



December 10, 2010

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Jason Vincent, President

CCAPA

j.vincent@planimetrics.net

(860) 677-5267 ext. 19

**The Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association Announces
2010 Award Recipients for Outstanding Planning Efforts in Connecticut**

At its annual awards luncheon on December 3, 2010 at the Inn at Middletown in Middletown, Connecticut, the Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association announced award recipients for outstanding planning efforts across the State of Connecticut. Awards were given out in six different standing categories: Citizen Planner, Public Service, Communication, Sustainability, Community Development and Public Program. In addition, two awards were given out to individual planners for their contributions to the field: the Special Chapter Award and the Bruce Hoben Distinguished Service Award. Descriptions of the award recipients are as follows:

CITIZEN PLANNING AWARD: Ruth Skovron

Ms. Skovron has worked tirelessly over the last four years to bring professional planning support to rural communities in the northwest corner of Connecticut. She has devoted over 2400 hours of her time to raise money, educate citizens and build consensus. Her tenaciousness and vision have been rewarded through the creation of the Northwest Connecticut Regional Planning Collaborative and raising over \$400,000 to address issues such as affordable housing and economic revitalization of village centers. The letters of support included in the nomination reflect deeply on not only her remarkable achievements but on her benevolence and her inclusive approach.

PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD: Waterbury Greenway Advisory Committee (Ron Napoli-Chair accepted the award)

In 2008, 17 individuals from diverse sectors of the Waterbury community were tagged to serve on a committee to assist with planning a 7.1 mile paved greenway along the Naugatuck River. Since that time, the Committee held monthly meetings, spearheaded public outreach, supervised the consultant, conducted visioning exercises and helped form a non-profit fundraising arm, the "Friends of Waterbury Greenway". Members walked and kayaked the study area and conducted guided tours for the public and participated in developing a "Corridor Driving Tour" for the Federal Highway Administrator, Congressman Chris Murphy and other visiting dignitaries. The active interest of all of the members of the Greenway Advisory Committee and their obvious embrace of collaborative planning that truly reflects the needs and desires of its citizens will ensure successful implementation.

COMMUNICATIONS: HousingUs and Kevin Litten

HousingUs (Betsy Crum, Director of Real Estate Development at Women's Institute for Housing & Economic Development and Chair of HousingUS and Jocelyn Ayer accepted the award)

The Chapter recognized two recipients for communications awards this year. The first represents communications related to raising awareness of the need for affordable housing.



HousingUs is a tri–state collaborative effort of nonprofit organizations and community leaders promoting broad–based affordable housing options in towns throughout the northwest corner of CT as well as parts of New York State and Massachusetts. The Women’s Institute for Housing & Economic Development based in Middletown participated as the Northwestern Connecticut contingent. The coalition launched a multi-media campaign including a website, direct mailings, an insert in four local newspapers, radio interviews and two billboards. The media campaign put a human face on the need to provide affordable housing for members of our communities. The newspaper insert which also served as direct mail piece was particularly poignant, featuring residents of Salisbury, Norfolk and Canaan. The insert begins, “They are firefighters and school teachers, farmers and carpenters, plumbers and bank tellers and artists. They are our neighbors and friends, our grandparents and grandchildren. They are US.”

Kevin Litten

The second communications award recognizes the individual effort of a reporter for his on-going coverage of planning and development issues. It is rare to find coverage much less in-depth educational coverage of local issues but **Kevin Litten**, a reporter for the Republican American, has devoted countless hours toward educating himself and delving into the issues and details of Planning and Zoning, Wetlands, and ZBA discussions in the City of Torrington. He artfully and accurately articulates these details in informative and educational articles. He has closely followed Torrington’s downtown revitalization efforts and was instrumental in getting the word out and providing coverage of the update of the Plan of Conservation & Development. A few examples of his articles include the application of smart growth principles to the approval of a Lowe’s entitled “It’s a Big Hello to Lowe’s”; “River Revival” about Torrington’s efforts to transform the Naugatuck River which included informative sidebars on the river’s history and efforts to control invasive species; and coverage of the city’s struggles with foreclosures.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: Route 6/Hop River Corridor Plan (Eric Trott, Town Planner for Coventry, accepted the award on behalf of the participating towns)

This year, the Chapter recognized the unique effort of an inter-regional collaboration of four small towns—Andover, Bolton, Coventry and Columbia. Regionalism is a word that makes many towns here in the land of 169 fiefdoms bristle, but the towns participating in this study recognized the power of unified, focused attention on balancing the natural assets and rural context of the Route 6 Corridor with growth and development. Putting aside parochial interests, the towns created a common vision for growth that sharply contrasts with the existing land use patterns of sprawl and inconsistent character. The Hop River corridor Plan puts forth an innovative approach for small rural towns in that it recommends that the Route 6 Economic Development Commission evolve into a Regional Economic Development Agency for the purpose of implementing infrastructure improvements and coordinating development at four nodes. The Plan also recommends the creation of common zoning regulations and design guidelines to be adopted by the respective town commissions. Hopefully, this plan will spur legislative recognition of the wisdom of applying these planning tools across the state.



SUSTAINABILITY AWARD- Danbury Branch Improvement Study (Floyd Lapp, Southwestern CT RPA accepted the award)

All of us are familiar with the level of traffic congestion from New Milford through Danbury and down into the Norwalk area. There have been numerous recommendations coming from endless studies and virtually all of them focused on making roads wider or creating new ones. Now through a federal grant, the region is looking to more sustainable approaches by improving existing commuter rail service and attracting more commuters to transit. As part of the Danbury Branch Improvement Study, an environmental Impact statement and alternative analysis served as a backdrop to expand the public's understanding of transit-oriented development as a means of guiding growth and mitigating congestion. The study evoked collaboration among a broad range of stakeholders including the public, elected officials, local representatives, the regional planning agency, the Department of Transportation and the federal government. The work products were exceptional –going above the standard report format—to include an informative video to educate stakeholders and a creatively formatted document presenting the alternatives.

PUBLIC PROGRAM AWARD-AGvocate (Jennifer Kaufman, AGvocate Program Coordinator accepted the award)

The name of the program in and of itself AGvocate is a perfect play on advocacy for agriculture. For a state like ours, who has essentially lost its agricultural economy and rural context, this Program has broaden support to towns and businesses by providing land use recommendations, implementing tax exemptions, promotional outreach and education and incorporating agriculture into local economic development strategies. Ashford, Brooklyn, Canterbury, Eastford, Franklin, Hampton, Sterling, Thompson, Windham and Woodstock participated in the Program, which has been funded through a Farm Viability Grant from the CT Department of Agriculture. Municipal leaders, agricultural producers and supportive citizens have come together to implement tools and create actions plans to support agricultural viability. AGvocate has created a voice for agriculture.

SPECIAL CHAPTER AWARD: Marcia Banach, AICP

Marcia Banach, AICP recently retired as South Windsor's Town Planner. She has been a hard working, knowledgeable, dedicated and creative planning professional, providing valuable guidance and leadership to the Town in all facets of community development and preservation. Marcia has been a very active member of CCAPA and also served the Capitol Region Council of Governments in various capacities. In making the award presentation, Fran Armentano noted that Marcia's stellar reputation "has helped demonstrate to the public the unique talents and great value that planners bring to Connecticut's cities and towns." He also noted the primary role she has played in the Chapter's social planning network and credits Marcia in bringing about the camaraderie that our membership enjoys. He suggested that the annual awards luncheon become an event where retired planners can annually re-connect with their colleagues.

Michelle Lipe, who has served under Marcia for her entire career at South Windsor, also participated in the presentation. She pointed out that Marcia's 25-year career marks a time of tremendous growth in town and she handled issues and challenges with professionalism and a high degree of ethics. Michelle is grateful to have benefitted from Marcia's depth of



knowledge and nurturing management style and Marcia should be proud of her accomplishments as both a planner and a leader in her community.

The entire Chapter extends best wishes to Marcia as she pursues her next career—retirement!

BRUCE HOBEN DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD: John Pagini, AICP

The Bruce Hoben Distinguished Service Award was created by the Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association to recognize distinguished service to the Chapter and the planning profession. Bruce served the Chapter in many roles and was a friend and mentor of many Connecticut planners. The Bruce Hoben award was established in 2009.

This year's recipient, John Pagini, AICP, has exhibited a tremendous amount of energy and acumen in serving as the Chapter's Professional Development Officer (PDO). As PDO, John challenged planners to excel through on-going education efforts and programs and worked with national leaders to recommend adjustments to the AICP Certification Maintenance program. He has also established a high standard for what the role of the PDO can be.

John's leadership, and countless hours of volunteer effort truly rise to the level of this Award and the Chapter is proud to name him as the second recipient.

John is currently a land use consultant. He has been an active planner since 1974 and has worked for numerous communities in Connecticut, and also worked for Robinson and Cole as a Land Use Analyst. John later worked in Nantucket, Massachusetts, for ten years. John is also the Conservation Coordinator for the Joshua's Tract Conservation and Historic Trust.