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TOWN OF GREAT BARRINGTON MASSACHUSETTS

OFFICE OF THE TOWN MANAGER

PRESS RELEASE

Town Launches Web-Based Map Service

Great Barrington has launched a new online mapping service to provide useful property data for free to the public. The service, called Muni, is a tool to help citizens, businesses, and those looking to relocate to or do business in Great Barrington learn more about a property.

The service compiles in one interactive format geographic information like roads, rivers and lakes, property information like addresses, property lines, and assessments, as well as regulatory information such zoning, wetlands, and floodplains. The online mapping tool can be accessed at http://maps.massgis.state.ma.us/map_ol/great_barrington.php or by clicking the link on the Planning Department page of the town website (www.townofgb.org).

Muni Mapper is a local GIS, or, geographic information service, and is provided for free to Great Barrington by the Commonwealth's Mass GIS technology division. Over the last several years, the Town Planner and Assessor have worked with Berkshire Regional Planning Commission to digitize all of the assessor's maps, zoning maps, and other information into a format that is more useful for Town staff and the general public. Recognizing those efforts, Mass GIS chose Great Barrington as one of eight towns to pilot the free service.

Town Manager Kevin O'Donnell noted that it would have taken the Town a substantial investment of funds to establish a state of the art GIS system from scratch. "The system could cost upwards of \$50,000 to purchase the software and base maps, digitize the records, and load the data, along with an annual maintenance fee," O'Donnell said. He added, "The best part is that this is free to the user, and it is free to the Town."

Town Planner Christopher Rembold said the Muni Mapper is a powerful economic development tool. "With Muni Mapper, somebody looking to relocate their business or their family to Great Barrington can do site selection online. This way they can determine the zoning, environmental constraints, and the size of the lot and building from their desktop. It's a basic tool that we have to have for economic development."

Rembold added that using the system should be straightforward for most computer users, but that it is intuitive enough for anybody. Users should call the Planning Department at (413) 528-1619, x.7 if they have any questions.

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