

## Year End Wrap Up for 2011

Todd I. Selig, Administrator  
Town of Durham  
12/30/11

This overview is intended to provide a snapshot of activity for the last year to keep the board updated on progress toward Council goals as part of a year end wrap up for 2011, as well as for my annual self-assessment/evaluation process. To cut down on time and paper, much of it is in bulleted or short paragraph form with key takeaway points in **bold**.

I believe the Town of Durham continues to be economically and prudently operated. We function as a purveyor of public services, and staff is working hard to implement business practices to control costs and maintain the municipality's fiscal position during uncertain economic times.

### The Importance of Sound Business Practices

Faced with an escalating full (town, local school, state school, and county) tax rate in recent years, a number of strategies have been or are in process of being implemented: ***Economic development and smart growth activities*** intended to broaden the tax base to mitigate anticipated future cost increases across the municipal operation; ***Working with UNH to find win/win partnership opportunities*** intended to broaden the tax base, better link the campus to the broader community, make UNH/Durham more desirable for residents/students alike, and obtain fair compensation from UNH for its fiscal impact upon the host community; ***Controlling escalating health care benefit costs*** by evaluating the possibility of changing health insurance providers, exploring new health care options for the mutual benefit of employees/employer, and discussing additional employee contributions toward health insurance co-pay levels. All municipal employees presently contribute 10% - 20% toward monthly health insurance premiums incurred by the Town; ***Coping with increasing utility costs*** and working creatively to offset them now and in the future through wholesale power purchase and investment in green technology; ***Rethinking the organizational structure of departments*** and the manner in which services are delivered utilizing *Kaizen* techniques in an effort to enhance organizational efficiencies and mitigate cost centers over the long-term; ***Maintaining a strong balance sheet and favorable bond rating status*** by working to stabilize and in the long-term increase undesignated fund balance within the General Fund and Sewer Fund, maintaining a strong Overlay account, realistic revenue/expenditure projections (to the extent possible in this economic environment and due to state downshifting of costs), maintaining a contingency fund equal to approximately 1% of the total budget to cover unforeseen, unanticipated circumstances; ***Working to control operational expenses*** as a continued short-term strategy to limit the impact of the U.S. macroeconomic situation on Durham taxpayers.

I continue to provide regular updates to the Council with respect to progress toward Council goals through the weekly “Friday Updates,” verbally during Council discussions and board/committee meetings, and as part of written overviews such as this one. Councilors should remember that **when the 2011-2012 goals were established in May 2011, rather than generating a list of items that could be easily accomplished in a single year, the board adopted a long-term focus** and acknowledged that goals had a two to five year timeframe.

A great deal of work has been devoted to addressing **human resource issues** in Durham over the last year. These include:

- **Collective bargaining contract negotiations** with the AFSCME unit representing Durham’s public works personnel, and the NEPBA Local 21 unit representing the Town’s police officers. To date the AFSCME unit has itself rejected two tentative agreements, and the Council has rejected one tentative agreement.
- **Recruitment of 2 new fire personnel**, promotion of 1 firefighter to captain, and holding open a vacant inspector position for budget cost control purposes.
- Selection process and **hiring of 6 police officers** over the course of the last two years. Holding the 19<sup>th</sup> police officer slot vacant for budget reduction purposes.
- Hiring of **part-time Parks & Recreation Director** and increasing hours from 20 to 30 per week as part of the approved FY 2012 budget.
- In an era of economic downturn and frozen wages, **morale has remained positive** amongst Town staff.

In pursuit of Council goals, we have continued a series of **initiatives to ensure board members have the tools necessary to be productive members of local government in Durham**. These include:

- Again in 2011, we organized an **orientation session for officers of all Town boards, commissions, and committees** in which we not only talked about rules and responsibilities but also were able to introduce the Chair and Vice Chairs of the committees to one another, as well as describing the Council goals and clarifying that the Council goals should be integrated into the work of the various Town boards and committees.
- Provided **annual right to know law forum** for the public to include Durham, Lee, Madbury, and the Oyster River Cooperative School District.
- Providing **funding for board members to attend various education sessions** offered through a variety of sources including the Local Government Center, the Strafford Regional Planning Commission, etc.
- More could be done in 2012 to provide technical education to members of our more complex boards such as the Planning Board, ZBA, Conservation Commission, and HDC.

Over the last year, the Town has worked to **pursue Long-Term Economic and Environmental Sustainability, which** are inextricably linked. Without economic sustainability, the Town will not have the financial resources available over the long-term to stabilize the tax rate, pursue desired projects/infrastructure, preserve open space, etc. Without a healthy natural environment, we will not sustain the Durham in which citizens hope and desire to live. **The 2011 Master Plan survey was very clear in pointing out that residents of the community seek balance.**

On August 1, 2011, the Town Council held a discussion concerning **the FY 2012 Budget** with the Administrator and provided guidance as part of the budget process culminating with the Council approving the FY 2012 Budget and 2012-2021 Capital Improvement Program by a 6-2 vote on 12/12/11. The approved budget is anticipated to increase the municipal portion of the Durham tax rate by .55% from \$7.57 to \$7.61.

I continue to move forward with educating myself and staff with regard to **the implementation of Kaizen/Lean manufacturing practices into the municipal workplace.** To this end, we plan to collaborate in 2012 with the Lonza Corporation in Newington, which is interested in facilitating several Kaizen events for Durham's various departments. We have also maintained a connection with the State of Maine Lean Lab for training purposes.

**Our Kaizen initiative has impacted the thought process of everyone on our department head team and the influence has begun to transcend this group** such that efficiency discussions and out of the box thinking are regularly taking place. These processes are responsible in large part for our new credit card acceptance program at the Town Clerk/Tax Collector's office, budget development process improvements, contracting out tax billing, discussions around energy purchases, overtime use, facility improvements, technology implementation, adding reflectivity to fire hydrants, problem solving around development projects, improving traffic patterns and parking opportunities in the downtown core, the 2011 DPW "Voice of the Citizen Survey," and more.

The Town continues to monitor from a distance the status of the 270 +/- acre **Spruce Forest** Trust for Public Lands (TPL) project. The NH DES Aquatic Resource Mitigation (ARM) Program informed us in December 2010 that the Spruce Forest project received a \$500,000 grant award. In addition, it ranked 12th in the nation through the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP), however, Federal budget constraints prevented sufficient funding becoming available to fully support the ranking. My understanding is that TPL is presently working to identify private funding for the project.

The Town in conjunction with the Lamprey River Advisory Committee and the S.E. Land Trust had been involved with discussions regarding **the Thompson parcel** along the Lamprey River for permanent conservation. To date, however, progress has not been made on establishing an acceptable value for the parcel and the project is on hold.

The Town contributed \$45,000 in 2011 to the Nature Conservancy on behalf of the Great Bay Resource Protection Partnership for acquiring approximately 66 acres of property in Durham known as **the Beaudette 2 project**, with approximately 1,405 feet of frontage on Bennett Road and 2,840 feet of frontage on Route 108.

A new **Agricultural Commission** was discussed and instituted by the Town Council in 2011 to support local farming and agricultural activities within the community.

Durham also acted quickly in 2011 when during the summer months the Seacoast **Farmer's Market** was displaced from the Mill Plaza. Within a matter of days, the community responded making the Pettee Brook Parking Lot available in support of local agriculture. The Farmer's Market may evaluate Jenkins Court as a potential location for 2012.

The Town partnered with UNH in installing a state of the art, nationally followed **bioretention basin** within the Store 24/Tedeschi lot in 2011.

The Parks and Recreation Department aspired to create a **“waste free” Durham Day** celebration in 2011. While it was not feasible to 100% meet this goal, numerous measures were put in place to be sustainable as part of the celebration. The effort, however, did tax the limited staffing and volunteer structure we have in place to support such events.

Despite the Town's ongoing effort to engage the owner of the **Mill Plaza**, there has not been movement to date. Staff has spent time over the last year meeting with potential development companies concerning the parcel but once again no project has moved forward as the owner appears to have little interest in a redevelopment at this time.

I am pleased to report that the **Grange project** along Main Street, which was initiated in 2010, came to fruition in 2011 when this fall the Town sold the parcel to Mr. Peter Murphy who has now moved the historic structure forward to the curb line and is presently undertaking construction which will eventually allow for commercial space, workforce housing, student housing (that could be convertible in the future to adult housing), and an enhanced pathway into the Mill Plaza area behind. The project had many challenges but through diligence and hard work we were able to collaboratively move it forward.

The Town sold the **Durham Business Park** to Eric Chinburg on November 29, 2010 bringing to culmination a process that began in 2007 with the signing of an Agreement of Sale between the Town of Durham and Eric Chinburg that was authorized by the Town Council. This parcel offers much potential for economic development and job creation in the coming years. Mr. Chinburg had been working with Great Bay

Aquaculture to potentially develop the company's corporate headquarters within the Durham Business Park but that idea seems to have ended. At the present time, Mr. Chinburg is planning to subdivide the property and market individual lots in 2012.

Significant energy continues to be dedicated to facilitating a new development project in downtown Durham to include numerous potential elements such as the UNH bookstore (in lieu of the present Memorial Union Building location), a downtown technology park, high quality professional office space, small hotel, performing arts center/black box theatre, etc. within the downtown core along Main Street. A variety of land parcels would be involved with such a project including the active financial participation of the municipality to address traffic flow and parking. As of December 2011, **Watershed Development** has been in discussions with landowners along Main Street for site acquisition. The Town's Pettee Brook Parking Lot would be leveraged to facilitate such a project.

Numerous **redevelopment projects have either been approved** by the Planning Board, are in the Planning Board process, or have actually been constructed. Examples include: the former Houghton's Hardware site, the former Don Thompson Real Estate site, Rosemary Lane, an infill project by Slania Enterprises on Jenkins Court, the Perry Bryant project on Mast Road, the Capstone project on Technology Drive, the 9-11 Madbury Road, the Grange, etc. Where projects had all but stopped in other parts of the state and nation, redevelopment in Durham moved forward in 2011. This continues to bode well for opportunities locally.

Durham had adopted **Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE)** state enabling legislation in 2010 whereby the municipality was able to issue a bond that could be used to support low interest loans to residents/businesses to provide energy-efficient upgrades to properties. Under this program, the loan would have been attached to the property, reimbursed annually through the local tax bill, and the debt would belong to the parcel rather than the property owner. However, opposition from the NH Bankers Association in early 2011 within the NH State Legislature resulted in substantial amendments to the PACE statute effectively stifling Durham's initiative.

Durham put out a Request for Qualifications for energy-related services and selected **Revolution Energy** to work with the Town in identifying potential renewable energy installations/locations within or upon town facilities. Six locations were ultimately selected by Revolution Energy in 2011 as appropriate candidates for such technology. We will hopefully be able to move forward in 2012 after appropriate due diligence with a finite number of renewable energy projects that can outwardly demonstrate to residents the community's commitment to a more sustainable energy future in accord with Council goals.

The Town of Durham competed for and was successful in obtaining an **Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant for street lighting upgrades**. The grant was sponsored by the New Hampshire Office of Energy and Planning and is a component of

the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The grant, valued at \$167,310, reimbursed the Town 100% of the cost of retrofitting all of the ornamental street lighting along the Main Street corridor and intersecting roadways. The grant did not require any kind of a match. Because the Main Street lighting corridor runs through the UNH campus it made sense to partner with the University to provide a consistent lighting pattern. The grant reimbursed Durham for replacing the existing 175 watt, Metal Halide Lighting and accessories with a Light Emitting Diodes (LED) retrofit kits within our current municipal street lighting fixtures. The benefit of this energy grant will be the following:

- Projected savings of 70.2 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>
- Avoid future energy and lamp costs of \$239,089
- Estimated MMBTU savings 18,053
- Proposed Energy Savings 1,756,212 (kWh)
- Lower operating fixture wattage from 175 to 38
- Increase longevity of lamp from 2.8 years to 12 – 15 years

The Town has utilized findings/suggestions gleaned from the **B. Dennis Commercial Core Strategic Plan** within the planning process to set the framework for the revitalization of Durham's Commercial Core.

The Town engaged DCI, Inc. in 2010/2011 to complete a comprehensive **Market Study** to identify the potential demand and likely build out for business, industry, student, and non-student residential located in the commercial core of Durham.

Funding was set aside but unutilized for a **part-time economic development director/contractor** in FY 2011.

The Planning Office successfully worked to conduct a series of **model traffic runs illustrating the impact of two way traffic through the existing downtown core** for review and consideration by the Traffic Safety Committee.

The **Pettee Brook Lane** traffic pattern revamped in 2010 was hardened up in 2011 with physical infrastructure to encourage increased pedestrian and bicycle activity and to reduce traffic speed. 21 additional parking spaces were also created to support the downtown core.

The **Madbury Road traffic pattern** between Main Street and Pettee Brook Lane was revamped in 2011, creating an additional 8 parking spaces, to address raceway conditions that were unfriendly to pedestrians/bicycles/school children. This project is still in its pilot phase.

A **comprehensive parking strategy** for the downtown core was developed with the assistance of Rick Chellman, the traffic engineer from the B. Dennis team, which was rolled out in the first quarter of 2011. Automated meters were investigated and the first

three were ordered in the fall 2011 for placement along Pettee Brook Lane with a January 2012 deliverable/installation date.

The town contracted Planner Beth Della Valle, one of the members of the B. Dennis Team, to further develop and move forward **“quick fixes” to the Durham Zoning Ordinance** which were included as part of the B. Dennis Commercial Core Strategic Plan for our commercial core. The first of three sets of “quick fixes” are presently before the Planning Board.

To leverage Council goals, **design guidelines/standards** have been incorporated into many of the “quick fixes” noted above and Roger Hawk has been consulting with the Planning Office and Historic District/Heritage Commission to facilitate the development of such guidelines/standards.

Durham engaged UNH Transportation Services with respect to the idea of broadening its campus connector route structure to include more Durham neighborhoods. The Police Department facilitated a meeting in the late-spring/early summer 2010 with potentially affected neighbors who have traditionally not wanted loud buses to come through their neighborhoods (Edgewood, Emerson, and Madbury Roads). In the interest of finding balance and encouraging energy efficiency, and given the fact that the UNH’s new bus fleet is much quieter and less odiferous than in the past, **the Town authorized UNH in summer 2010 to extend the campus connector down Madbury Road and Edgewood Road** to enhance alternative forms of transportation. Public Works also erected two bus shelters, both on Madbury Road. The routes were successful with little concern expressed, however, due to UNH budget reductions, the route expansion was curtailed in the summer of 2011. We remain hopeful that the program can be reinstated if budget issues are resolved on campus.

The University has the largest transit system in the state and is located here in Durham. In 2012 the Town should consider ways to collaborate with UNH to make the west-end campus connector system more efficient, which will likely entail discussion regarding whether the Mast Road Extension gate should be revisited.

**We have worked to identify definitive sites and develop a plan for key public facilities** to include Public Library, Fire Station, and Town Office so as to strengthen the town’s identity, as well as to meet the present and future needs of the community. Examples include the following:

After much evaluation, **Durham secured the DiMambro Parcel for the future site of the Durham Public Library** during the summer of 2010. An active capital campaign is now under way to raise in excess of \$2.1 million of a \$4.8 million new public library for the community. A bond referendum for up to \$2.7 million will be on the March 2012 election ballot.

The Fire Department held a mini-charette on December 16, 2010 to further refine the idea of a **combined Fire Station/Parking Structure on the UNH C-Lot**. It was ultimately determined in 2011 by the Town that C-Lot would in fact make a desirable stand-alone fire station location, however, UNH will not commit to the site until after its present Master Plan update process concludes in 2012.

Discussion has continued with respect to integrating the **Town Hall site** with the Irving Station next door on Dover Road triggering the need to either relocate the Town Offices or combine them with a new private development on the present site. Possible uses for the Town Office lot include a pharmacy or some other commercial purpose either with or without a municipal presence.

**Staff has worked in 2011 to maintain the integrity of Durham neighborhoods** through vigilant enforcement of zoning regulations, the exploration and thoughtful evaluation of potential new regulatory strategies (noise ordinance modification & disorderly house ordinance), the development of new desirable opportunities for undergraduate, graduate, and junior faculty housing in appropriately zoned locations to relieve pressure on traditional single family neighborhoods, and through continued collaborative relationships with the University of New Hampshire, the Durham Landlords Association, the Rental Housing Commission, and neighborhood residents. We continued once again in 2011 a mass information campaign to better educate landowners within Durham's central core and Seacoast area realtors concerning zoning regulations in Durham. Staff worked to prosecute (and publicize successful prosecution of) more egregious cases of non-compliance with local zoning. The Durham Police Department has been vigilant in consistent enforcement of noise and open container ordinances. The Code Enforcement Office has stepped up enforcement of trash regulation offenses.

Durham worked with the NH State Legislature, New Futures, and UNH to ensure a local "opt out" provision in new statutory language in 2011 dealing with "**Happy Hour**" billboard advertising, and later the Council passed a resolution "opting out" to preserve quality of life within neighborhoods surrounding the downtown core.

Consistent with Council goals, the Town also worked to develop and adopt **affordable housing** provisions for Durham's Zoning Ordinance to ensure the community was in compliance with new state requirements. The Planning Office was able to secure grant funding to offset the cost of this initiative. To effort was also intended to support the needs of residents and families with limited means desirous of residing in Durham.

The Planning Board/Planning Office has been active in revisiting the long-term vision for Durham through the **update of the 2000 Master Plan** with emphasis in 2011/2012 on integrating six chapters to include Downtown and Community Core Chapter, Professional Office Chapter, Environmental and Cultural Resources Chapter, Tax Stabilization Chapter, Land Development Regulations Chapter, and Energy Chapter. The process has been slow moving, though, which has been a source of frustration for me and for others.

Durham continues to explore **cooperative efforts with UNH** to enhance the intellectual, cultural, and potential future economic benefits of being a university town. At the Town's request, the University moved forward with a downtown site for its **UNH Business School**, which is now under construction. The University has indicated an interest in a new **Performing Arts Center** and desires a location proximate to the downtown area as a potential venue in concert with the desire of the Town. Once again, I authorized extending the leases for the **Store 24 and Strafford Avenue parking lots** for additional one-year terms. The goal is to integrate these leases into broader plans for the downtown area.

The Town and University, through the joint Water, Wastewater, and Stormwater Committee, continue to address a multitude of items to include taking all reasonable steps to preserve the **Town's water interests** as well as our natural resources within the Lamprey River watershed, and focusing tremendous attention in 2011 on **Great Bay Estuary nitrogen regulations** promulgated by the US EPA. Work is also being undertaken on ensuring our **water and wastewater tie in fees** for new development are reasonable to both enhance this revenue source thereby ensuring equity for existing rate payers, but not making it prohibitive for new development to take place.

It is helpful to note that staff in 2010 moved forward solutions which have substantively addressed the **wastewater bottleneck issue at the west end** in the vicinity of Cowell Stadium and the railroad tracks for the short-term with long-term solutions if necessary. These improvements make possible further economic development activity to the west. This directly benefitted the Capstone project in 2011 allowing it to come to fruition.

The Town hopes to have further discussions with the University with regard to the **Leawood Orchard** site for graduate students and junior UNH faculty. However, this initiative is on hold until the present UNH Master Plan update is complete.

In addition to the success we have seen within our various recreational programs, the **Durham Historical Building has, as hoped, become a hub for recreational activity** following our moving the Durham Parks and Recreation office as well as the Oyster River Youth Association office to that location. These enhancements have put recreation on the map in Durham in terms of a definitive physical location as well as space for indoor programming to take place. The Parks & Recreation Committee has previously provided the Council with statistics on programs provided and numbers of citizens served in 2011.

Last year, the Town negotiated and extended its contract for **solid waste trash disposal** by an additional 5-year period with Waste Management (with an additional 5-year option) maintaining its present competitive pricing and adding #3-#7 plastic recycling to the mix of allowable recyclables in Durham effective January 1, 2011 *and* the potential for single stream recycling in the future. Additionally, in 2011 the Town put

out its curbside collection program for bid and was pleased to learn that **Durham's in-house operation is actually \$55,000 less expensive than contracting out.**

The Town has **engaged the Oyster River Cooperative School District** to be more open and transparent in communication and sustainability in financial and environmental matters. Much community focus exists surrounding the school district at this time. A superintendent search is presently under way and Durham community representatives participated in the fall 2011 focus group process held by the School Board.

The Durham **Fire Department celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary** in 2011 with several opportunities for residents to participate in the festivities.

In 2011, Durham celebrated the **10 year anniversary of Amtrak Downeaster** rail service from Portland to Boston with stops in Durham, Dover, and Exeter, and successfully engaged with state and Federal officials when the US Congress was considering budget cuts that would have placed NH train service in jeopardy.

The **Durham Police Department was successful in 2011 in obtaining reaccreditation** through the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). This was a major accomplishment for the department and the community.

The **Morgan Way project** was completed by the Department of Public Works under a State of New Hampshire Municipally Managed Highway Grant program in 2011 with much applause and fanfare from affected local residents who have for many years advocated for the Route 4 safety improvements.

Public Works completed the **culvert replacement project under the Depot Road Parking Lot** (a Federally designated contaminated Brownfields site) in 2011 utilizing \$200,000 in Federal grant funding competitively pursued by DPW.

As a management philosophy, I have advocated funding for the various agencies of the Town in a manner so as to provide the minimum staffing needed utilizing hard working, competent personnel to accomplish the ongoing business of the town. Projects that transcend the routine and are beyond our static organizational capacity are contracted out or absorbed based upon internal capability where such resources exist.

This approach is metaphorically a two-edged sword: when projects move ahead as planned, the Town is successful in controlling cost centers and in producing quality results; when complications occur or new/unplanned demands are added to the mix, staff is forced to prioritize in order to complete essential tasks resulting in extended completion timeframes for less essential projects or for projects with longer time horizons.

Cases in point were the three extended power outages during 2011. Those unanticipated multi-day events had the effect of bogging down each of our public safety departments from planned tasks in order to meet the pressing needs of the emergency creating work backlogs stretching all the way to my desk. In the end, however, staff got the job done and actively pursued FEMA funding to maximize reimbursement opportunities.

It is easy for members of the community to lose track of the breadth and extent of projects underway at a given time in Durham. To give Councilors a sense of various initiatives underway in terms of **ongoing municipal infrastructure projects** and planning for the efficient use of Durham's resources, the following partial list may be informative. This list is also reflective of areas in which significant time has been devoted over the last year by town staff.

1. 2011 and 2012 Road Program
2. Oyster River Dam – Engineering
3. Depot Road advertising panels to promote downtown, address graffiti, and connect Durham/UNH
4. Inflow/Infiltration (Sewer)
5. Sewer Collection Upgrades
6. Wagon Hill Community Garden
7. Jackson's Landing Boat Ramp Extension
8. Church Hill Rink operation that has been profitable
9. Police Station Major Repairs/Rehabilitation, Front Steps, Ramp
10. FEMA Flood Applications for Route 108/Hamel Brook, Bennett Road, Longmarsh Road.
11. Successful Household Hazardous Waste Day
12. Aeration Blower Replacements & Improvements to Wastewater Treatment Process
13. 401 Water Quality Certificate Management & Flow Monitoring
14. Lamprey River Protected Instream Flow Study
15. Wastewater System Facilities Plan Update
16. Wastewater Dewatering System & Sludge Disposal Improvements
17. New Stormwater Requirement Implications
18. Engineering of the Pump Test and Artificial Recharge System at the Spruce Hole Well Site
19. Rehabilitation of the Dover Road Wastewater Pump Station
20. Complete the Wiswall Dam/Denial Fish Ladder rehabilitation
21. Implement additional speed tables to calm traffic with town funds and with the award of a Safe Routes to School Grant from the New Hampshire Department of Transportation
22. Complete new water, wastewater, and storm water ordinances
23. Complete engineering/construction of sewer collection system repairs in the Edgewood Road/Davis Avenue area
24. Complete repairs to the Thompson Lane drainage system

25. Complete structural repairs at the Smith Chapel on Mill Pond Road
26. Complete a traffic calming renovation project along the Pettee Brook Lane corridor
27. Conduct engineering analysis of the Main Street Railroad Bridge

**I believe my overall performance as Administrator has been a B+ for 2011.** I have channeled tremendous energy (as have members of our staff, committee members, and Councilors) toward moving forward the Council goals for 2011/2012 as well as in ensuring that the daily operations of the Town occur seamlessly so that Councilors can focus on broader policy issues -- only to have had much of the effort diluted as a result of the prevailing economic conditions – yet progress on many fronts has occurred. As we know, effort does not necessarily equate to success. It remains my belief that this good work will pay off in the form of desirable new development and the broadening of Durham’s tax base as well as increased environmental and energy sustainability opportunities per Council goals as individual projects come on line in the coming years. An area that requires addition attention in 2012, however, will be our overall planning capacity. To this end, I shall be working to leverage improvements in the coming months.

The weekly “**Friday Updates**” have proven successful in keeping Councilors aware of breaking issues as well as progress updates on a weekly basis while also filling a longstanding community void in keeping residents informed of topics of local or regional interest and allowing residents to become engaged in issues of concern. To this end, the “Friday Updates” have become a valued community resource for Durham.

Durham is **an extremely vibrant community** characterized by rich and active community engagement and discussion on nearly every subject. While in many towns and cities, projects are supported simply because the “chief,” “director,” or “administrator” in their professional opinion believe something to be prudent, in Durham, nearly all proposals – large or small - result in an extended discussion requiring staff and Councilors alike to not only justify logic, but also for them to explain why other ideas/approaches are not more worthy of support. This kind of intensive process takes time, resources, patience, and an appreciation for civic engagement to navigate successfully. Consequently, projects typically take much longer to move to fruition in Durham than in other places. I believe my skill sets continue to be well-suited for Durham’s setting and am of the belief that had I not been part of the Durham landscape over the last eleven years, many of the meaningful initiatives the Council has been successful in implementing would not have moved to fruition. In addition, I consider myself very fortunate to have the opportunity to work and live here.

This year end wrap up for 2011 and self-assessment concludes with my **acknowledging the efforts and accomplishments of the staff in each of Durham’s departments as well as our various board members.** I sincerely appreciate all that they do on behalf of the community. I am but one part of a much larger team that extends

Year End Wrap Up/Self-Assessment for 2011

Todd I. Selig, Administrator – 12.30.11

Page 13

from staff to citizen board members to outstanding volunteers. Good work one and all on a successful year.