



Doing Business in Ashford

Compiled by the
Ashford Economic Development Commission

Revised May 2, 2021

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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 Web Site. (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.

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 favor 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 2015 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. The APOCD is available on the Town's website at <https://ashfordtownhall.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Ashford-POCD-2015-Final-11116.pdf>

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. Such issues exist in any town with lesser or greater complexity. The type of business will, of course, determine the necessary licenses, as well as, which Town and State agencies will be involved. For help with State licensing and taxes see:

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DRS/Publications/pubsip/2018/IP-2018\(5\).pdf?la=en](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DRS/Publications/pubsip/2018/IP-2018(5).pdf?la=en)

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. The form is found at

<https://ashfordtownhall.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/TownClerk-Trade-Name.pdf>

Town Offices and the Town Clerk are located at 5 Town Hall Rd.

Most building projects and food service activities require approval from the local health district, **Eastern Highlands Health District**, before any permits are issued. Applications can be obtained online from <http://www.ehhd.org/content/109/default.aspx>.

Their offices are located on **4 South Eagleville Road Mansfield, CT 06268**
Phone: 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 their 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 filings, in the case of rental property. The property assessment process is also discussed. The Assessor's office <https://ashfordtownhall.org/directory/assessors-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 a 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. The land use office information can be found at <https://ashfordtownhall.org/directory/planning-and-zoning/>

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. Email and phone numbers for all town employees can be found at <https://ashfordtownhall.org/contact-us/town-directory/>

Land Use Department (860-487-4404)

The Land Use Department is responsible for the administration and review of all building and zoning permits in Town. The office also maintains property records for each parcel in Town which may include; building permits, well reports, septic as build's, plot plans and other correspondence.

The Building Department issues permits via an online permitting system which can be found on the Town's website or by [clicking here](#).

The office staff may be contacted at the information below if you have any questions regarding the use, reuse, modification or occupancy of any building or property in Ashford.

Land Use Clerk: Katie Connolly kconnolly@ashfordtownhall.org

Zoning Officer: Michael D'Amato zeo@ashfordtownhall.org

Building Official: Randy Heckman buildingofficial@ashfordtownhall.org

Inlands Wetlands and Watercourses Commission 860-487-4404

Joseph Theroux, **Wetland Agent**

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

Information and documents can be found at <https://ashfordtownhall.org/directory/inland-wetlands-commission/>

Assessor, Kara J. Fishman

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, Sherri Much

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 for various required licenses and permits with this office.

Health Department

Eastern Highlands Health District, 4 South Eagleville Rd, Mansfield, Ct. 06268

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

Ashford Sanitarian: Sherry L. McGann, RS

860-487-1104, 860-208-9904 cell, Email McgannSL@ehhd.org

The Health Department should be contacted for review and approval of site plans in the case of new construction and review of use in existing structures. Also, inspections and certain licenses must be made and/or issued for various businesses, such as restaurants, beauty parlors and child care facilities.

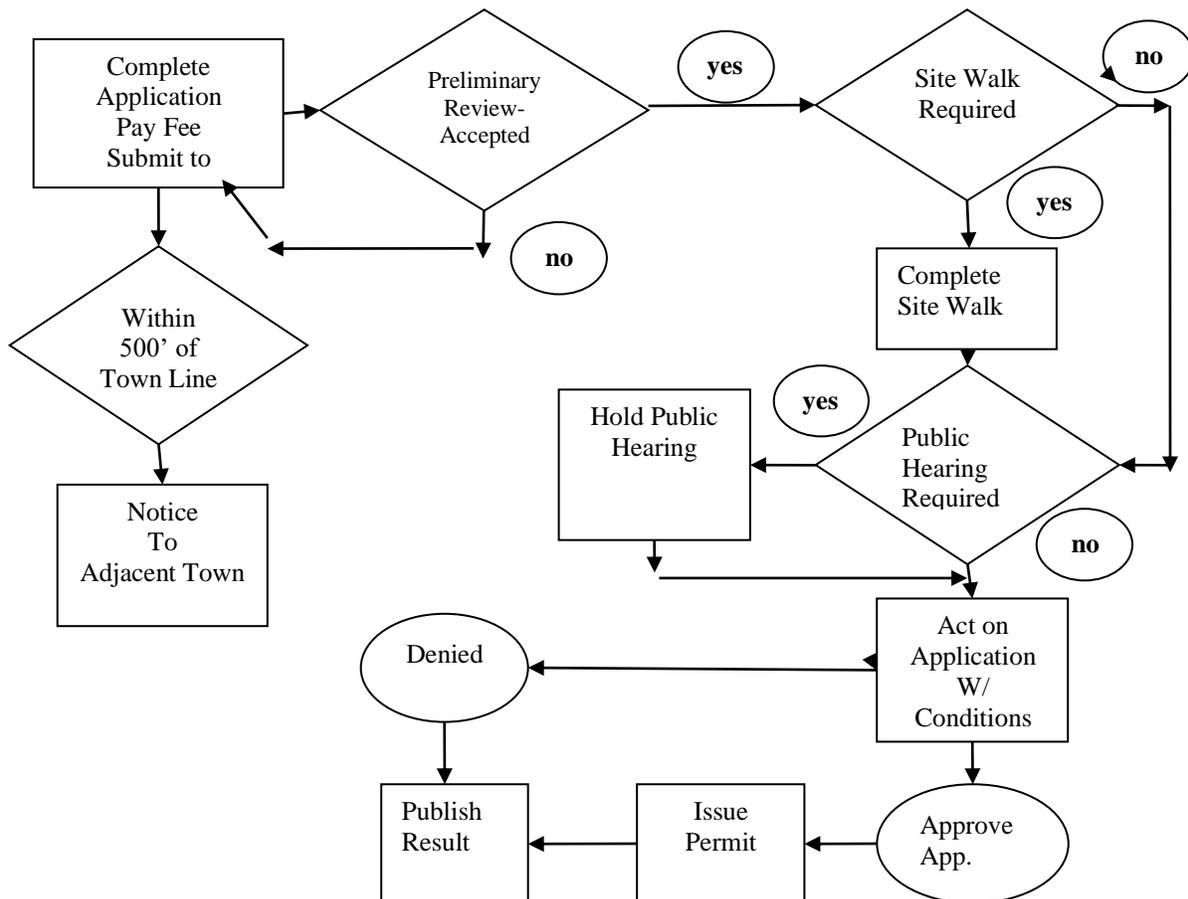
7. Land Use Commissions and Boards

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.

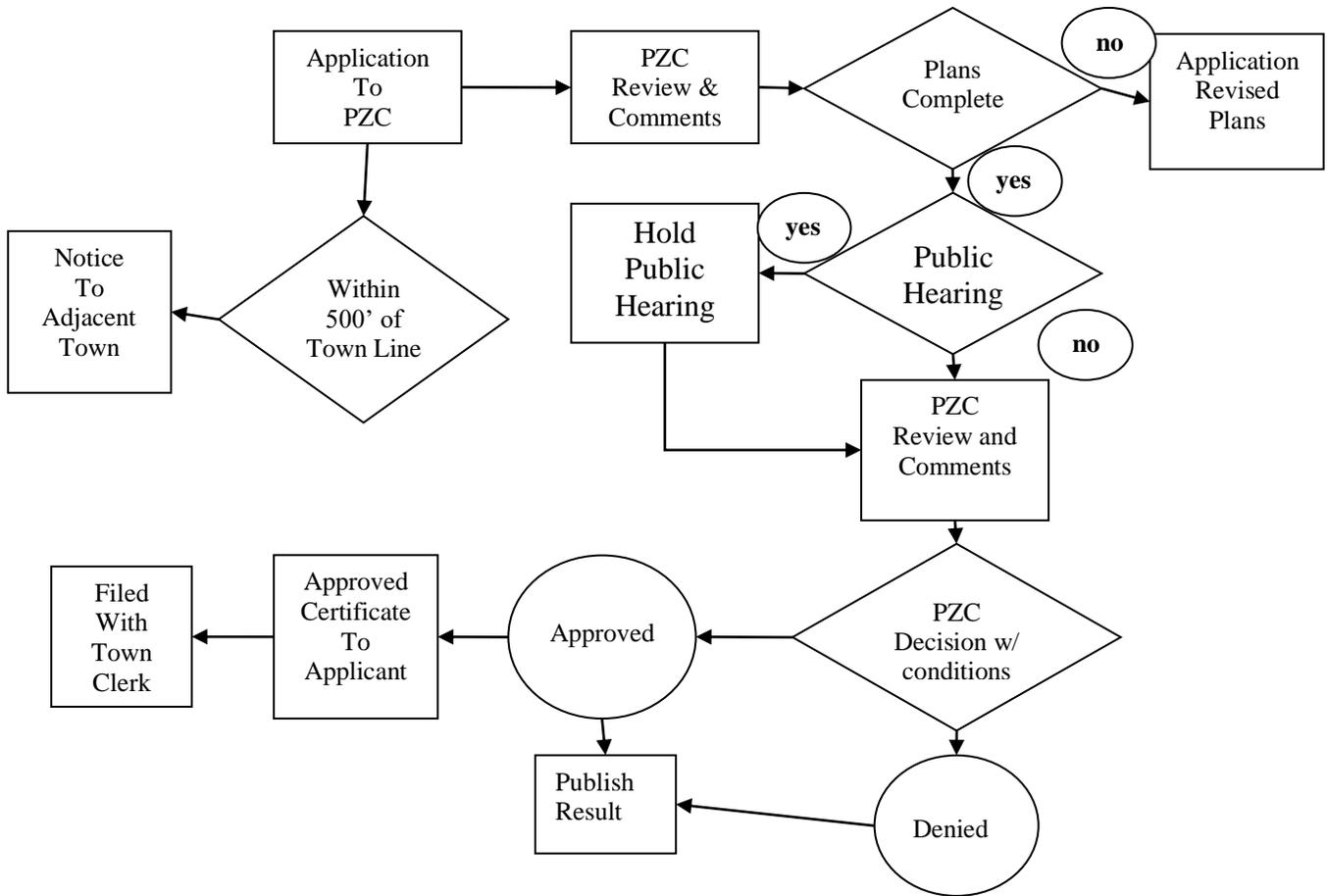
Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission



Planning and Zoning Commission:

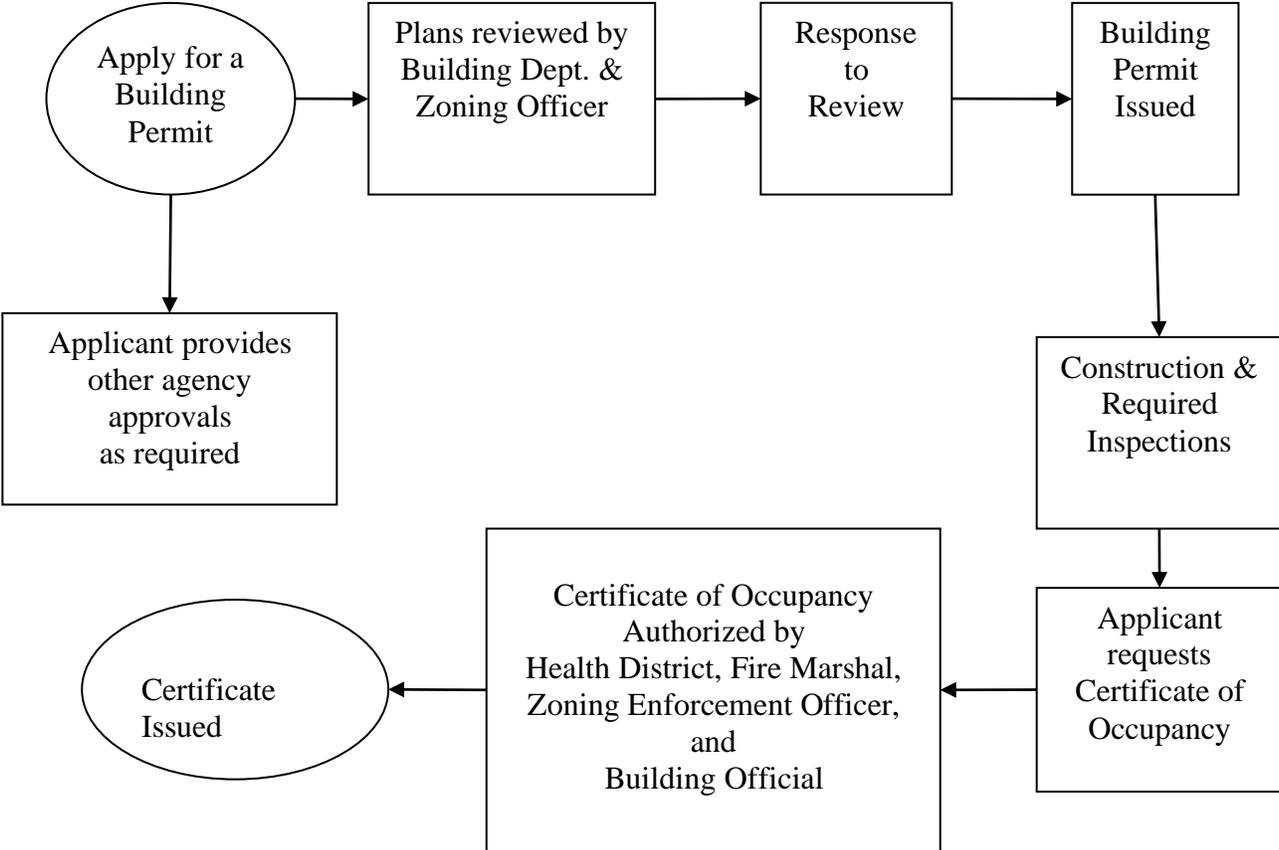
This commission typically considers the business function, its location, and the construction and/or use of any commercial building. The regulations applied by this commission consider use, building size, setbacks, parking, lighting, and signage, to name some of the major considerations. Well-planned 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.

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.

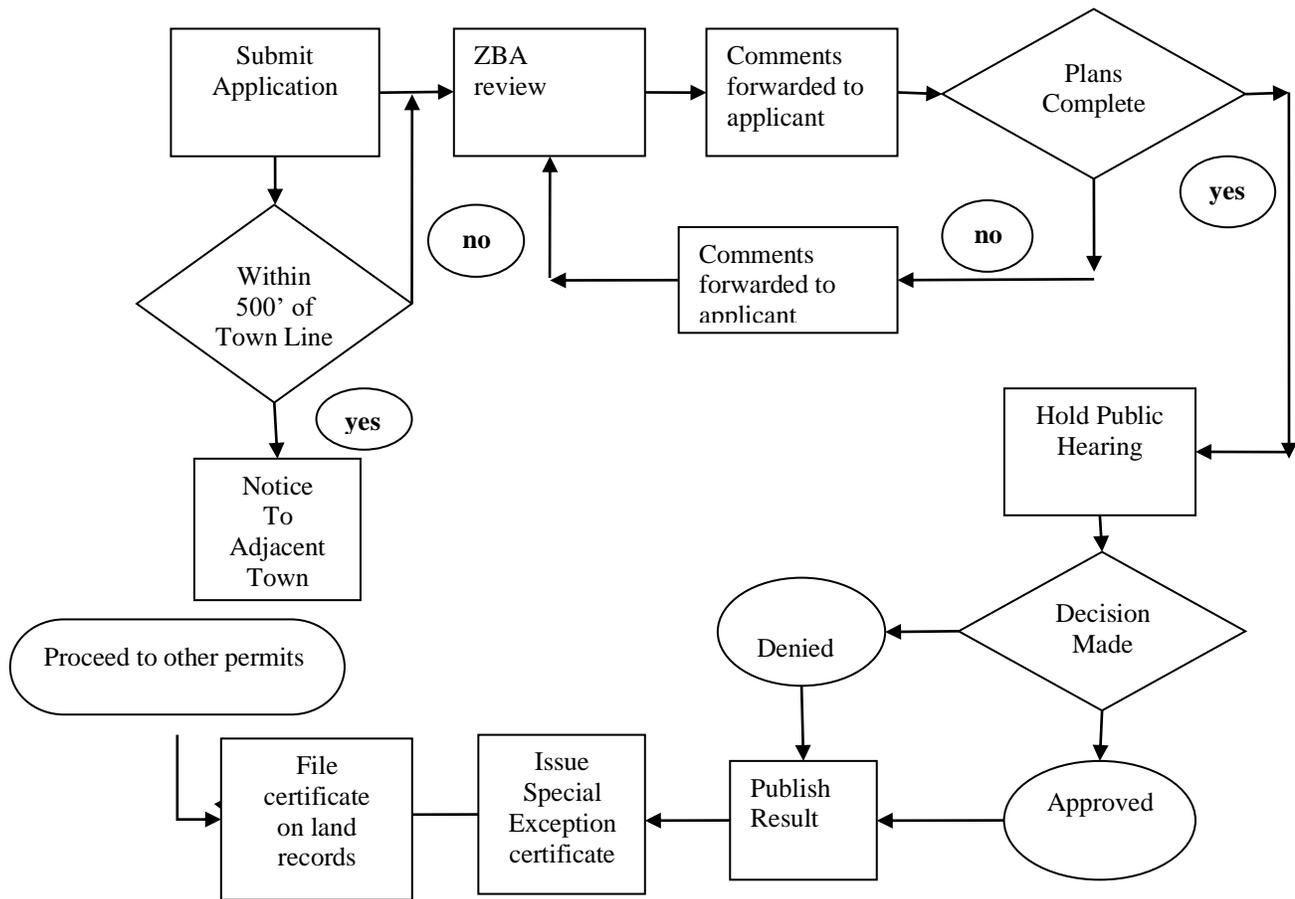
Building Permit Process



Zoning Board of Appeals

This board is a quasi-judicial body that may provide rulings on specific areas of the zoning function. These can have relevance in the case of operating or establishing a business. Zoning regulations can and do impose certain dimensional restrictions on land use, such as building setbacks. Further, they may place restrictions on the use of property depending on its location. This board's function is to hear appeals relevant to zoning requirements as outlined in C.G.S. Chapter 124 Zoning 8-7.

Zoning Board of Appeals



8. *FEES

Note: Fee schedules are subject to change and are updated periodically. Check links to insure they are the most current.

Building Department:

Building permit fee schedule can be found at:

<https://ashfordtownhall.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/A-Building-Permits-in-Ashford-with-fee-schedule2.pdf>

Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission:

The link below has the application and instructions. The fee schedule is on page 15.

<https://ashfordtownhall.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/IWWC-Application-2019.pdf>

Planning and Zoning Commission:

The Planning and Zoning Fee Schedule can be found at

<https://ashfordtownhall.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Planning-and-Zoning-Fee-Schedule.pdf>

Eastern Highlands Health District:

The Eastern Highlands Fee Schedule can be found at:

<http://www.ehhd.org/filestorage/109/Approved2021.pdf>

9. References to Commercial Zoning Regulations

The Zoning Regulations were recently updated on August 1, 2020 and can be found here:

<https://ashfordtownhall.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Final-Zoning-Regulations-2020-0801-clean.pdf>

The specific zoning regulations sections specifically related to business are:

Article 4C General Commercial Zone (GC)

Article 4D Interstate Interchange Development Zone (IID)

Article 4E Technology Development Zone (TD)

However, the general provisions of the regulations also apply to businesses so read through the entire document. If you have questions contact the Zoning Officer at 860-487-4404.