



Town of Danvers

Planning and Economic Development Division

David Fields, Director
Josh Morris, Principal Planner
Georgia Pendergast, Planner

1 Sylvan Street, Danvers, Massachusetts 01923 | p: 978-777-0001

www.danversma.gov

TO: Prospective Applicants
FROM: David Fields, Director of Planning + Economic Development
RE: Application Review and Permitting during COVID-19
DATE: April 9, 2020

Thank you for your interest in developing within the Town of Danvers. During these uncertain times the Planning and Economic Development Division is closely monitoring legislative action in response to COVID-19 and will adjust permitting activities accordingly.

The Planning and Economic Development Division, as a branch of the Land Use and Community Services Department, understands the importance of continuing to forge ahead with permitting activities. However, it should be understood by all who choose to proceed with permitting during this public health emergency that there are risks associated with such activities, and that state orders and local policy concerning construction and limitation of other nonessential services and employees may delay projects and their associated permit approvals.

To ensure a straightforward permitting scheme while remote activity is the primary or only means of communication, the Planning and Economic Development Division provides the following procedures, should applicants choose to move forward at this time:

Staff Meetings

Our staff are ready to assist you with all inquiries related to real property development and redevelopment at this time. Please feel free to reach out to any of our knowledgeable and dedicated staff and we will respond in a timely manner and with the best accuracy possible given staff's limited access to historic permitting information.

Technical Review

For those projects of a scale or complexity requiring a more in-depth review, or the assistance of other departments outside of the Land Use and Community Services Department, the Town offers a technical review process that includes, but is not limited to: Planning staff, Engineering staff, Building staff, Fire Department staff, etc.

The Planning and Economic Development Division staff is available to schedule meetings with applicants and applicable staff. Please schedule with the Planning and Economic Development Division via email and staff can arrange a phone-in conference call or a virtual meeting hosted on the WebEx platform. Such a meeting can be scheduled by sending an email to our current permitting ombudsman:

Joshua Morris, Principal Planner at jmorris@danversma.gov

Time Keeping

The Planning and Economic Development Division will continue to proceed with pre-application conferences, application review, and permitting procedures as best we can at this time. As provided in Chapter 53 of the Acts of 2020, *An Act to Address Challenges Faced by Municipalities and State Authorities Resulting from COVID-19*, which was recently passed by the Massachusetts Legislature and signed by the Governor on April 3, 2020, all deadlines for reviewing and approving permits are

suspended as of March 10, 2020, and shall resume review within forty-five (45) days after the termination of the state of emergency. Thus, constructive approval deadlines, as well as timing requirements for hearings, do not currently apply.

Application Submittal

Applicants who wish to submit a development application are still able to do so during this time.

Procedures for Submitting Applications

The procedures for delivery of hard copy applications are modified to ensure the safety of all parties.

Applicants shall follow the procedures below for submitting applications.

1. Email or electronically deliver an electronic copy of the full application package to Joshua Morris at jmorris@danversma.gov. Should the file size of the application be too large to email, our staff can work to set up a submittal link or accept electronic submission via a USB flash drive mailed to:

Joshua Morris,
C/O Alicia Linehan,
Town of Danvers Department of Land Use and Community Services
1 Sylvan Street
Danvers, MA 01923

2. Review fees and a paper copy of all applications must also be mailed to the Town of Danvers Department of Land Use and Community Services, 1 Sylvan Street, Danvers, MA 01923.

At this time all permit granting Board and Commission meetings and hearings under the purview of the Planning and Economic Development Division are suspended. This includes decisions not yet reached for open permits and open public hearings. Upon the lifting of the State of Emergency normal meeting schedules are to resume. Please contact our staff with any questions on this matter. Due to this suspension of service it may be prudent to simply work with staff to ready your submission for when we return to a more regular business pattern.

As noted above, there are no constructive grants of approval for permit applications during the current state of emergency. Recording requirements for permits previously issued by a regulatory board or commission are currently suspended, and the failure to record a permit shall not preclude a permit holder from commencing construction or obtaining other required approvals, should they be able to do so.

Upon return to a regular meeting and hearing schedule, regulatory bodies may revoke or modify a permit for any permissible reason other than the permit-holder's failure to exercise their rights under the permit due to the state of emergency.

Questions and Contacting our Division

Although staff is working remotely all inquiries will be responded to in the order that they were received.

Planning and Economic Development Division Email:

- David Fields dfields@danversma.gov



Thursday, April 9, 2020

- Joshua Morris jmorris@danversma.gov
- Georgia Pendergast gpendergast@danversma.gov
- Alicia Linehan alinehan@danversma.gov
- Francine Butler fbutler@danversma.gov

Again, the Planning and Economic Development Division would like to thank you for working with us as a team to ensure that all projects are reviewed and appropriate procedures are followed. We are here to aid and provide guidance for permitting and development activities in Danvers and look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

David Fields, Director of Planning + Economic Development

Cc: Steve Bartha, Town Manager

Aaron Henry, Director of Land Use and Community Services