

**ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS**  
**NAHANT, MASSACHUSETTS**  
**RULES AND REGULATIONS**

The Nahant Zoning Board of Appeals, pursuant to the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 40A, Section 12, hereby adopts the following Rules and Regulations governing the organization, procedures and conduct of the Board, and governing review and action on special permits, variances, appeals and comprehensive permits.

**ARTICLE 1— ORGANIZATION**

**Section 1.1: Members and Officers**

The Zoning Board of Appeals shall consist of five regular and up to four associate members, all residents of the Town of Nahant and appointed by the Board of Selectmen. The officers of the Board shall consist of a Chair and a Clerk, who shall be elected annually by vote of the regular members of the Board at the Board's meeting in October. The regular members shall also adopt and/or amend these Rules and Regulations at the annual meeting. For all other business or administrative matters requiring a vote at a business meeting, including the approval of the Board's minutes, all members, regular and associate, may vote, each having one vote. A majority vote shall be required to adopt or approve business matters covered by this section.

**1.1.1 Chair:** In addition to the powers granted by the Massachusetts General Laws and the Nahant Zoning By-law and subject to these Rules and Regulations, the Chair shall transact the official business of the Board, advise the Zoning Board Administrative Secretary, appoint such committees as necessary or desirable, direct the general work of the Board, and exercise general supervisory power. He/she shall report any official transactions that have not otherwise come to the attention of the Board at the appropriate hearing or meeting.

The Chair shall be responsible for the orderly conduct of the Board's business, whether conducted during a public hearing or a public meeting. The Chair may use her/his discretion to rule out of order unsolicited or irrelevant comments made by members of the public. All points of order subject to these rules shall be decided by the Chair unless overruled by a majority of the Board in session at the time. The Chair shall rule on any possible conflicts of interest in matters pertaining to the Board, or when he/she deems it necessary, shall call on Town Counsel for such a ruling. No member or associate member shall participate in cases in which he or she is deemed to have a conflict of interest. The Chair shall name associate members of the Board to sit in place of members, in cases of absence, inability to act or possible conflict of interest on the part of any member.

In case of absence, inability to act or conflict of interest on the part of the Chair, he/she shall designate an Acting Chair to sit in his/her place. If the Chair is unable to designate an Acting Chair, the Clerk shall sit as Acting Chair in his/her place.

**1.1.2 Clerk:** The Clerk shall be a regular member of the Board and shall, in the absence of the Zoning Board Administrative Secretary and subject to review by the Chair, supervise all of the clerical work of the Board including: reviewing all correspondence of the Board, sending all notices required by law, preparing rules and orders of the Board, reviewing all applications for compliance with the rules of the Board, keeping agendas and minutes of the Board's proceedings, compiling all required records, and maintaining necessary files and indices. If the Clerk is absent from a meeting, the Chair shall appoint an Acting Clerk.

**1.1.3 Associate Members:** Associate members shall sit on the Board, as designated by the Chair, in the case of absence, inability to act or apparent conflict of interest on the part of any Board member, or in the event of a vacancy of the regular membership.

## **Section 1.2: Zoning Board Support Staff**

**1.2.1 Administrative Secretary:** The Zoning Board Administrative Secretary shall conduct the administrative work of the Board. Specifically, the Administrative Secretary shall: receive all applications and related plans, written testimony and communications; prepare and review Board correspondences; send all notices required by law; review applications for compliance with the Zoning By-law and Rules and Regulations of the Board; prepare related analyses, studies and reports; keep all required records of the Board's proceedings; and maintain necessary files and indices. The Administrative Secretary shall provide for each member, and each associate member, copies of General Laws of the Commonwealth relating to Zoning and to Subdivision of Land, and copies of the Nahant Zoning By-law, Rules and Procedures of the Board, copies of all decisions of the Board and other such material as the Chair may direct. The Clerk shall assume these duties in the absence of staff support.

## **Section 1.3: Quorum**

**1.3.1 Sitting Board:** The sitting Board for all meetings and public hearings shall consist of the five regular members of the Board. In case of the absence, inability to act, or recusal due to conflict of interest of a regular member of the Board, the Chair shall designate an Associate Member to sit in his/her place. The Chair may also designate other Associate Members to sit as alternates for a case; alternates may be later designated by the Chair to sit in place of a sitting member in case of absence, recusal or inability to act.

**1.3.2 Quorum:** Four (4) sitting members shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of opening or continuing a public hearing on an application for a variance, special permit or appeal as a party aggrieved, or to take any action thereon unless otherwise specified by Massachusetts General Laws. Three (3) sitting members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of routine administrative business, such as convening or adjourning a meeting or approval of minutes.

#### **Section 1.4: Resignations**

**1.4.1 Resignation from the Board:** If a regular Member or an Associate Member resigns from the Board, the resignation shall be submitted in writing to the Chair of the Board of Selectmen, and a copy shall be provided to the Town Clerk and to the Zoning Board Administrative Secretary. Subject to any applicable restrictions relating to the terms of the appointment of the individual, the resignation may specify a future effective date, so as to allow completion of any pending cases in which the member has participated. Unless otherwise stated, the resignation shall become effective upon the filing of same with the Town Clerk.

**1.4.2 Resignation of Chair or Clerk:** If the Chair or Clerk resigns from office, an Acting Chair or Acting Clerk may be appointed by the Chair if not more than sixty (60) days remain in his/her term of office. When more than sixty days remain in the term of office, the Chair or Acting Chair shall call an executive meeting of the Board within ten (10) days of the certification of appointment of members to the number of five, for the purpose of electing a Chair or Clerk to fill the remainder of the unexpired term.

#### **Section 1.5: Annual Meeting**

**1.5.1 Annual Meeting:** An annual meeting of the Nahant Zoning Board of Appeals shall be held during the Board's regular meeting date in October of each year. This date may be changed at the direction of the Chair, with the concurrence of a majority of the Board. The annual meeting shall be attended by all regular members and whenever possible by all associate members. Election of officers shall be by vote of the members with the advice of the associate members. The business of the annual meeting shall be: to elect a Chair for a term of one year and or until his/her successor is elected; to elect a Clerk for a term of one year or until his/her successor is elected; to reaffirm the Rules and Procedures of the Board for the ensuing year, or to amend them by a majority vote.

### **ARTICLE 2 - PROCEDURES OF THE BOARD**

#### **Section 2.1: Meetings**

**2.1.1 Schedule:** Meetings and public hearings of the Board of Appeals shall be held on the second Wednesday of each month, commencing at 7:00 p.m., at the Nahant Town Hall, or such

other time or location as shall be determined by the Board. The date, time and/or location may be changed at the direction of the Chair, with the advice and consent of the Board, but any change shall be subject to the provision of public notice as set forth below. Special meetings may be called by the Chair or a majority of the Board as deemed necessary to conduct the Board's business in an orderly and timely manner.

**2.1.2 Notice:** All meetings of the Board of Appeals shall be public meetings and shall be conducted in accordance with the Open Meeting Law, MGL Chapter 30A, Sections 18 through 25. Notice for each meeting shall be filed with the Town Clerk and publicly posted in accordance with the Town of Nahant's meeting posting procedures, at least 48 hours prior to the meeting, excluding Saturdays, Sundays and legal holidays. Agendas for Board meetings and hearings shall be posted in like manner and sent to any interested parties, as determined by the Chair, the Clerk or the Zoning Board Administrative Secretary.

**2.1.3 Public Hearing Required:** Public meetings, while open to the public, are not public hearings. Applications for special permits, variances, appeals or comprehensive permits shall require a public hearing as described below, and no new evidence or testimony concerning such applications shall be accepted or considered outside of a public hearing.

**2.1.4 Business at Public Meetings:** Business conducted at public meetings shall include:

- Review and approval of final plans required as conditions of a Special Permit or Comprehensive Permit, Variances, Enforcement Actions, or other decisions of the Board, such as but not limited to improvements to sites, landscaping, signs, lighting, and related matters
- Review of other documents and/or information required by or related to conditions attached to existing Special Permits, Comprehensive Permit, or other decisions of the Board, such as but not limited to compliance with conditions, enforcement orders, and related matters
- Review and/or approval of *De minimus* changes in previously approved site plans, floor plans, elevations, Management Plans, or other aspects of an approval. In all cases, the purpose of the review shall be for the Board to determine whether the changes are significant enough to require formal Modification of the permit and/or conditions.
- Other matters for which the Board is not required to hold a public hearing, such as Annual or Administrative Meetings.

**2.1.5 Public Testimony:** The Board may seek clarifying information or testimony from the public as it deems necessary during a meeting, but unsolicited comments from the public may be ruled out of order.

**2.1.6 Vote Required:** The affirmative vote of four sitting members of the Board shall be necessary for approval of all plans, signs, and all other items required by conditions attached to existing permits.

## **Section 2.2: Public Hearings**

**2.2.1 Public Hearing Required:** All applications for special permits, variances, appeals or comprehensive permits shall be considered only at a properly-noticed public hearing as required by MGL Chapter 40A.

**2.2.2 Public Participation:** All public hearings shall be open to the public without limitation. No person shall be excluded from attending or speaking at a public hearing unless he/she is determined by the Chair, with good cause, to be a "serious hindrance" to the workings of the Board.

**2.2.3 Public Notice:** Notice of public hearings shall be published twice, in each of two successive weeks, in a newspaper of general circulation in the Town of Nahant. The first publication of such notice shall be not less than fourteen days before the day of such hearing. Notice of public hearings shall be filed with the Town Clerk and publicly posted in accordance with the requirements of the Open Meeting Law, not less than fourteen (14) days prior to the hearing. In all cases where notice to individuals, parties in interest, or specific boards or other agencies is required, notice shall be sent by mail, postage prepaid. All Notices for public hearings shall be in accordance with MGL Chapter 40A, Section 11.

**2.2.4 Opening of Public Hearing, Extensions:** In accordance with MGL Ch. 40A, Sections 9 & 15, the public hearing shall be held within 65 days of the filing of the application or appeal with the Town Clerk. The required time limits for opening a public hearing may be extended by written agreement between the petitioner and the Board. A majority vote of the sitting Board shall be required to grant an extension. A copy of such extension shall be filed with the Town Clerk.

**2.2.5 Site Visits:** The Board of Appeals may take a view of any properties that come before it under applications for special permits, variances, appeals and comprehensive permits when it is determined by the Chair, or by a majority of the sitting Board, that a site visit is needed for proper consideration of the matter before the Board. Applicants will be notified of the site visit and should be prepared to meet with the Board at the site. The purpose of the site visit shall be for Board members to view and familiarize themselves with the site and its relation to the surrounding area. No evidence or testimony shall be given or accepted at a site view, outside the public hearing. The Open Meeting Law does not apply to site visits, and the applicant or property owner may deny access to members of the public, although the Board strongly discourages such denial of access.

**2.2.6 Representation and Absence:** An applicant may present the application in person or be represented by an agent or attorney. Should no one appear at the public hearing on behalf of the applicant, the Board may act on the matter using the information it has otherwise received, or the Board may decide by affirmative vote of four sitting members that the petition be denied, or to continue the matter to a future date certain.

**2.2.7 Public Hearing Procedure:** The Chair will open the meeting, explain the procedures of the Board and call on the Clerk or Acting Clerk to read the Notice for the public hearing. All hearings will generally proceed in the following order, at the Chair's direction:

- a. Presentation of evidence by the applicant or his/her representative.
- b. The Board may pose questions to the applicant either before or during his/her presentation
- c. Following the applicant's presentation, comments and questions from the public will be solicited. Persons in favor or against may speak. The applicant will be given the opportunity to respond to public questions or comments.
- d. The Chair may rule out of order any question or comment from the public deemed to be irrelevant or deemed to be a personal attack on the applicant or the Board.
- e. Following all questions and comments from the public and the Board, the applicant will be given the opportunity to make a final statement
- f. The Board will determine whether it wishes to conduct a view of the premises, if it has not already done so.
- g. The Board will determine whether to continue the public hearing to a future date certain, or to close the public hearing.
  - If the Board closes the public hearing, it may then either proceed directly to deliberate the matter or schedule a deliberation to be held at a future date and time.

**2.2.8 Deliberations:** All deliberations shall be held only during a public meeting of the Board. Consideration of an application shall be based on findings of fact which the applicant has presented, as well as specific findings that the application meets all of the necessary provisions of the Nahant Zoning By-laws. Deliberations may include, but need not be limited to: identification, review, and making findings of fact and/or law; identification, review, and making findings that may require under any applicable section of the Zoning By-law; identification, review and establishment of conditions to be attached to the Board's decision; act on a motion to approve or deny the petition, application or appeal, Approval of any application may be subject to conditions, modifications and reasonable restrictions as required by the Zoning By-law or as deemed necessary to ensure compliance with appropriate sections of the Zoning Bylaw. Denial of an application may be based on a finding that either: (1) insufficient information was submitted for the Board to adequately review the proposal or to make the findings required under the Zoning By-law; or (2) a determination, based on specific findings, that the application does not meet the requirements of the Zoning By-law for approval.

**2.2.9 Voting:** The record shall show the vote of each sitting Board member upon each question or, if failing to vote, indicating such fact. A concurring vote of four sitting Board members shall be required to grant special permits, variances, and appeals from a decision of the Inspector of Buildings. Sitting members shall be regular members of the Board or Associate Members designated to sit by the Chair, as set forth in Article I, Section 3.1 above.

**2.2.10 Written Decision:** During the Board's deliberation, a sitting member will generally be assigned to prepare a draft of the written decision of the Board. The Board's written decision shall state the specific findings of fact and reasons for its decision, based on the applicable sections of the Zoning By-law and other applicable laws. The text of the decision of the Board shall be considered, discussed and voted upon only during a public meeting of the Board.

**2.2.11 Filing and Recording:** Decisions of the Board shall be considered final only when the written decision is signed and filed with the Nahant Town Clerk. Decisions may be signed by all Board members participating in the vote or by the Chair on behalf of the Board. Time limitations for filing are specific to the type of application, as specified in MGL Chapter 40A, Sections 9 & 15.

No Board decision that grants a special permit, variance or comprehensive permit shall take effect until a copy of the decision is recorded at the Essex South District Registry of Deeds, bearing the certification of the Town Clerk that twenty days have elapsed after the decision has been filed and no appeal has been filed, or, if an appeal has been filed, certification that the appeal has been dismissed or denied in court. Upon certification by the Town Clerk, the decision shall be promptly recorded at the Registry of Deeds by the Applicant. The applicant shall be responsible for the payment of all fees and for the recording of documents at the Registry of Deeds.

Note that denials, withdrawals of applications and appeals of a decision of the Inspector of Buildings will generally not be recorded at the Registry of Deeds.

**2.2.12 Exercise of Rights Granted by Variance:** Rights granted by a Variance must be exercised within one year of the date the decision granting such Variance is filed with the Town Clerk. If the rights are not so exercised within one year, the Variance shall lapse, unless an extension is granted, and may be reestablished only after notice and a new public hearing pursuant to these Rules and Regulations.

A one-time extension of such rights granted by Variance, not to exceed six months, may be granted by the Board, provided that a written application for such extension is filed with the Board prior to the expiration of such one-year period.

**2.2.13 Exercise of Rights Granted by Special Permit:** Special permits shall lapse if a substantial use thereof or construction thereunder has not begun, except for good cause, within 24 months following the filing of the special permit approval (plus such time required to pursue or await the determination of an appeal referred to in MGL Chapter 40A, Section 17, from the grant thereof) with the Town Clerk. If the rights are not so exercised within the specified period, the Special Permit shall lapse, and may be reestablished only after notice and a new public hearing pursuant to these Rules and Regulations.

**2.2.14 Reopening of Public Hearing:** Once a public hearing has been closed, whether or not a vote has been taken and a decision has been made, the taking of further evidence shall require reopening the public hearing, which shall be approved by majority vote of the sitting Board. If the public hearing is to be reopened at a time other than the meeting at which it was closed, the reopened public hearing shall be advertised, and abutters notified in accordance with MGL Chapter 40A, Section 11.

**2.2.15 Reconsideration:** Prior to the filing of the Board's written decision with the Town Clerk, any sitting member may request that the Chair call a vote to reconsider the Board's decision, for the purpose of reopening the Board's deliberation and to further deliberate the findings, language or conditions of the decision. The affirmative vote of a majority of the members sitting on a case shall be required to reopen a deliberation. Any further deliberation shall be done only in a duly-noticed public meeting.

**2.2.16 Withdrawal:** Any application may be withdrawn, without prejudice, by notice from the applicant in writing to the Town Clerk with a copy to the Zoning Board Administrative Secretary at any time prior to publication of legal notice of the hearing in the newspaper and notification of abutters. Requests to withdraw after publication of legal notice may be in writing as provided above or may be made by the applicant orally at the public hearing. After such publication of notice, withdrawal shall require approval by majority vote of the Board of Appeals at a public meeting. If the public hearing on the application has been opened, a majority vote of the sitting Board for the case shall be required to allow a withdrawal, with or without prejudice.

**2.2.17 Modifications:** Requests for modifications or changes to the language, terms or conditions of previously-granted permits or site plans attached thereto shall be heard at a public hearing, unless the Chair, with the approval of a majority of the Board, determines that such changes are *de minimus* and that a formal public hearing is not required. Such modifications or changes shall constitute an amendment to the original permit or decision.

**2.2.18 Retention of Evidence:** All materials and physical evidence submitted to the Board at a public hearing shall become part of the public record and shall be marked for identification and retained by the Board in accordance with applicable Public Records laws.



**2.2.19 Expert Testimony:** The Board may at its discretion seek information or testimony from any Town official, board, committee, agency or any other person whom the Board believes may have appropriate expertise in any matter before the Board.

### **ARTICLE 3 - APPLICATIONS TO THE BOARD**

**3.1 Application Form:** All applications to the Board of Appeals must be submitted on the official application form as approved by the Board. Applicants must submit the signed original and 9 copies of the application form (13 copies total) to the Board of Appeals Board Administrative Secretary, along with 13 copies of supporting plans and documents. Applicants must also submit two signed and dated copies of "General Filing Requirements — Nahant Zoning Board of Appeals" along with the application. Petitioners should retain their own copies of the application and all supporting plans and documents. Applications, plans and supporting documents should be collated before submission to the Board.

**3.2 Application Deadline:** All applications will be processed in order and heard on the next available date.

**3.3 Filing of Application with Town Clerk:** The Board of Appeals Board Administrative Secretary will file all applications received with the Town Clerk. Filing with the Town Clerk "starts the clock" for the applicable deadlines for the Board to act on an application. Applicants who wish to receive a copy of the application bearing the date and time of filing certified by the Town Clerk must submit a stamped, self-addressed envelope along with their application. Alternatively, as set forth in MGL Ch. 40A, Sections 9 & 15, applicants themselves may file the application with the Town Clerk. A copy of the application, bearing the date and time of filing certified by the Town Clerk, shall be filed forthwith by the applicant with the Office of the Board of Appeals. All applications must be received by the Board prior to the application deadline as set forth above.

**3.4 Certified Abutters List:** If the parcel that is the subject of the application is abutted only by properties within the Town of Nahant, the Office of the Board of Appeals will obtain a Certified Abutters List. If the parcel in question abuts another city town, the applicant must obtain a Certified Abutters List for all abutting properties located outside of Nahant from the respective city or town(s). Petitioner must submit a copy of the Certified Abutters List(s) to the Office of the Board of Appeals at the time of application in order to ensure proper notification per Mass. General Law Chapter 40A, Section 11.

**3.5 Certified Plot Plan Required:** All applications must include a Certified Plot Plan, prepared by a Civil Engineer or Land Surveyor registered in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Thirteen (13) copies of the plan shall be provided; at least one of these must be a signed original.

Plot plans shall be drawn at a scale of not less than 1" = 100' and shall have indicated thereon the following information:

- a. The ownership of the parcel in question.
- b. The location of all existing and proposed property lines.
- c. The location of all existing and proposed buildings on the property, including proposed additions or alterations to those buildings.
- c. All abutting streets, roads or ways.
- d. The front, side and rear setbacks for all existing and proposed buildings on the property.
- e. The location of any wetlands (as defined in MGL Chapter 131, Section 40)
- f. Any other physical conditions or circumstances which may have bearing on the application (i.e. soil conditions, shape, topography, or location of septic system, wetlands or easements).

Plot plans should be submitted on sheets no larger than 17" x 22" whenever possible. If larger original sheets are submitted, reduced-size copies not exceeding 17" x 22" should also be provided.

**3.6 Certified Plot Plan Not Required:** A Certified Plot Plan will not be required for applications that involve ONLY a request for special permits or variances under Town of Nahant Zoning By-Law - Use Regulations." However, submission of a plot plan is strongly encouraged if it will help to illustrate the nature and impact of the use being proposed. The Board may, at its discretion, require submission of a Certified Plot Plan before taking final action on any such application.

**3.7 Failure to Submit Certified Plot Plan:** If a Certified Plot Plan is not submitted with the application or at the time of the opening of the public hearing, the Board at its discretion may either:

- a. Continue the public hearing until a satisfactory Certified Plot Plan has been received, or:
- b. Deny the application as incomplete.

**3.8 Drawings required:** All applications must include architectural drawings as follows:

- a. For applications involving changes and/or additions to an existing building, the drawings shall include front, side and rear renderings or elevation drawings showing the proposed exterior changes to the structure. Floor plans, drawn to scale, shall also be provided for any floor where additions or alterations are proposed, showing all entrances and exits, windows, interior partitions and doorways, stairways, chimneys and any other pertinent features.
- b. For applications involving a proposed new structure, the drawings shall include front, side and rear renderings or elevation drawings showing the proposed exterior of the

structure, including all portions of the structure below grade. Floor plans, drawn to scale, shall also be provided for all floors in the proposed structure, showing all entrances and exits, windows, interior partitions and doorways, stairways, chimneys and any other pertinent features.

Thirteen (13) copies of all plans and drawings shall be provided. Plans should be submitted on sheets no larger than 17" x 22" whenever possible. If larger original sheets are submitted, reduced-size copies not exceeding 17" x 22" should also be provided.

Detailed construction drawings are not required, but drawings submitted must be sufficient to clearly indicate the scope, scale and nature of the work being proposed. Drawings stamped by a Registered Architect or Engineer are required for Controlled Construction only, per Mass. Building Code (780 CMR).

**3.9 Electronic Submission:** In addition to the required thirteen (13) copies of the application form, plans, drawings and supporting documents, applicants are encouraged, but not required, to also submit these materials in electronic form. Acceptable formats are Adobe Portable Document Format (.PDF) and/or Microsoft Word (.DOC, .DOCX). Electronic submissions may be submitted on physical media or sent as attachments to the Town Clerk, please contact the Town Clerk's office for the current email address for this purpose.

**3.10 Incomplete applications:** Applications that are not accompanied by plans as required in paragraphs 3.5 and 3.6 above may be denied by the Board as incomplete.

**3.11 Application fee:** A non-refundable fee, payable to the Town of Nahant, shall be submitted at the time of application to cover the cost of processing, legal advertising and abutter notification. The amount of said fee(s) is available at the Town of Nahant website and by contacting the Town Clerk or the Inspection Services Department. In addition, a separate check, payable to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, shall be required for the applicant to record the Board's decision at the Registry of Deeds in Salem. The recording of the Decision at the Registry of Deeds is the Applicant's responsibility.

**3.12 Legal Notice:** Notices of hearings are advertised in a newspaper of general circulation including the Town of Nahant as set forth in Section 2.1.2 above. No advertisements will be scheduled for publication unless the Office of the Board of Appeals is in receipt of the application form, application fee, and required supporting documents.

**3.13 Consent of Owner:** For any application filed by any person other than the owner of the property as recorded at the Registry of Deeds, a letter of consent signed by the property owner

shall be submitted at the time of application. The property owner must also sign the application form.

Adopted by vote of the Zoning Board of Appeals on September 5, 2018.

Chair 