

Current Administrative Process for Building Permits for Small Projects

We have had several meetings and discussions about the building permit process and ways to make the process more efficient for small projects, most of which require only minimal review for approval and issuance of the permit. For businesses, these projects often involve small repairs or maintenance, and though small, may need to be completed on an emergency basis. We have offered several suggestions for issuing these small project permits online, without review, while still collecting the necessary information about each project to support the permit and satisfy FEMA requirements for the National Flood Insurance Program. We have not reached agreement to adopt or test any of the suggested changes. Town staff believe that with the recently added position for the building official, staff can process permits for small projects quickly, often on the same day.

The proposed plan would:

- Reinforce the need for a permit for all projects – construction, repairs, maintenance. While exceptions to requirements for building permits are possible for properties not in a FEMA-designated flood zone, maintaining the Town’s participation in the NFIP does not allow exceptions for the 2/3 of the Town that is in a flood zone.
 - There is a current exception for maintenance projects with less than \$1,000 in materials costs, but it does not apply to flood zone properties and has not been a consideration in any building permits issued by the current building official. We could discuss eliminating this exception.
- Reinforce and consider a written policy that emergency projects may proceed when a permit cannot be obtained immediately; application and required documentation can be provided afterward.
- The Town will provide data on the time from application to issuance of the permit for projects with a total cost (labor and materials) less than \$7,500 and summarize and report these data each month. Application and issue dates are already included in the spreadsheet reports each month.
- Fees will continue to be required for all projects.
- At the end of six months, we can evaluate the data and determine if the system is working efficiently or if there are changes needed to the process to enhance efficiency.