

INSPECTION SERVICES

Fiscal Year 2011

The goals of this department are accomplished through the enforcement of building, electrical, plumbing, mechanical, and fire protection codes for residential and commercial construction. Departmental staff receives applications for permits, reviews plans to ensure compliance with applicable codes, issues permits for construction, and performs inspections to confirm work is completed according to approved plans and in compliance with applicable codes.

This past year we have seen many changes including the requirement by the state to implement a sheet metal permitting and inspection program, adoption of the 8th Edition of the Massachusetts State Building Code, and the Town's adoption of the Stretch Energy Code.

This department issued a total of 2,963 permits this fiscal year. Total construction value for all permits issued by this department was \$28,259,373 which resulted \$531,571 in department revenues.

This year we experienced a substantial increase in commercial activity although there was a significant decrease in new single family dwellings with only six compared to eleven in the previous year.

During fiscal year 2011 there was more than usual restaurant activity. The Amherst Brewing Company moved to its new location on University Dr. After being closed for 2 years, the China Dynasty remodeled and re-opened under new management to become the new Ginger Garden on the corner of University Dr and Northampton Rd. Mission Cantina opened in South Amherst while the center of town gained "That's A Wrap", "The Lumber Yard", "Go Berry's", and the nightclub "Lit".

Amherst Housing Authority property was upgraded on Pomeroy Ln. Construction began of a new 5-story mixed-use apartment complex with office space which includes twelve residential apartments.

The renovation to the Lord Jeffrey Inn started during this fiscal year. Other commercial activity included the Cooley Dickinson Hospital creating an Urgent Care center at their University Dr. satellite office, a new Laundromat in North Amherst, Atkins Corner Market added an 8,400 square foot warehouse addition, and additional UMass office space at the Slobody building on University Dr.

Renovations to the South East St. School allowed the consolidation of two satellite classroom buildings to be condensed into one as well several upgrades. The addition and remodel of the bathrooms at Ziomek Field created a more accessible facility.

The fall of 2010 marked the opening of the Temporary Overnight Shelter at the Baptist Church on North Pleasant St. Improvements to the site included the installation of a partial sprinkler system, fire alarm upgrades, and shower facilities.

This department is also responsible for the periodic inspection and certification of certain buildings and structures. These include annual inspections of public and private schools, daycare facilities, residential apartment buildings, places of assembly and restaurants. There were 182 inspections performed this year.

Enforcement of the Town's Zoning By-law is also a function of this department. Applications for permits are reviewed for compliance with all zoning provisions including allowable use and occupancy. Staff also performs investigations and responds to complaints to ensure that activities, including those other than construction, are not in violation of the By-law.

Robert A. Morra, C.B.O.
Building Commissioner