulations should remain in effect, and if amendments are made, they should only advance the goal of preserving the distinct character of the District. There are three Zoning Districts: Residential, Business, and Bathhouse.

The Village District strongly believes in the protection of the environment, the conservation of natural resources, the protection of forests and wetlands, beautification practices, and the planting and care of shade and ornamental trees. The Village District should keep apprised of Federal and State environmental legislation and Administrative Rule changes, and should continue its concern for, and funding of, local beautification projects within the District.

The District does not wish to regulate the appearance of individual residences; however, the homes throughout the District are generally characterized as classic seaside architecture, and maintaining this character is desirable.

The storage of boats, recreational vehicles, excess automobiles, or other objects detract from the aesthetics of the District, and is strongly discouraged. Storage of boats is acceptable, however, if not overly obvious and not for an extended period of time. The Zoning Ordinance advances this vision.

The beaches within the District are public. However, users of these facilities should comply with all municipal, state and federal laws and regulations. The District, therefore, encourages the posting and enforcement of regulations relative to appropriate behavior on the public beaches.

Due to the population density of the District, the District discourages hunting; even where there may be safe places to discharge a firearm or bow, the pursuit of wounded or dead animals would detract from the character of the District. Further, hunting is prohibited in the District's area of the Little River and Bass Beach Salt Marshes as well as on any Public or Private lands so posted. Fishing is encouraged, both in the ocean and in the many streams in the Village District.

Traffic safety measures are strongly encouraged and supported by the District. Some of our roads are very heavily travelled. The District encourages the State to construct bicycle paths alongside Ocean Boulevard on State property. Parking is prohibited along many roads due to safety issues. Additional parking is not encouraged, unless it doesn't detract from the scenic character of the road, and can be shown not to cause safety concerns.

Most of the objectives/goals in this Master Plan are consistent with the 2000 Master Plan; however, the Planning Board should review this Master Plan annually and update it every 5-10 years.

## **Natural Resources:**

The Village District is situated on a glacial drumlin on the New Hampshire seacoast, having about 1.5 miles of unobstructed frontage on the Atlantic Ocean, with northeasterly views of the Isles of Shoals and, toward the southeast, a distant view of the Cape Ann coastline. In addition to the North Hampton State Beach-- one of the rare sandy beaches on this portion of the seacoast – the Village District contains two ecologically significant as well as highly scenic salt marshes: the Little River Salt Marsh, comprising approximately 156 acres (of which a small portion lies within the Town of Hampton), and Bass Beach Salt Marsh, comprising approximately 50 acres. These salt marshes produced hay at a time when farming was the dominant land use in the District

Recognizing the importance of preserving and protecting these tidal marshlands, as well as other, non-tidal, wetlands lying in the Village District, its residents approved in 1990 a zoning ordinance establishing a 75-foot buffer zone surrounding all marsh and wetlands, in which construction, fill and septic systems are not allowed. In addition, the Village District is actively supporting and has contributed to the Little River Salt Marsh Restoration Project. With a budget of approximately \$1.5 million, mostly in the form of federal grants but with additional financial support from the State of New Hampshire and individual contributions to the North Hampton Conservation Commission's William P. Fowler Fund (established by residents of the Village District), the goal of the restoration project is to restore healthy tidal flow to the Little River Salt Marsh, as well as to reduce the incidences of flooding. The project was completed in 2000.

The understanding and scientific research regarding wetlands and their functions, as well as the buffering requirements to maintain these important resources is constantly changing. Technological advances in waste water treatment has also gained momentum in the past decade, to the point where water being discharged from small residential wastewater treatment tanks is clean enough to drink. As science and technology advance, it is very important that the District's Ordinance be amended if necessary to protect these resources.

Beautification within the Village District is considered of major importance as shown by the following: First, the Fuller Gardens, a not-for-profit garden area (first laid out in part by Frederick Law Olmstead on the estate of the late Governor of Massachusetts, Alvan T. Fuller), features 1500 rose bushes and has an annual attendance of approximately 8,000 people. Second, the gardens flanking the Fish Houses, which is maintained by the Rye Beach - Little Boar's Head Garden Club and is supported financially by membership dues and a contribution by the Village District each year, is widely admired.

## **Historic Preservation:**

The Village District, determining that a Heritage Commission was the appropriate group to address cultural and historic resource matters, established the Little Boar's Head Heritage Commission on September 6, 1996. This Commission replaced the Historic District Commission, which had been in existence since September 4, 1990. Seventeen structures of historic importance had been researched and listed in the 1994 First Report of the Historic District Commission.

Although the Village District is not a "Historic District" under New Hampshire law, the mission of the Heritage Commission is to advise on the preservation and the unique cultural, architectural and natural heritage of Little Boar's Head. Little Boar's Head was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in June of 1999 as a result of the Commission's efforts. The certificate from the Division of Historic Resources is framed and on display at the North Hampton Public Library. The Heritage Commission, when requested, is ready to assist the Planning Board and Commissioners in their efforts to advance these ideals. Preservation of research already completed and further research projects will be undertaken by the Commission in a continuing effort to recognize the importance of the historic foundation of our community.

**Transportation, Utilities, Commercial Land Use, Housing:**

There is no public transportation within the Village District.

Water is provided by Aquarion Water Company.

There is no municipal sewer service within the District.

Household waste removal is provided by private contractors only.

Broadband (internet) service is provided by Fairpoint and Comcast.

The Town of North Hampton has a Master Plan that addresses Transportation, Utilities, Housing and Community Facilities, all of which are important components of a Master Plan. The District hereby adopts the Town Master Plan as it pertains to the District and the needs of the residents of the District by reference.

Commercial activities in the Residential District are limited to agriculture, the sale under certain conditions of fish and agricultural products and one "grandfathered" non-conforming uses.

DRAFT 8/10/15

**Planning and Zoning:**

The District established zoning in 1937. The Town of North Hampton adopted zoning in 1946, and for many years, the District and the Town have exercised concurrent land use control jurisdiction, and property owners within the District must satisfy both sets of ordinances and at times apply to both Land Use Boards. The Little Boar's Head District and the Town of North Hampton operate independently of each other on planning and zoning matters. Upon the completion of this Master Plan, the District's Zoning Ordinance will be updated and amended as necessary to facilitate this change in process.

It is the intent of the District Commissioner's to implement this change in policy/procedure by the end of -2015.

**Land Use:**

The land use map that accompanies this Master Plan shows that the District is almost entirely residential with the exception of the two commercial uses mentioned above, all of which predate the establishment of Zoning. While there is some vacant land within the District suitable for development, most of the vacant land that remains is not.

## **Conclusions & Recommendations:**

This Master Plan reinforces all of the goals and initiatives advanced by previous Master Plans and Zoning Ordinances, which have so carefully protected and preserved Little Boar's Head for over 77 years;

The protection of our natural resources, and the continued application of ordinances and regulations which provide for orderly development, preservation of property values and maintain the aesthetic character of the District are critically important;

New technologies (for example, waste water disposal systems, pervious pavement, and rain gardens) should be carefully considered and only implemented when it can be proven that they will maintain and/or improve the natural resources they were designed to protect;

Any proposals by NHDOT to modify Route 1A, the intersections off Route 1A or public parking should be carefully reviewed to ensure that they don't detract from the character of the District;

Legally non-conforming land uses should be carefully monitored to ensure that they comply with all provisions of the Zoning Ordinance and NH Statutes;

The current Zoning Ordinance should be reviewed and amended as necessary to ensure that it advances this Master Plan and future Master Plans;

We feel this Master Plan supports the ideals and goals of the Village District of Little Boar's Head.

Members of the Planning Board:

Joyce Hamilton, Chair  
Michael Megna  
Kathy Megna  
David O'Heir  
Guil Spencer

Commissioners:

Leon Asadoorian  
Richard "Dickie" Garnett  
Brian Goode

## **CERTIFICATION**

Be it remembered that the above members of the Planning Board did meet this 26<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2015 and did certify that the above Master Plan is adopted herewith.