

Speakers

Andre Leroux, *Executive Director, Massachusetts Smart Growth Alliance*

André has been the Executive Director of the Massachusetts Smart Growth Alliance since 2007, where he established the Great Neighborhoods program to help local residents transform their communities through smart growth projects. He helped found Transportation for Massachusetts, a statewide coalition that advocates for increasing funding for walking, biking, and public transportation. Prior to that, André was the Director of Planning and Policy at Lawrence CommunityWorks, where he coordinated the Reviviendo Gateway Initiative (RGI), an award-winning community revitalization effort in Lawrence, MA. A graduate of Dartmouth College, Andre completed two years of graduate studies at El Colegio de México in Mexico City studying urban development and environmental impact assessment. He has worked at the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies at Harvard University and the Massachusetts State Senate.

Mark Barnhart, *Director, Office of Community and Economic Development, Town of Fairfield*

Mark S. Barnhart is the Director of Community & Economic Development for the Town of Fairfield. During his tenure, Mr. Barnhart has been responsible for overseeing construction of the Fairfield's newest commuter rail station as well as the redevelopment of the former Fort Devans site into twenty-two units of affordable ownership housing and eight units of permanent supportive housing. Previously, Mr. Barnhart had served as the Town Manager and Chief Executive Officer for the Town of Stratford. Mr. Barnhart holds a Master's Degree in Public Administration from the University of Pennsylvania and completed his undergraduate studies at Albright College, a small liberal arts college located in Reading, Pennsylvania. Mr. Barnhart serves on the Board of Directors of the United Way of Coastal Fairfield County and the Connecticut Economic Developers Association.

Beth Cavagna, *Town Planner, Town of Bethel*

Beth Cavagna is the Planning Director for the Town of Bethel and was formally the Assistant Director as well as the Inland Wetlands Agent. Beth has been recognized by the Northwest Conservation District for her efforts to acquire open space. Her work has included the preparation and adoption of two POCD Plans, the Bethel Forward TOD Plan and the final phase of adoption of TOD Regulations. She is currently the Chair of the Bethel Housing Authority.

Pat Llodra, *former First Selectman, Town of Newtown*

Pat Llodra has lengthy experience in both the public and private sectors and a proven record of leadership. Pat moved to Newtown in 1970 and became involved in local issues through her active membership in the Sandy Hook PTA, the PTA Council, the St. Rose Parish Council, the League of Women Voters, and the Republican Town Committee. She was elected to a six-year term on the Board of Education in 1976. Pat has been a leader in educational policy locally and statewide. She was first elected to Newtown's Legislative Council in 2005 and won re-election in 2007. She was elected First Selectman in 2009 and served in that capacity until November of this year.

Patrick McMahon, *President & CEO, Connecticut Main Street Center*

Patrick McMahon is the CEO of the Connecticut Main Street Center, a nonprofit organization dedicated to community and economic development within the context of historic preservation, and committed to bringing Connecticut's downtowns and village centers back to life socially and economically. Patrick previously served as Director of Economic and Community Development in Suffield for 15 years working on community branding and marketing, community facilities planning, Town Center enhancements and economic development efforts around Bradley International Airport. He also served as Economic Development Consultant to Windsor Locks. He is the former President of the Connecticut Economic Development Association and former Board Member of the Northeastern Economic Development Association. While President of CEDAS, he worked with partners on the passage of Municipal Tax Increment Financing Legislation.

Raphael Podolsky, *Staff Attorney, Connecticut Legal Services, Inc.*

Raphael Podolsky, a staff attorney with Connecticut Legal Services, is the housing advocate for the legal aid programs in Connecticut. He was one of the drafters of the original Affordable Housing Appeals Procedure Act (Section 8-30g) in 1988-1989 and of the major revisions to that act in 1999-2000. He was also involved in the creation of the state Rental Assistance Program (RAP) and has worked for many years to assure that Connecticut's eviction laws give tenants a fair chance to be heard in court. He is currently the chairperson of the Connecticut Advisory Council on Housing Matters, a state advisory board to the housing court system, and, for years, was the editor of the Legal Services Housing Index, a comprehensive indexing of judicial and administrative housing cases.

Dara Kovel, *Development President, Beacon Communities*

Dara Kovel is President of Beacon Communities Development. Dara has over 25 years' experience in affordable housing. Before joining Beacon, she spent five years at Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA) where she oversaw all multifamily lending and tax credit allocation activities, as well as the homeownership program. Dara's experience prior to CHFA includes leading the New England office of Jonathan Rose Companies, a New York-based, real estate development and investment company. Dara has served on the Federal Home Loan Bank of Boston's Advisory Council, Urban Land Institute's Terwilliger Center's Workforce Housing Board, and the Home Connecticut Steering Committee. Dara is a LEED Accredited Professional and holds a Bachelor of Arts in English from Yale as well as an MBA from the Yale School of Management.

Melissa Kaplan-Macey, *Connecticut Director, Regional Plan Association*

Melissa Kaplan-Macey leads RPA's research, planning and advocacy activities in Connecticut. An expert in land use planning and community engagement, Melissa has extensive experience in building collaborative relationships with community partners in order to leverage resources and create actionable policy. Prior to joining RPA, Melissa was principal of Collaborative Planning Studio and, previously, was a senior associate at BFJ Planning. Melissa is an adjunct professor in the urban planning program at New York University's Robert F. Wagner School of Public Service and is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners. She also is a registered Professional Planner in the State of New Jersey. She holds a master's in urban planning from New York University's Wagner School of Public Service and a bachelor's in urban studies from Brown University.

John Guskowski, *CME Associates*

John Guskowski is currently Lead Planner with CME Associates, Inc. based in Storrs, CT. John holds a Bachelor's Degree from Fairfield University and a Master's Degree in Natural Resources Management & Engineering from UConn. Mr. Guskowski is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) and holds accreditations from the US Green Building Council (LEED-AP) and the Institute for Sustainable Infrastructure (ENV-SP). As a Planner with CME Associates, Mr. Guskowski serves both private sector developers and municipalities. In addition to serving as Consulting Town Planner for Essex, Clinton, and Hampton, CT, John also serves as Economic Development Coordinator for Hebron, and has completed numerous special studies for Milford, Manchester, Putnam, Canton, Brooklyn, Derby, and Wethersfield. Prior to his work with CME Associates, Mr. Guskowski served as Town Planner in Woodstock and Thompson, CT, and as a Planner with the Capitol Region Council of Governments. For the past fifteen years, Mr. Guskowski has also served on the Board of the nonprofit Connecticut Resource Conservation & Development Council, the last thirteen years as President.

David McCarthy, *President, Heritage Housing, Inc.*

David R. McCarthy founded Heritage Housing, Inc. in 2017 and serves as its President. David has eleven years of experience in real estate development and acquisitions with a specialty in affordable housing. David developed or preserved over 1,000 units of affordable housing prior to founding Heritage Housing, Inc. and worked on projects that ranged from 10 to 400 units and from \$3 million to \$100 million. He is deeply familiar with affordable housing financing programs and public housing authority Project-Based Voucher and RAD programs. He has worked on projects in Connecticut, New Jersey, Michigan, and West Virginia. David was previously employed at Jonathan Rose Companies in Stamford, CT / New York, NY, a national developer and investor in affordable housing, for 8 years as a Senior Project Manager and Project Manager. Before that he worked at New Neighborhoods, Inc. in Stamford, CT, a not-for-profit Community Development Company, for 3 years as an Asset Management Associate.