

# An Introduction to the Permitting Process in Essex

To determine exactly what path your project will be required to follow you will want to consult the Building Inspector at the beginning of your planning process.

The Building Inspector will lay out the general flow for review and approval from the Town of Essex Boards, Departments and Commissions which your project may need to undergo before a Building Permit will be issued.

You are required to obtain a Building Permit for most projects which involve the construction of any structure on a property or the renovation/alteration of an existing structure.

The general rule is that the more complex a project is, the more time it will take to permit and the more changes to the plans may be necessary to satisfy all the Town of Essex Boards, Departments and Commissions.

In some cases an applicant may go directly to a specific Department for approval. For example, the Department of Public Works should be directly contacted regarding the installation of a driveway or moving the location of road access. However, in most cases, the Building Inspector's office should be your first stop.

The Building Inspector cannot issue a Building Permit until the individual requirements of all Town Boards and Commissions that are necessary for the Building Permit are met.



## ***Why should I contact the Building Inspector?***

*There are many reasons why you should contact the Building Inspector's Department before you begin that project...*

*Renovating a bathroom or kitchen? Having a temporary tent installed for a function? Changing the current use of a property? Adding a shed or a patio to your home or your business? Starting a new business? Starting a new business in a building that has a business already? Doing any type of work on one of the four designated scenic roads: Belcher Street, Choate Street, Story Street, or Apple Street?*

### **Building Inspector**

Building Permit Applications for all projects are available on the Town website: [www.essexma.org](http://www.essexma.org). Building Permits may also be found at the Essex Town Hall outside of the Building Inspector's Office on the second floor hanging file to the left of the door.

A full and completed Application includes:

- ✓ A completed application form
- ✓ Copies of contractor's licenses if you will be hiring someone to do the work
- ✓ Two sets of plans detailing the proposed construction activity
- ✓ Two sets of accurate site plans drawn to scale
- ✓ It has been reviewed or approved by the Town Department as required by the Building Inspector
- ✓ New construction also requires an energy report



**IMPORTANT:** All Building Permit Applications must be presented in person to the Building Inspector or the Assistant Building Inspector. Applications that are left in the office will be rejected and returned to the applicant.

**IMPORTANT:** No matter the age of a property, all Building Permit applications for the demolition of a building must be reviewed the Historical Commission.

**IMPORTANT:** All Commercial Building Plans must be reviewed by both the Plumbing Inspector and the Electrical Inspector. Commercial Building Permit Applications are only available at the Building Inspector's office during office hours.

**IMPORTANT:** If you believe your project may require zoning relief, you must contact the Building Inspector first.

**INSPECTIONS:** Please call 978-768-2514 before 9:00 a.m. on Friday and the Building Inspector or the Assistant Building Inspector will arrive for the inspection Friday Afternoon or Saturday morning. An inspection request may also be submitted by email. Please plan accordingly.

**DOCUMENTS YOU MAY NEED:**

- ✓ Building Permit application
- ✓ Worker comp certificate and the form completed
- ✓ Home Improvement Contractor Registration
- ✓ Construction Supervisor(s) License
- ✓ Two site plans of property
- ✓ Two sets of building plans



All Building Permit Applications must be accompanied by two (2) copies of a site plan drawn to a suitable scale and contain the following:

- ✓ Name and address of the Owner and the Applicant
- ✓ Date
- ✓ Graphic Scale and North Arrow

- ✓ The graphically accurate shape, size, and location of the lot to be built upon
- ✓ A locus plan showing the lot's relation to abutting streets
- ✓ The graphically accurate shape, size, height and location of any buildings to be erected, altered or removed, including setbacks from lot lines
- ✓ The accurate size and location of existing buildings
- ✓ Required off-street parking and loading space, existing and proposed
- ✓ Location of any required screening
- ✓ All applications must be signed by the owner. In the case of leased land or a signed Purchase and Sales Agreement, the signature of the owner and the applicant are both required
- ✓ Any other information which may be required by the Building Inspector or the Planning Board

Town Hall Resources

Bill Sanborn, Building Commissioner

Bill Holton, Local Building Inspector

Natalie Fiore, Clerk

Address: Essex Town Hall - 30 Martin Street

Phone: 978-768-2514 - Fax: 978-768-2505 – Email: [bsanborn@essexma.org](mailto:bsanborn@essexma.org)

**Historical Commission**

The mission of the Essex Historical Commission (EHC) is to identify, document, and protect Essex's historic resources, to increase public awareness of Essex's heritage and the value of historic preservation, and to do so with not only the guidance and counsel of the Massachusetts Historical Commission, but also by interacting with other town boards and committees. In addition, the EHC maintains inventories of culturally significant structures, conducts related research initiatives, posts timely notices in the local press, and holds regular public meetings.

**In pursuit of this mission the EHC administers the mandates of Essex's Town Bylaw 4-15: Demolition Delay/Review:**

"The purpose of this bylaw is to encourage the preservation and protection of significant buildings and structures within the Town of Essex that constitute or reflect distinctive features of the Town's architectural, cultural, economic, political or social history and to limit the adverse effect that demolition may have on the character of the Town."

The Historical Commission meets on the 3rd Thursday of the month, 7:00-8:30pm at the Senior Center, 17 Pickering St. All community members are welcome.

Town Hall Resources

Richard Stevens, Chairman

[specwood@gmail.com](mailto:specwood@gmail.com)



**Electrical Inspector**

Applications for all projects and a list of fees are available on the Town website: [www.essexma.org](http://www.essexma.org) or at Town Hall from the Selectmen's Assistant, Pam Witham, during the regularly scheduled hours of operation of Town Hall on the second floor, second office on the right.

**Town Hall Resources**

Ramie Reader, Electrical Inspector  
John Shields, Electrical Inspector's Assistant  
Address: Essex Town Hall - 30 Martin Street  
Phone: 978-768-2514 - Fax: 978-768-2505



**Plumbing and Gas Fitting Inspector**

Plumbing & Gas Permit Applications and related fee schedules are available at Town Hall at the Board of Health Office in the hanging bins to the right of the office door.

To schedule a Plumbing or Gas Inspection, please call the Board of Health Office at 978-768-7614 by 3:00 the day before your requested inspection date. The Board of Health Clerk will be happy to assist you.

**IMPORTANT:** Inspections are performed Tuesday - Friday at 8:00 & 8:30 a.m.

**Town Hall Resources**

Richard Corriere, Plumbing and Gas Inspector  
David Pereen, Plumbing and Gas Inspector's Assistant  
Address: Essex Town Hall - 30 Martin Street  
Phone: 978-768-7614 - Fax: 978-768-2505



**Essex Planning Board**

The Planning Board has the authority to review and approve or deny a wide range of projects under the provisions of the Essex Zoning Bylaws and the Essex Subdivision Control Regulations.

The general duties of the Planning Board include the study of the Town's resources and needs, development of plans to address the protection or wise use of resources and to meet the community's needs.

Duties requiring review and decisions by the Planning Board include:

- ✓ Review and approve or deny Special Permits
- ✓ Conduct Site Plan Reviews
- ✓ Review Approval Not Required (ANR) Applications
- ✓ Review and approve or deny Subdivision Plans
- ✓ Make recommendations to the Zoning Board of Appeals on Special Permits, Appeals, and Variances

- ✓ Review the town Zoning Bylaws and Proposed Amendments via a process of Public Hearings and vote at Town Meeting

The Building Inspector will determine if a Special Permit Application or Site Plan Review is required.

**IMPORTANT:** All applications should be date-stamped by the Town Clerk prior to submittal to the Planning Board.

The Town of Essex Bylaws may be found on the Town web site, [essexma.org](http://essexma.org). Chapter VI contains the Zoning Bylaws. Forms and information may be found on the Planning Board web page or by contacting the Planning Board Administrative Assistant.

The Building Inspector may determine that a Building Permit Application will require review by the Planning Board. The Building Permit Application will be presented by the Building Inspector to the Planning Board during the next Regularly Scheduled Meeting. You are not required to contact the office to request time on an agenda.

If you have questions or concerns for the Planning Board you may mail or email your comments to the Planning Board Office. The Planning Board will discuss the correspondence during the next Regularly Scheduled Meeting of the Planning Board during the Regular Business portion of the meeting and will respond to your correspondence in writing in a timely manner.

Unless otherwise noted, meetings are held on the first and third Wednesday of the month. Meetings commence at 7:30 p.m. and are typically held at the T.O.H.P. Burnham Library which is located at 30 Martin Street, Essex, MA. The Meeting Schedule is posted at Town Hall and on the Town web site.

To request copies of documents please contact the Planning Board office. A copy of the Public Record Request Policy for the Town of Essex may also be found on the Planning Board web page or you may contact the Town Clerk or the Planning Board Administrative Assistant for a copy of the Public Record Request Policy.

*Town Hall Resource*

Mary Heeney, Administrative Assistant

Address: Town Hall – 30 Martin Street

Phone: (978) 768-7663 - Email: [planningboard@essexma.org](mailto:planningboard@essexma.org)

**Essex Conservation Commission**

In 1972, Conservation Commissions were given the responsibility of administering the Wetlands Protection Act (G.L. Ch. 131 §40). This allowed the Essex Conservation Commissions to serve their community in a regulatory as well as a conservation capacity. The Essex Conservation Commission reviews applications for permits to do work in and near wetlands, flood plains, banks, riverfront areas, beaches and surface waters. At this time, Essex does not have any non-zoning bylaws or ordinances giving the Commission further local power to protect the wetlands.

Although the Commission does review plans which must be approved by other regulatory boards, the sole responsibility of the Commission is to determine if a project will have significant impact upon environmental resources and if the project falls within the scope of the Wetlands Protection Act. If a project falls outside of the scope Wetlands Protection Act, no other action will be taken by the Commission.

In Essex, it is required that most Building Permit applications be reviewed and approved by the Commission to determine if the project is covered under the Wetlands Protection Act. Applicants may contact the Conservation Commission's Administrative Clerk for an appointment to have an application reviewed. If it is determined that a project falls within the scope of the Wetlands Protection Act the Conservation Commission Agent and the Administrative Clerk will be able to advise which application will be required.

Any time the soil is disturbed, the Commission is required to review the project to determine if the project will have an impact on wetlands.

#### Documents You Will Need:

- ✓ Original Building Permit Application
- ✓ Site Plan

Conservation Commission Meetings: Every first and third Tuesdays of the month at 7:30 pm at the T.O.H.P. Burnham Library, 30 Martin Street, Essex, MA.

#### Town Hall Resource

Deborah Cunningham, Administrative Clerk  
Address: Essex Town Hall -30 Martin Street  
Phone: 978-768-2509 - Fax: 978-768-2505 -Email: [conservation@essexma.org](mailto:conservation@essexma.org)  
Cell phone: 978-609-5158



#### **Board of Health**

The role of the Essex Board of Health (BOH) is to assess and address the health needs of the Essex Community in order to protect and improve the health and quality of life of its residents, visitors, and work force. This charge is carried out through health promotions, community health services, public outreach and education, as well as promulgation and enforcement of Health Department, Town and State Regulations.

In the area of land use and permitting required for development, the Board of Health has authority over the abandonment of septic systems, Title 5 inspections, Perc tests, review of sewage disposal systems, and construction permits for disposal works. Further, the BOH oversees the exam for the installers of disposal works, and licensing for septage haulers.

Board Of Health Meetings: Every second and fourth Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at the T.O.H.P. Burnham Library, 30 Martin Street, Essex, MA.

#### Documents You May Need:

- ✓ Board of Health Regulations



- ✓ Floor Drain Regulations
- ✓ Title 5; Application for Septic System Abandonment
- ✓ Application for Perc Test
- ✓ Sewage Disposal Permit Application
- ✓ Variance Request
- ✓ Disposal Works Construction Permit

Town Hall Resources

Erin Kirchner, Board of Health Administrator  
 Ann White, Administrative Assistant  
 Lianne Cook, Public Health Nurse  
 Address: Town Hall - 30 Martin Street  
 Phone: 978 768-7614 - Fax: 978 768-2505



**Department of Public Works**

The Department of Public Works (DPW) is responsible to key elements of development approvals; particularly when a new or expanded residential use is proposed.

Anyone proposing a new driveway access onto public roadways, or a change in location of access, needs to get a permit for that access location from the DPW.

The DPW is required to monitor and record all sewer connections. Any new construction or expansion of residential or commercial properties may need a connection to the Town’s water system, or may need a new sewer connection permit within the sewer service area.

Anyone seeking a Building Permit in the sewer service area needs to have DPW approval to ensure design flow is not exceeded.

Any water main extensions need an engineered plan for review by the Department of Public Works.

Documents You May Need:

- ✓ Driveway Permit
- ✓ Sewer connection permit
- ✓ Trench Permit
- ✓ Water Service Permit
- ✓ Drain Layers license
- ✓ MS4 Permit



The permit forms can be obtained at the DPW office at the address listed on the next page.

Permits that require fees for Department of Public Works Review:

- ✓ Driveway Permit
- ✓ Water Connection service

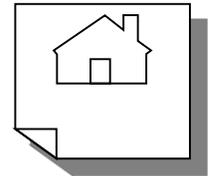
- ✓ Sewer Connection
- ✓ Trench Permit
- ✓ Drain layers license
- ✓ MS4 Permit

Office Hours: Monday – Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

**IMPORTANT:** If You Have an Emergency after Normal Business Hours Please Contact the Essex Emergency Center at (978)768-6628.

Town Hall Resources

Paul Goodwin, Superintendent  
 Mandy Davis, Administrative Clerk – Gayle Nagle, Administrative Clerk  
 Address: Water Treatment Plant - 44 Centennial Grove Road  
 Phone: (978) 768-6262 - Alternate Phone: (978) 768-6431 - Fax: (978) 768-2500



**Essex Board of Appeals**

The Essex Board of Appeals was established to hear and decide appeals where an appeal has been filed with them within the required 30-day period following a decision alleging that there was an error in any order, requirement, decision, or determination made by the Planning Board, the Building Inspector or any other administrative official that is in violation of the provisions of the Zoning By-law of the town of Essex or of the provisions of Chapter 40A of the Massachusetts General Laws.

The Board may reverse or affirm, or modify, decisions made by any town officer. The Board can also provide a variance from the provisions of the Essex Zoning By-law in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 40A, Section 15; Massachusetts General Laws (M.G.L.). The receipt of a variance requires an application and a noticed public hearing. Massachusetts General Laws are restrictive of the conditions on which the Board of Appeals can grant a variance.

Documents You May Need:

- ✓ Application for Hearing
- ✓ Guidelines for Applicants and Procedures of the Board

Town Hall Resource

Gillian Palumbo, Administrative Assistant  
 Address: Essex Town Hall – 30 Martin Street  
 Phone: 978-768-7831- Fax: 978-768-2505

**Fire Department**

The Essex Fire Department participates in review of building proposals by confirming the consistency with the 911 address and the actual location of the proposed development site.

The Fire Department also reviews building construction for the location of smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors.

In most cases, the contact with the Fire Department is made by the Building Inspector though a resident may approach the Fire Department for the review and sign-off.

No application or fees are involved in this process beyond the provisions of a Building Permit application.

#### Fire Department Resources

Board of Engineers:

Daniel M. Doucette, Fire Chief-C1

Ramie Reader, Deputy Fire Chief -C2

Keith Carter, Deputy Fire Chief-C3

Address: Essex Fire Station - 24 Martin Street

Phone: EMERGENCY: 911 *or* 978-768-6363

Phone: Non-Emergency: 978-768-6511 (office)

Fax: 978-768-7635



#### **Town Clerk**

The Town Clerk is responsible for filing and recording many legal documents of the Town.

All applications for the Board of Appeals must be filed with the Town Clerk. All decisions of the Board of Appeals will be kept on file with the Town Clerk.

All applications for the Planning Board must be filed with the Town Clerk. All decisions by the Planning Board will be kept on file with the Town Clerk.

These documents have an appeal period and certification of any appeals or the lack of an appeal is issued after the appropriate time frame.

If you require a certified copy of the Town of Essex Bylaw please contact the Town Clerk.

#### Town Hall Resource

Pamela Thorne, Town Clerk

Dawn Burnham, Assistant Town Clerk

Phone: 978-768-7111 – Email: [pthorne@essexma.org](mailto:pthorne@essexma.org)