



Doing Business in Ashford

Compiled by the

Ashford Economic Development Commission

January 2010

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“Profit is the result of risks wisely selected”

Frederick Barnard Hawley, 1907

1. Preface

This booklet is intended to help existing and potential members of our business community comply with the requirements for doing business in our town. It has been created with the support, input, and oversight of various town agencies, officials and commissions concerned with encouraging Ashford business while maintaining relevant regulations and ordinances.

The booklet was compiled by the Ashford Economic Development Commission as an aid in establishing or modifying your business. It is our hope that this information will reduce time and effort in complying with the process.

This pamphlet is also published on the AEDC website (www.ashfordedc.org).

2. Office of the First Selectman

Welcome

Throughout our community's history there has been a steady presence of independent and energetic individuals hard at work to make a living either from the land or from their own imagination. While we fiercely protect the rural nature of our town, we welcome the services and benefits that Business brings, old and new, to our community. We continue to work to improve the Town's relationship with our local businesses and to aid in their success.

Ralph H. Fletcher, First Selectman

3. Overview of Business in Ashford

Ashford is unique in that it is strategically located in relation to area commercial hubs. We are very accessible to Hartford, Boston, and Providence via a major highway and principal State roads that intersect our Town. We are close to two major State universities. We have the services of a stable and eclectic workforce.

Another unique feature is the longstanding rural aspect of the community born out of our agricultural heritage. It is this heritage that shapes much of the Community's attitude and its desire to maintain rural character.

That being said, there is a need for continued expansion of services provided by the local business community. Ashford welcomes new businesses that contribute to a healthy local economy and a desire to support the rural flavor of the community. It is the obligation of the Town and businesses to work together to produce a result that benefits all.

4. Ashford Plan of Conservation and Development

In 2005 the Town adopted a comprehensive plan that stands as the community's vision of Ashford's future. The Plan recognizes that, while growth is inevitable, we have a strong desire to balance growth while continuing to maintain the rural nature of our community. We see this as an asset not only to residents, but to the businesses within our community. The Plan encourages business to come to Ashford and provide services to and employment for our residents.

5. Doing Business in Ashford

In General

A business wishing to establish itself in Ashford must adhere to certain requirements and regulations pertinent to their specific business situation. The type of business will determine the necessary licenses, as well as, which Town and State agencies will be involved. For help with State licensing see:

www.ct-clic.com

Ashford requires that each business register their "Trade Name" with the Town Clerk's office. This is a simple process and requires a minimal fee of five dollars.
Town Offices located at 5 Town Hall Rd.

Most building projects and food service activities (including temporary food events) require approval from the local health district, **Eastern Highlands Health District**, before any permits are issued. Applications can be obtained online from www.ehhd.org. Their offices are located on **Eagleville Rd., Mansfield, Ct. 860-429-3325**.

Inspection by the Fire Marshal is typically required, depending on the type of business. This protects you and your future customers from unwanted liability. Contact **Richard Whitehouse at 860-429-6222**.

It is recommended that a new business discuss its proposed operation with the Town's Assessor. The Assessor's office will provide an explanation of the required personal Property Declarations or Income and Expense filing, in the case of rental property. The property assessment process is also discussed. The Assessor's office is located in the **Town Offices at 5 Town Hall Rd. 860- 487-4403**.

Business Location

The business's location may prompt the need to respond to various local regulations through one or more of the land use commissions. Typically a business will function in the home, a rented space, or a property owned by the business. A business-owned location may result from the purchase of an existing or newly constructed commercial structure.

Land Use Office

In the case of the business renting space, purchasing an existing building, or constructing a new commercial building, it is recommended that the first step be to contact the Ashford Land Use Office. Providing proposed site plans and internal layouts would be an advantage at this point. The Land Use Administrator is in a position to access the project and determine the steps necessary to move the project through the commission/s involved. The Land Use Administrator can also assist in preparing applications and permit requests, as well as providing a preliminary review of the project.

Depending on the complexity of the project, and more specifically in the case of new construction, the various land use commissions are willing to consider an informal review of the project prior to the cost and effort of initiating formal application.

6. Municipal Staff

The following is a list of the names, functions and contact information of those individuals who will most likely be involved with the establishment of your business:

Land Use Department

Michael Gardner, official

Building Inspection and Zoning Enforcement

Telephone number: 860-487-4404; FAX, 860-487-4435

Controlling Regulation:

Ashford Zoning Regulations

Connecticut State Building Code

Connecticut State Fire Safety Code

Types of permits:

Building Permit

Zoning Compliance Certificate

Certificate of Occupancy

Proposed floor plans and layout

Signage

Change in use and Changes to layout

Fixtures

Exterior lighting

Joseph Theroux, Wetland Agent

Telephone number: 860-487-4415, Wetland Office or
860-376-6842, Agent's Home Office

Controlling Regulation:

Ashford Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Regulations

Inspections will be made of all permitted activity for compliance. This office will also respond to reported wetland infractions.

Assessor, Lynn Byberg

Telephone number: 860-487-4403; FAX, 860-487-4432

New businesses and businesses modifying their operation should contact the Assessor's office in order to place certain business assets on the Town's Personal Property list.

Fire Marshal, Richard Whitehouse

Telephone number: 860-429-4412

Building floor plans and layouts, new or revised must be provided to the Fire Marshal for approval.

Town Clerk, Barbara B. Metsack

Telephone number: 860-487-4401; FAX, 860-487-4431

A business is required to register the business name and address with the Clerk's office. You may also need to file various required licenses and permits with this office.

Health District, Eastern Highlands Health District

Telephone number: 860-429-3325, Fax 860-429-3321

Website: www.ehhd.org Email: ehhd@ehhd.org

The EHHD needs to be contacted for review and approval of site plans, septic systems (new and repair) and any building conversion, change of use, building addition, accessory structure and lot line change. Soil testing may be required. Also food service establishments require yearly licensing and regular inspections. Plan review is required for new food establishments and/or transfer of ownership. Inspections for daycares, family camp grounds and public pools are completed by EHHD. For further information and required forms please visit the above website.

7. Land Use Commissions and Boards

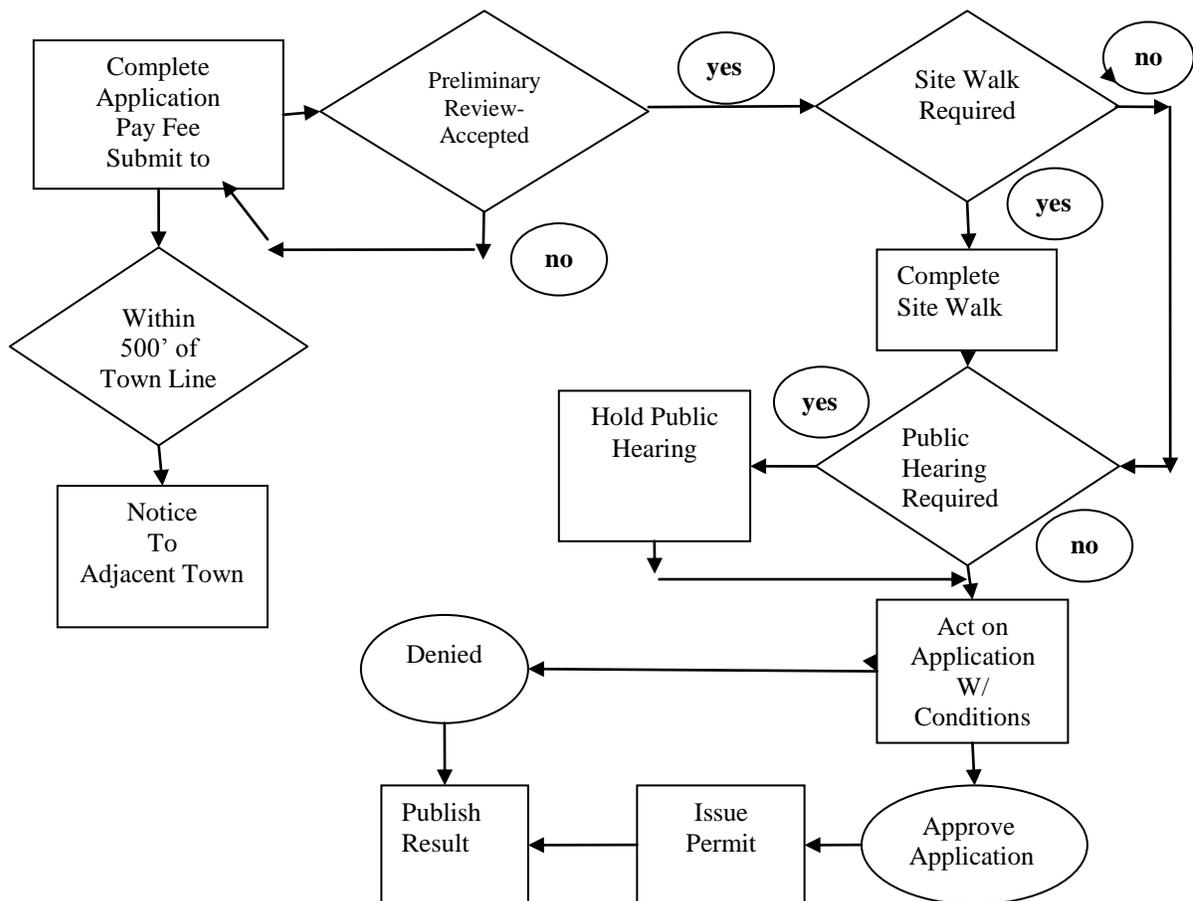
Note: A Flow Chart has been provided for each of the commissions. These are intended to demonstrate the general flow of the procedure and do not provide for every possible variation that may occur.

Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission:

Due to the number of major waterways and the abundance of defined wetland areas, Ashford plays a significant part in the water recharge for the area. Our streams and wetlands also provide significant habitat for a large variety of wildlife. It is these assets that are protected by this commission. This commission is required to review any activity that may have an impact on regulated wetland areas. If such activity is approved, a formal permit is issued. The Wetlands Commission consideration typically occurs prior to review by the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Process Flow Chart:

Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission

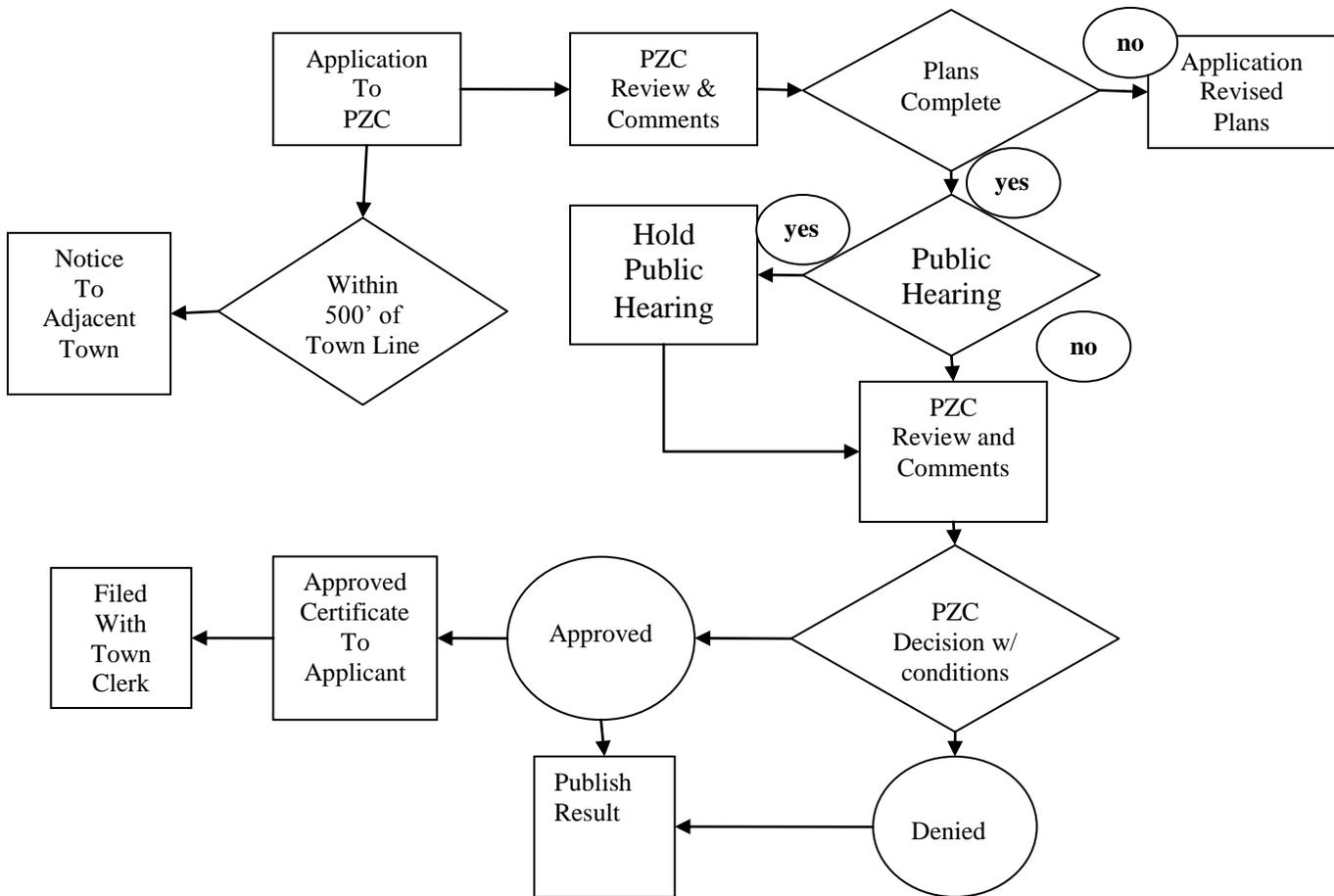


Planning and Zoning Commission:

This commission typically considers the business function, its location, and the construction and/or use of any commercial building. The regulations applied by this commission consider use, building size, setbacks, parking, lighting, and signage, to name some of the major considerations. Well-planned and documented features of the business and a site plan are essential to expedite this process. Again, the advice of the Land Use Office is critical to success, and preliminary presentations to the Commission, in the case of complex projects, are helpful.

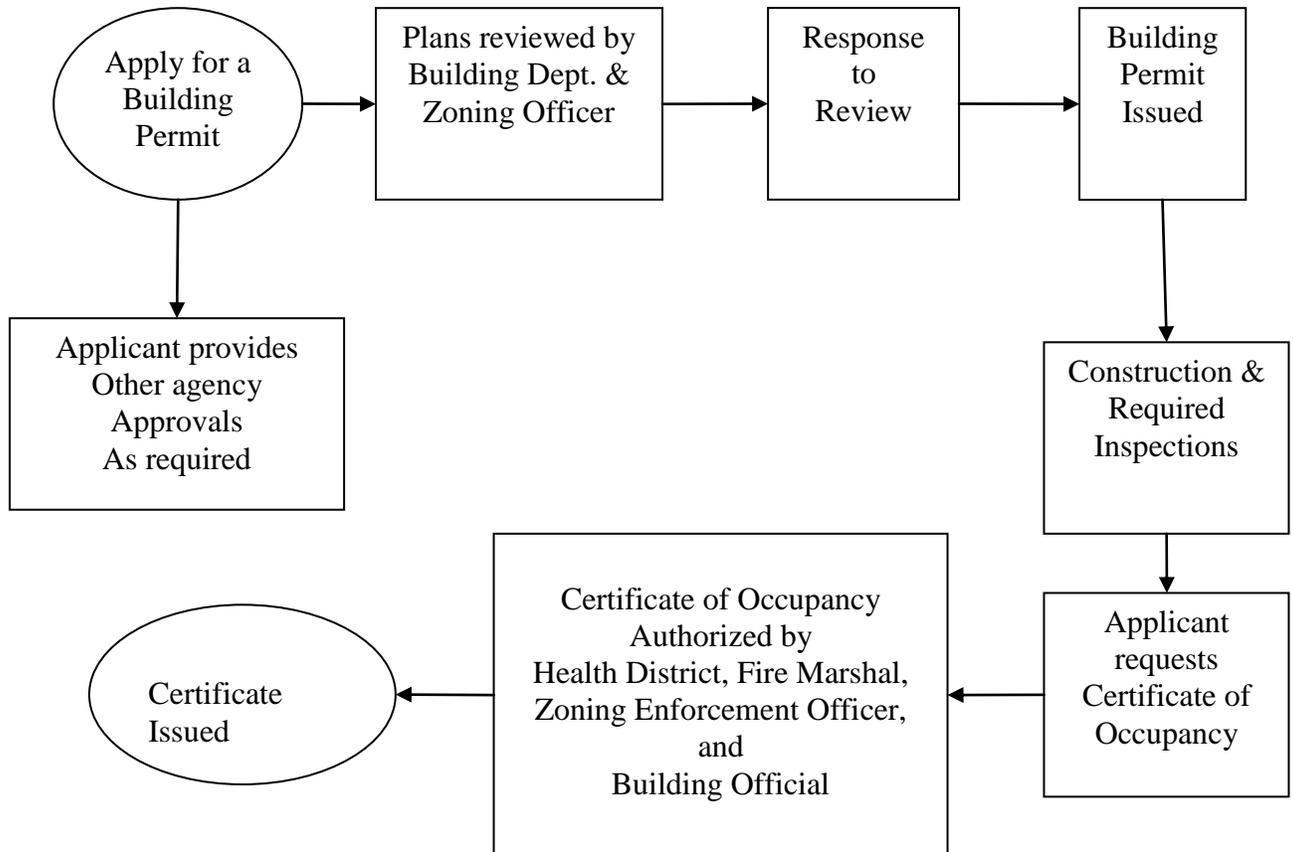
Process Flow Charts

Planning and Zoning Commission



Note: After receiving approvals from Eastern Highlands Health and the Land Use Commissions, the Building Official is authorized to issue a Building Permit upon his approval of construction documents and plans.

Building Permit Process

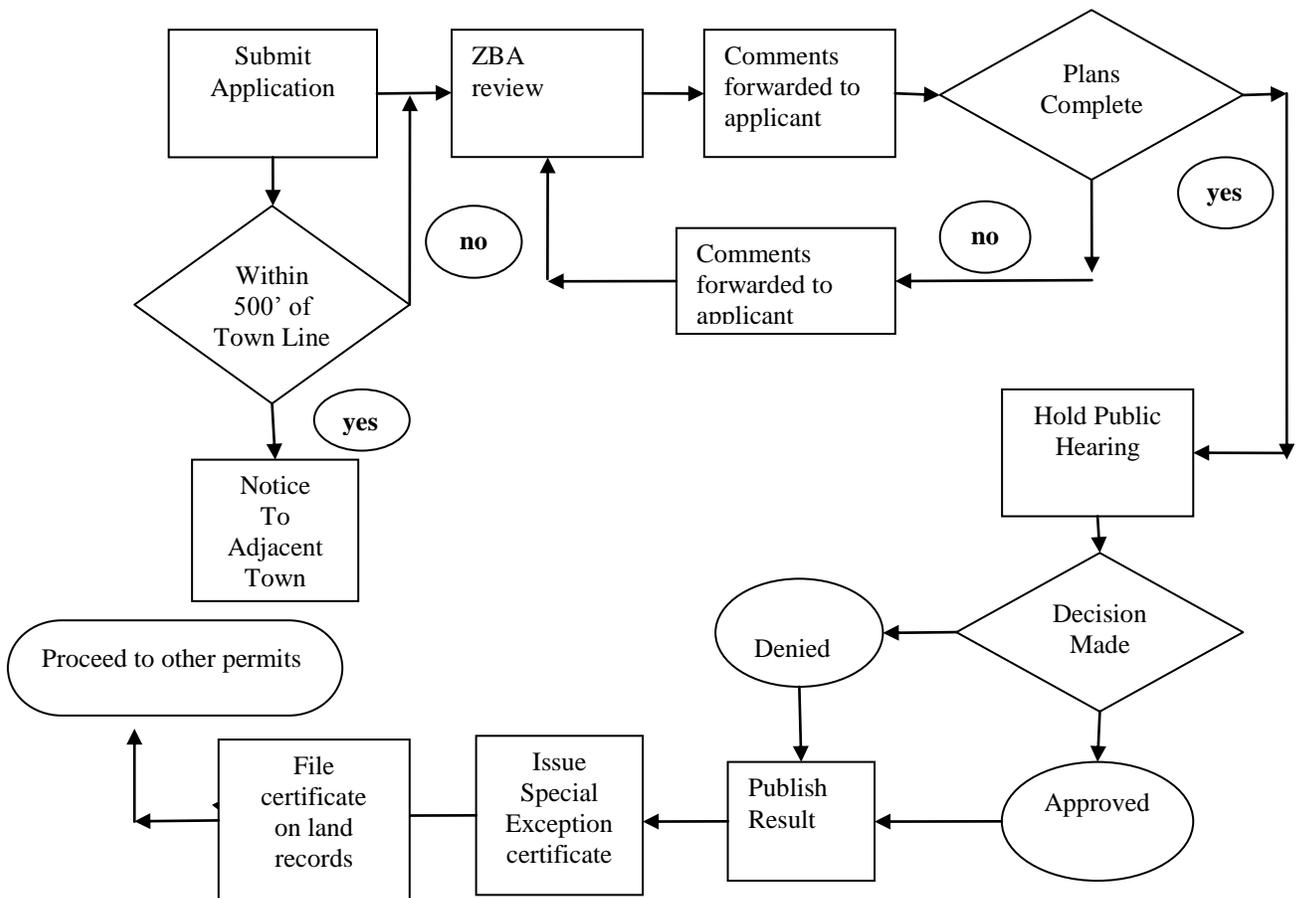


Zoning Board of Appeals:

This board is an appellate land use commission. The function of the ZBA is to hear and decide upon any appeal of a decision, order or requirement imposed by the Zoning Enforcement Officer. The ZBA also has the power to vary or adjust the strict application of the Ashford Zoning Regulations in cases of unusual hardship. The third function of the ZBA is the authority granted by Connecticut State Statute to hear and decide all requests for site approval for motor vehicle sales, services, and repair uses. In this function, the ZBA is acting as the local authority of the Connecticut State Department of Motor Vehicles and not in strictly a zoning capacity.

Process Flow Chart

Zoning Board of Appeals



8. *FEES

Building Department:

Building Permit Fee-
(\$10.22/ \$1,000 of Project Cost)

Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission:

Application Fee - Commercial Uses - \$170.00

Engineering Review - \$105.00 per hour

Environmental/Wetlands Consultant - \$100.00 per hour

Legal Counsel – Up to \$150.00 per hour

Wetlands Agent Inspection - \$35.00 per hour

State Fee - \$60.00

Planning and Zoning Commission:

<u>Applications</u>	<u>Fee</u>	<u>** State Surcharge</u>	<u>Total</u>
Change of Zoning Regulations	\$250.00	\$60.00	\$310.00
Change of Zoning Maps	\$250.00	\$60.00	\$310.00
Special Permits	\$250.00	\$60.00	\$310.00
Zoning Permit	\$25.00	\$60.00	\$85.00
Home Occupation	\$25.00	\$60.00	\$85.00

Commercial Site Plan Review (Single Lot) \$150.00 \$60.00 \$210.00

Permanent Signs - \$10.00/sq.ft.

** To comply with Public Act 92-235 of the Ct General Assembly, this surcharge is added per approved applications.

Eastern Highlands Health District:

Please visit website at www.ehhd.org for current fee schedule (or call 869-429-3325)

***All fees listed above are subject to change.**

9. Commercial Zoning Regulation References

This section highlights those areas of the Zoning Regulations that are pertinent to commercial activity. The complete text of each reference can be obtained through the Ashford Land Use Office or on the Ashford Municipal website, www.ashfordtownhall.org

Section 2.09 Prohibited Uses

Section 2.10 Special Regulations for Certain Accessory Uses

- 2.10.03(A) 1 Keeping of Farm Animals on less Than Three Acres
- 2.10.03(A) 2 Avocational and Commercial Dog Kennels, Animal Daycare and Veterinary Hospitals
- 2.10.03 (B) Roadside Stands
- 2.10.03(C) Boarding, Rooming, or Lodging Quarters
- 2.10.03 (D) Home Occupation (special required for Home Occupation)
- 2.10.03 (E) Farm and Agricultural Uses

Section 3.02 Commercial Zone and Light Commercial Zone

- 3.02.01 Generally Permitted Uses
- 3.02.02 Specially Permitted Uses
- 3.02.03 General Standards for Commercial Zone
(Review by Design Advisory Board)

Section 4.01 Signs and Lighting

Signs:

- 4.01.01 (A) Definitions
- 4.01.01 (B) General Provisions
- 4.01.01 (C) Temporary Signs
- 4.01.01 (D) Permanent Signs
- 4.01.01 (E) Non-conforming Signs
- 4.01.01 (F) Permits

Site Lighting:

- 4.01.02 (A) Definitions
- 4.01.02 (B) Lighting Plan
- 4.01.02 (C) General Requirements
- 4.01.02 (D) Special Permits

Section 4.02 Off-Street Parking and Loading

- 4.02.01 Parking General Statement
- 4.02.03 Non-Residential Parking
- 4.02.04 Loading General Statement
- 4.02.05 Plan Required for Non-Residential Uses
- 4.02.06 Combined parking and Loading Areas

Section 4.07 Motor Vehicle Service and Repair Stations

Section 4.08 Eating and Drinking Establishments

Section 4.09 Rural Industries Special Permit

- 4.09.01 Purpose of Rural Industries Regulations
- 4.09.02 Permitted Rural Industries
- 4.09.03 Standards for Rural Industries

Section 5.02 Permits

Section 5.03 Special Permits

- 5.03.02 When Required
- 5.03.03 Application
- 5.03.04 Waivers
- 5.03.05 Additional Requirements
- 5.03.07 Special Conditions
- 5.03.08 Standard Conditions
- 5.03.09 Special Permit Procedures