

## PROFILE OF BART MCDONOUGH

Bart McDonough, who just stepped down as Chair of the Durham Conservation Commission, is a man in motion and one looking to make a difference.

In March, Bart took a position as the Town Planner in Kittery, Maine where he assists the Planning Board in analyzing development applications, zoning amendments, and other initiatives, including affordable housing programs. The latter is of particular concern to Bart who serves on the board of the Seacoast Workforce Housing Coalition.

He and his wife Bree now plan to purchase land and build a net-zero house near Kittery. They look forward to living in a home where the energy generated on site is at least equal to the energy that is used, through use of solar panels, a geothermal system, or other sustainable methods.

Durham has UNH, Exeter hosts Phillips Academy, and Bart has his own behemoth next door – the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard. He is working with the facility to enhance housing opportunities for their employees, provide more parking nearby, and expand transit to the site. The Town and shipyard coordinated to extend sidewalks in Kittery Foreside, the inviting town center outside the entrance to the shipyard. The Town recently enlisted area artists to paint 30 concrete Jersey barriers being installed to expand walking and dining areas.



Bart grew up in Manchester and graduated from UNH with a degree in German and International Affairs. He spent two years with the Peace Corps in Zambia, a landlocked country in Southern Africa, living in a mud-brick hut in Maloba, a small village in Luapula Province. Bart assisted residents in producing honey for market, smoking the bees to briefly disorient them when the honeycombs were removed (to avoid getting stung).

While living in Zambia, he visited Victoria Falls on the Zambezi River and observed the annual migration of giant African bats – with numbers reaching over 8 million – in Zambia’s Ksanka National Park. Of his time there, Bart says, “The people were wonderful. Very friendly and hospitable. Aside from cultural differences people are pretty much the same all over.” Maloba villagers speak Bemba, one of over 72 different languages and dialects in the country. Lucky for Bart, English is the administrative language.

He is working to maintain his competency in German but his Bemba could be better. Bart would frequently respond with “Mukwai,” a powerful word meaning please, thank you, and

several other things, which is a general term of respect as well. He was also proficient with “Mwashibukeni” (Good day). Bree came to see Bart in Maloba and he later reciprocated during her Peace Corps posting in Ethiopia.

Seeing how important water was in the lives of the villagers Bart became interested in this critical resource, noting, “Humanity will change its relationship with water as it becomes more scarce, especially with climate change.” After returning from Africa, he obtained a Master’s Degree from Tufts University’s Urban and Environmental Planning program. His focus on environmental management broadened to municipal planning in general.

Prior to the position in Kittery, Bart served as the Assistant Town Planner in Salisbury, Massachusetts, situated at the mouth of the Merrimack River. Of the planning profession, Bart says, “I love it. I get to help people and help a town become a great place.”

After living in Durham for four years, Bart says, “This is a wonderful inclusive community with UNH, the library, the athletic facilities, and lots of support for quality education. You can’t compete with Durham for its conservation efforts. The members of the commission bring a lot of terrific ideas. I especially enjoyed working on trails and bridges with Ellen Snyder and John Nachilly. They do a phenomenal job!”

We wish the best to Bart, Bree, and their cat Mugatu (not a Bemba name) in this exciting next phase of their lives and thank him for his many contributions to Durham. Let us not say Shalineepo (Goodbye), but rather Twalamonana Milo (We’ll be seeing you).