

BUILDING AND ZONING REPORT

FEBRUARY, 2023

Building:

1. In the month of February: 48 inspections and site visits were conducted, 4 fire inspections or re inspections were performed, 12 building permits were issued and no building permits were renewed.
2. At the end of February, there were 11 expired building permits.
3. There are 16 cases of fire inspections being overdue, or having failed previous inspections. 7 of these are making required repairs prior to scheduling a reinspection.
4. Three complaints were received in February:
 - A. An additional verbal complaint regarding an ongoing investigation related to tires having been dumped on a property was received.
 - B. A written complaint regarding an unsafe abandoned building was received, confirmed, and a letter was sent to the property owner requiring the property be maintained and secured to prevent unauthorized entry, as well as placarded to warn first responders of any interior hazards.
 - C. An additional verbal complaint regarding an unsecured, unsafe abandoned building was received after the complainant had seen videos of the property posted online. The property has not yet been identified, and it is unclear if it is within the Town of Washington.
5. One ongoing investigation remains open regarding tires having been dumped on a property. Due to adverse weather and time limitations, no additional action was taken during February.
6. In order to comply with state floodplain laws, a call was scheduled and conducted with a representative from the DEC regarding the Floodplain Management Law and the Floodplain Development Permit was updated and made available.
7. Per the ongoing efforts to make the Town website more user friendly, the Building and Zoning homepages were combined and updated with additional information and forms. Additionally, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) were provided by representatives of the Planning and Zoning Boards, and were added to their respective website sections.
8. 2 subpoenas regarding an ongoing lawsuit between an architect firm and their former client were received and responded to in February. This involved a construction project recently built in the Town of Washington, but was otherwise unrelated to the Building Department.

Zoning:

1. In the month of February: 5 municipal searches were completed, as well as 3 site visits.
2. 2 FOIL requests were received and completed in February.
3. Four zoning complaints were received in February:

- A. In the last week of February, a verbal complaint was received alleging that a previous violation involving the addition of a concrete truck dispatching service and related activities to a pre existing non conforming business use had been continued since the previous investigation had closed. While no written complaint was received, this will be investigated as soon as possible, as it is part of a recently closed investigation.
 - B. A written and a verbal complaint were received regarding an property with multiple unregistered vehicles and conditions that would be considered as being a "junkyard". A site visit was conducted, but no further action has yet been taken due to lack of time.
 - C. A written complaint was received alleging that mining activities were taking place on Woodstock Road without the required permits. A site visit was conducted which confirmed that no such violation existed, and the complaint was later withdrawn, as the complainant had misidentified a legal mining operation.
 - D. A written complaint alleging clear cutting and wetland violations was received and a site visit was conducted. The site visit and investigation revealed that the activities did not meet the definition of clear cutting under the wetlands law, and appear to be exempt agricultural activities. Pending a reply to an inquiry made by the complainant to the Department of Agriculture and Markets, the investigation is scheduled to be concluded in early March.
4. One open case remains at the end of February:
- A. A pre existing shooting preserve which had erected a fence in order to minimize the impact of projectiles on an adjoining property is continuing to work on a proposal for modifications and screening needed to bring this into compliance with the Zoning Code. A site visit was conducted and the responsible parties were reminded of the applicable code requirements and that the expectation is that this will be resolved as soon as possible.