

TOWN OF SOUTHTON
DEVELOPMENT REVIEW GUIDE

Contents

Introduction..... 2

How to Use This Guide..... 2

Principles..... 3

Overview of the Process 4

Roles and Responsibilities 5

What Happens At A Public Hearing? 6

Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC)..... 6

Conservation Commission (Wetlands) 7

Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) 7

Permit Process Flow Charts 8

 SUBDIVISION (PZC)..... 9

 SPECIAL PERMIT USE (PZC) APPLICATION PROCESS 11

 SITE PLAN (PZC)..... 13

 BUILDING/ZONING PERMIT (STAFF) 15

 CONSERVATION COMMISSION (WETLANDS) 17

 SPECIAL EXCEPTION / VARIANCES / APPEALS OF ZEO (ZBA) 19

Fees for Land Use Applications (REVISED – April 2, 2014)..... 22

Fees for Copies of Regulations and Maps (Free Digital Files Online as Noted)..... 24

TOWN OF SOUTHLINGTON DEVELOPMENT REVIEW GUIDE

Introduction

The Town of Southington provides streamlined development application and permit reviews to applicants that come before its development agencies. To help accomplish this, the Town of Southington has a combined Planning and Zoning Commission and Aquifer Protection Agency (PZC). The Town of Southington has an elected Planning and Zoning Commission, and appointed Inland Wetlands Agency (Conservation Commission) and Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA). The elected members of the Planning and Zoning Commission serve staggered two year terms, promoting continuity and developing expertise among members who deal with land use and development policy and administration. The Town of Southington also has an Economic Development Coordinator on staff to guide developers and applicants as needed.

The Southington planning and zoning department is the staff agency for the PZC as well as the Conservation Commission (CC) and ZBA. The department serves as the single point of contact for applicants.

All development applications are filed in the planning department office. The planning staff schedules applications on the PZC, CC or ZBA agenda and coordinates the review process among town departments and, if appropriate, other review agencies. The department sends the applicant's plans to the town's water department; the town's engineering department; the fire marshal; the Police Chief; the Building Official and the Health Department. These departments review the plans and return their comments to the department for transmittal to the applicant. Referrals are made to a traffic engineer, regional planning agencies and abutting towns on an as needed basis.

How to Use This Guide

This guide is a tool we have prepared to help improve customer service. It describes some of the various review processes and conveys our philosophy and commitment to both the town and the applicant to promote development that meets the needs and desire of both the community and the applicant in a timely and effective way.

This guide describes the application process in general terms. Many of our zoning districts have very specific and unique requirements. Likewise, every development application faces different issues, and may need multiple permits. The following permit processes are generalized in the guide: Subdivision, Special Permit, Site Plan, Conservation (Wetlands), Variance, Special Exception and Building/Zoning Permit. Each land use or development proposal may follow one or more of these basic processes.

TOWN OF SOUTHLINGTON DEVELOPMENT REVIEW GUIDE

Principles

- The staff's objective is to help applicants meet the requirements of the town's zoning, wetlands, and subdivision regulations, town ordinances and submit plans that can be approved.
- The PZC relies on the staff to review applications for compliance with the standards and criteria contained in the Town's development regulations, and to ensure that the plans meet the Town's public improvement specifications.
- The PZC focuses on development impacts and those discretionary zoning regulation criteria applicable to the proposal. The PZC can focus on these development issues because it has a current Plan of Conservation and Development and the zoning and subdivision regulations to help implement it.
- The planning department encourages direct communication between parties for clarification of information before written responses are completed and transmitted. However, we recognize that any individual's comments may suggest revisions which would affect other aspects of the plan. If the applicant receives staff's comments and wishes to discuss them staff will do so over the phone or in person.
- We will hold informal pre-application meetings with applicants provided the applicants have enough information on a plan or drawing to allow the staff to make initial comments on what could be substantive issues.

**TOWN OF SOUTHLINGTON
DEVELOPMENT REVIEW GUIDE**

Overview of the Process

Town staff involved in plan review attempt to get applications before the Commission, and have decisions made, within the minimum statutory period allowed to make decisions. In Connecticut law the PZC must act on applications which do not require a public hearing within 65 days of the PZC receipt of the application. When applications require a public hearing, the staff endeavors to have the public hearing before the PZC within that minimum time period, and have a decision made shortly thereafter.

Connecticut statutes allow the applicant and the PZC to agree to extensions to any one of the required statutory time periods. However, extensions should only be required if the developer/applicant is unable to submit all required documents and staff does not have the time needed to review them.

Regardless of the statutory provisions, the following is the general time line we attempt to meet on every application:

Days	Action
0	Applicant/Agent files plans in the Planning Department
0-2	If the application is complete staff distributes the plans for review
2-28	Staff comments on PZC applications due back to Planning and review checklists transmitted to agent upon completion. If there are substantive comments staff or the applicant can request a meeting to discuss the comments.
14-21 from submittal	Scheduled on land use board meeting agenda. Some applications have lengthy legal notice requirements or need other approvals prior to PZC consideration.
1 week prior to next PZC meeting	Deadline for submittal of revised plans responding to staff comments to be sure they will be reviewed by staff for completion prior to the PZC meeting.
14-65	A decision on an application is targeted for 65 days or less from the official receipt of the application.

TOWN OF SOUTHTON
DEVELOPMENT REVIEW GUIDE

Roles and Responsibilities

The time line can only be met if both the town staff and the applicant provide the necessary information and perform in a timely manner. In order to meet this time line the applicants and the town have different responsibilities.

Town Staff Responsibilities	Applicant's Responsibilities
To distribute the plans within two days of their receipt in the planning department office.	Submit applications which contain the required elements. Those elements should be properly completed. Partially complete submissions or plans that are not checked can delay the review process
To return all comments or review checklists to the Town planning department as soon as possible and advise the Town Planner of major issues so a meeting with applicant can be held.	Avoid revisions to the plans subsequent to the initial filing but before staff review so as not to complicate the review process.
To convey staff comments to the applicant in a timely manner and provide an opportunity for the applicant to respond prior to the scheduled meeting.	Submit revised plans and written responses to staff comments in a timely manner.
Review revised plans and written responses to staff comments in a timely manner.	Revised plans submitted prior to noon on the Tuesday prior to a scheduled PZC meeting will be reviewed again for completeness and on the agenda for information/action

TOWN OF SOUTHLINGTON DEVELOPMENT REVIEW GUIDE

What Happens At A Public Hearing?

The PZC conducts public hearings for all zoning map and regulation changes, special permits, resubdivisions. The Conservation Commission holds public hearings for significant activities. The ZBA conducts public hearings for all special exceptions and variances.

At the hearing the applicant and/or their agent explains their proposal or request. Town staff present at the meeting will help to explain and clarify why the request is necessary, and may provide comments or recommendations. At the hearing, anyone who wishes to speak either in favor of or against an application has an opportunity to do so.

Once the hearing is closed the land use board can take no more testimony on the item. The board may act the night of the hearing, or at the next meeting depending upon the information and testimony provided during the hearing.

Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC)

Southington has a combined Planning Commission and Zoning Commission. Although a combined commission, the PZC has three distinct roles in the development process:

Planning: The PZC in its planning capacity reviews and decides on the subdivision applications. A subdivision is the division of a tract or parcel of land into three or more parts or lots for sale or building development. Any land so divided after December 4, 1956, the date the PZC adopted subdivision regulations, must go before the PZC.

Zoning: The PZC, in its zoning capacity, is responsible for reviewing and deciding on any permits required by the zoning regulations. The PZC hears and acts on changes to the zoning map and adopts and/or amends the zoning regulations. Zoning regulation or map changes may be initiated by the PZC, town residents, or property owners.

The PZC also hears and acts on special permit use applications. A special permit use is a land use activity which is permitted in a zone, but not necessarily at all locations. To determine whether a special permit use should be permitted the Commission will hold a public hearing to review an application against specific criteria contained in the Zoning Regulations in Section 8

TOWN OF SOUTHLINGTON DEVELOPMENT REVIEW GUIDE

These areas cover the broad categories of jurisdiction of the Planning and Zoning Commission in zoning. There are other, more specialized procedures in the regulations. These include earth excavation permits, site plans and flood plain filling applications. Applicants should consult the zoning regulations and town planning staff for more information on specific requirements.

Conservation Commission (Wetlands)

The Conservation Commission is charged with two roles; to review applications with regulated activities proposed within wetlands or watercourses or the Upland Review Area (URA) as defined in the regulations and to provide an advisory opinion on conservation and preservation initiatives as it relates to flora and fauna. Of note, when land is being subdivided through the PZC that contains wetlands or watercourses, even if there are no direct impacts to them, the plan must be referred to the Conservation Commission for review.

Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA)

The ZBA serves in a quasi-judicial capacity when hearing variances from the zoning regulations. The ZBA also grants Special Exceptions as defined in the zoning regulations in a very similar capacity as the PZC does when granting Special Permits. Such permits are land use activities, subject to formal Public Hearings, that are permitted in a zone but not necessarily at all locations due to specific standards set forth in the zoning regulations granting such permits. They also hear appeals to zoning enforcement orders issued by the Zoning Enforcement Officer (ZEO).

TOWN OF SOUTHLINGTON DEVELOPMENT REVIEW GUIDE

Permit Process Flow Charts

The following pages contain flow charts for various development permits. These flow charts are simple depictions of what can sometimes be a complex process. They are intended to illustrate the major steps in the submission and review process.

We assume here that the roles and responsibilities mentioned earlier are adhered to by both the town and the applicant. It is not unusual during plan review to have several iterations of plan revision and review both before and after PZC actions. We have not charted these. Neither have we detailed the process that occurs when there is an appeal of a PZC action. In that event the staff and applicant, and their attorneys, consult on the process.

A few final notes on the flow charts: We have included a chart for each basic type of application. You will see that for many Planning and Zoning Commission applications the process is very similar. Because all of these applications are managed by the planning department the processes are combined and run concurrently when multiple approvals are required as much as possible. Should a variance be necessary for a development proposal, this would always need to be granted first, as is the case for any zone changes or regulation revisions; aka a “two-step application” process.

TOWN OF SOUTHLINGTON DEVELOPMENT REVIEW GUIDE

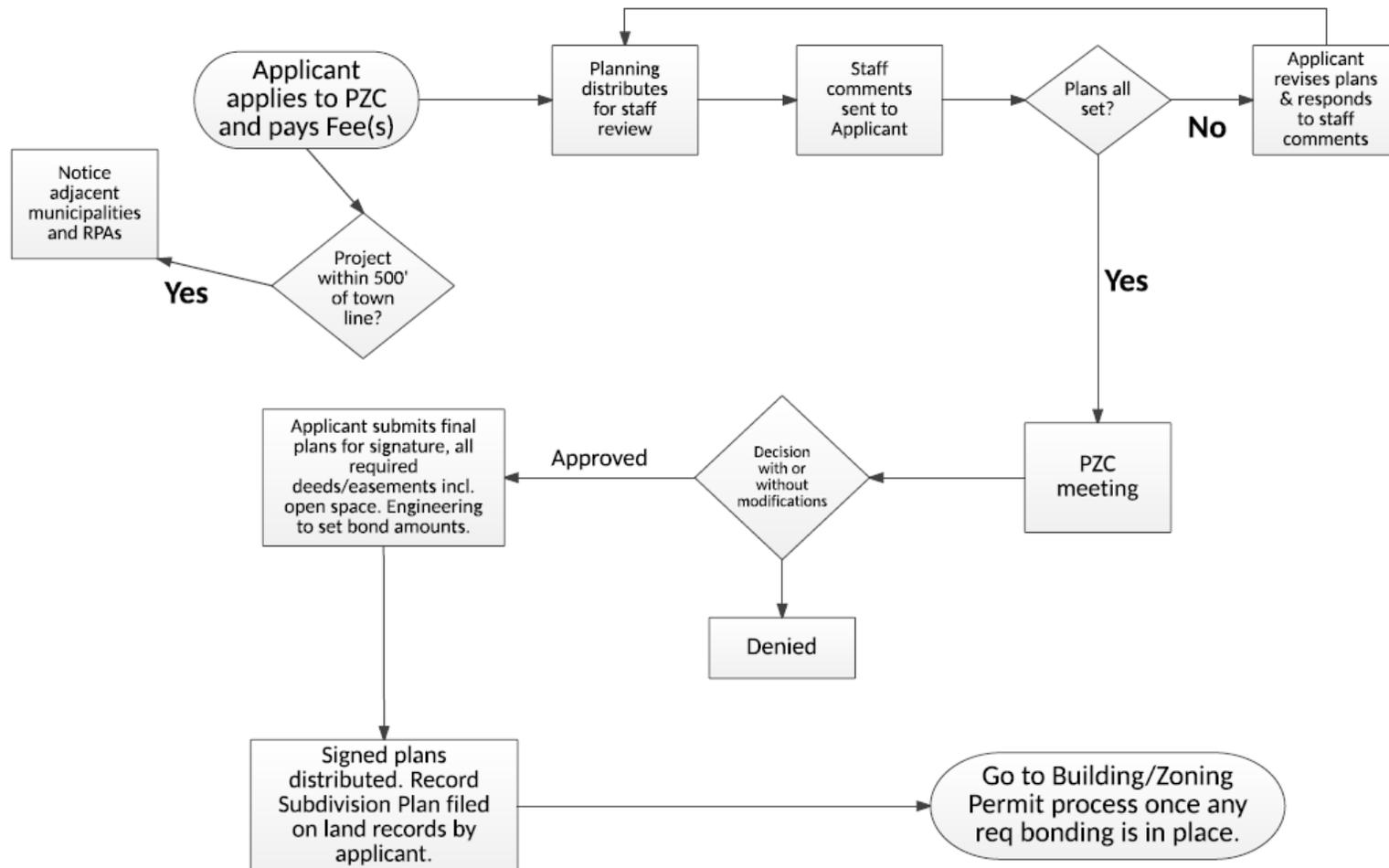
SUBDIVISION (PZC)

Highlights - Tips - Important Notes

- Subdivision means the division of a tract or parcel of land into three or more parts or lots made subsequent to the adoption of subdivision regulations by the commission, for the purpose, whether immediate or future, of sale or building development expressly excluding development for municipal, conservation or agricultural purposes, and includes resubdivision.
- Resubdivision means a change in a map of an approved or recorded subdivision or resubdivision if such change (a) affects any street layout shown on such map, (b) affects any area reserved thereon for public use or (c) diminishes the size of any lot shown thereon and creates an additional building lot, if any of the lots shown thereon have been conveyed after the approval or recording of such map. By state statute a resubdivision requires a formal public hearing.
- If the site is within 500 feet of the town line, the planning department will notify the adjacent municipality and the Regional Planning Agencies (RPA) within seven days of the PZC's receipt of the application. The RPA is required to comment within 35 days of receipt of the notice and the PZC cannot act until RPA's comments are received or the 35 days transpire.
- Upon approval, the applicant must submit plans incorporating any required modifications to the planning department for signature. Once the plans have been stamped with the PZC's approval, they will be distributed internally and the applicant can pick up the signed map for their use with the Zoning Permit Process.

TOWN OF SOUTHLINGTON DEVELOPMENT REVIEW GUIDE

GENERAL SUBDIVISION APPLICATION PROCESS



**TOWN OF SOUTHLINGTON
DEVELOPMENT REVIEW GUIDE**

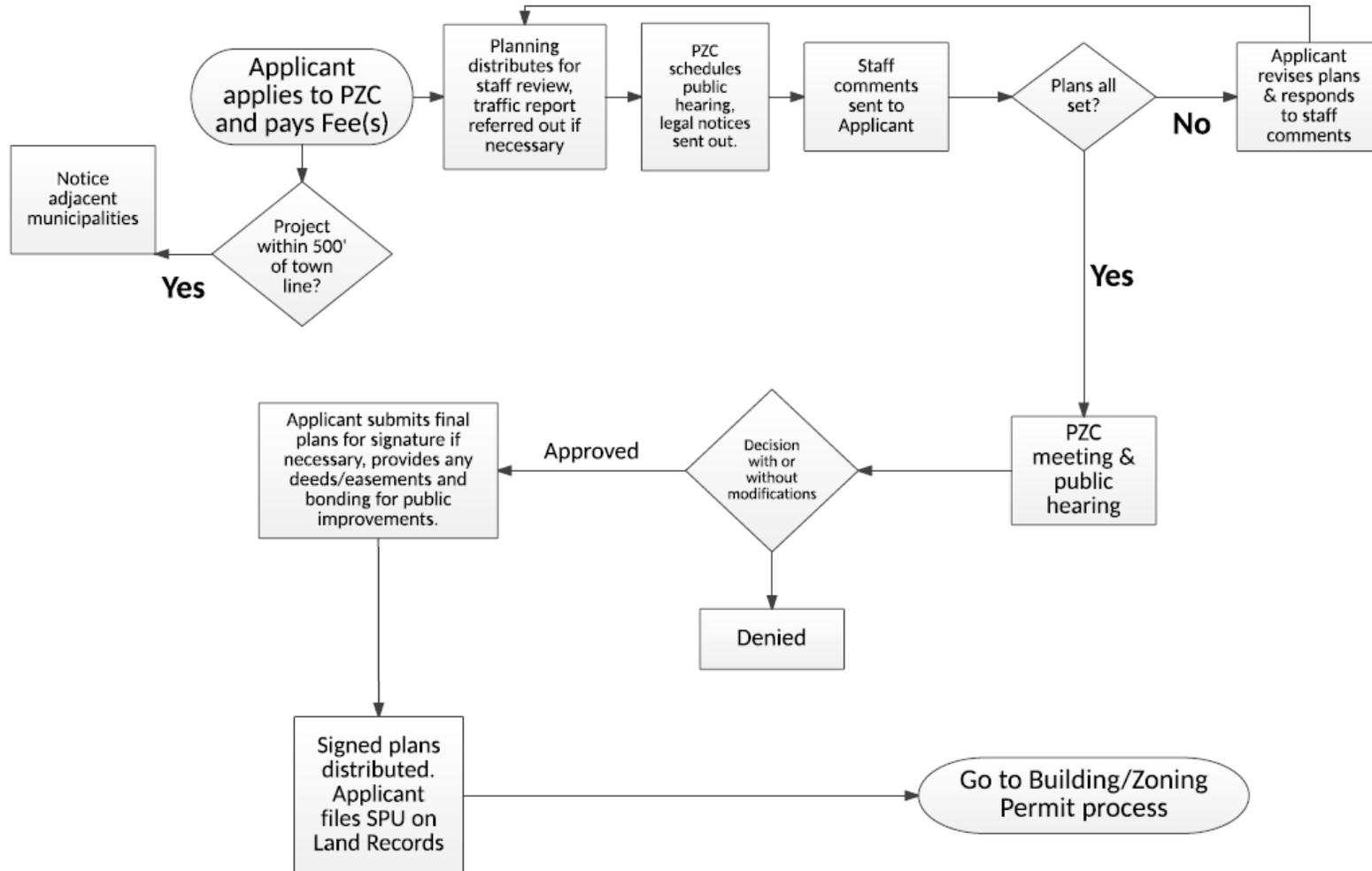
SPECIAL PERMIT USE (PZC) APPLICATION PROCESS

Highlights - Tips- Important Notes

- If the site is within 500 feet of the town line the planning department will notify the adjacent municipality within seven (7) days of the Planning and Zoning Commission's receipt of the application.
- SPU's require public hearing and legal notice to all abutting landowners within 500 feet of all property subject to land use review (except Home Occupation applications where only directly abutting owners are notified)

TOWN OF SOUTHLINGTON DEVELOPMENT REVIEW GUIDE

GENERAL SPECIAL PERMIT USE (SPU) APPLICATION PROCESS



**TOWN OF SOUTHINGTON
DEVELOPMENT REVIEW GUIDE**

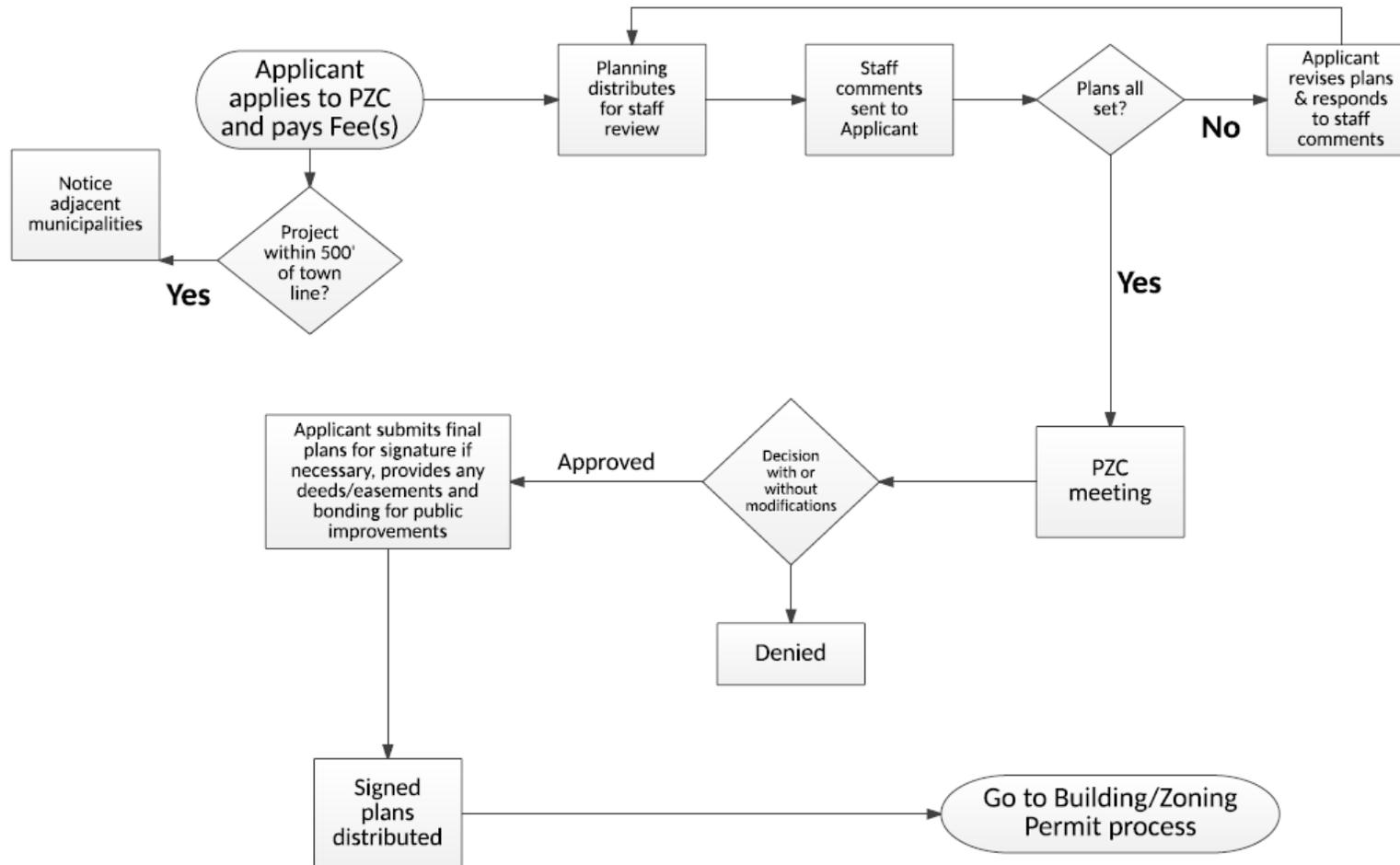
SITE PLAN (PZC)

Highlights - Tips- Important Notes

- If the site is within 500 feet of the town line the planning department will notify the adjacent municipality within seven (7) days of the Planning and Zoning Commission's receipt of the application.

TOWN OF SOUTHLINGTON DEVELOPMENT REVIEW GUIDE

GENERAL SITE PLAN REVIEW (SPR) APPLICATION PROCESS



**TOWN OF SOUTHLINGTON
DEVELOPMENT REVIEW GUIDE**

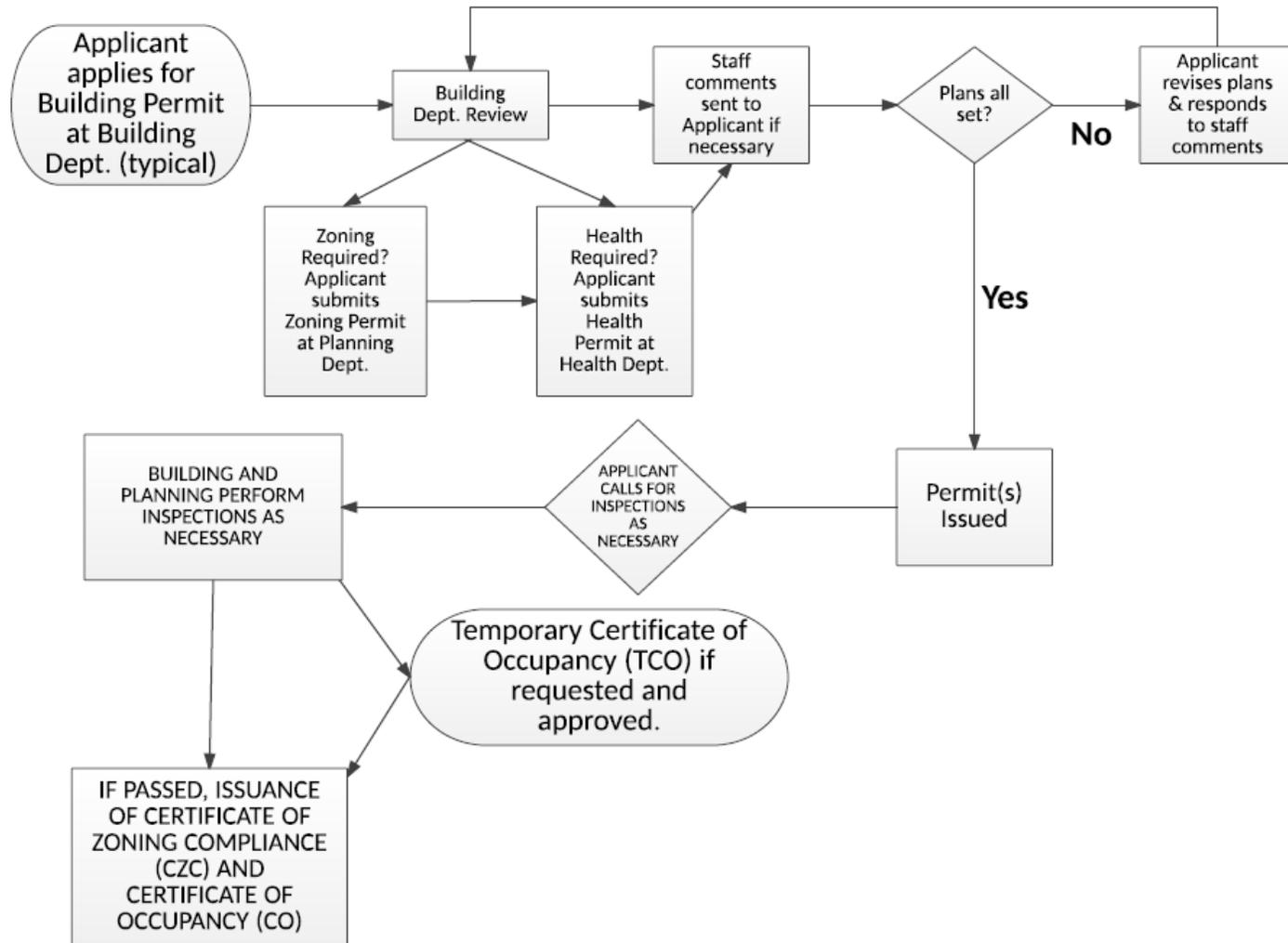
BUILDING/ZONING PERMIT (STAFF)

Highlights - Tips- Important Notes

- Before a building permit can be issued all taxes on the property must be current.
- The building department cannot issue a building permit for projects receiving PZC approval until the associated Zoning Permit has been signed off on.

TOWN OF SOUTHLINGTON DEVELOPMENT REVIEW GUIDE

GENERAL BUILDING/ZONING PERMIT PROCESS (note - there are occasions where only Building, Zoning or Health Permits are required.)



TOWN OF SOUTHLINGTON DEVELOPMENT REVIEW GUIDE

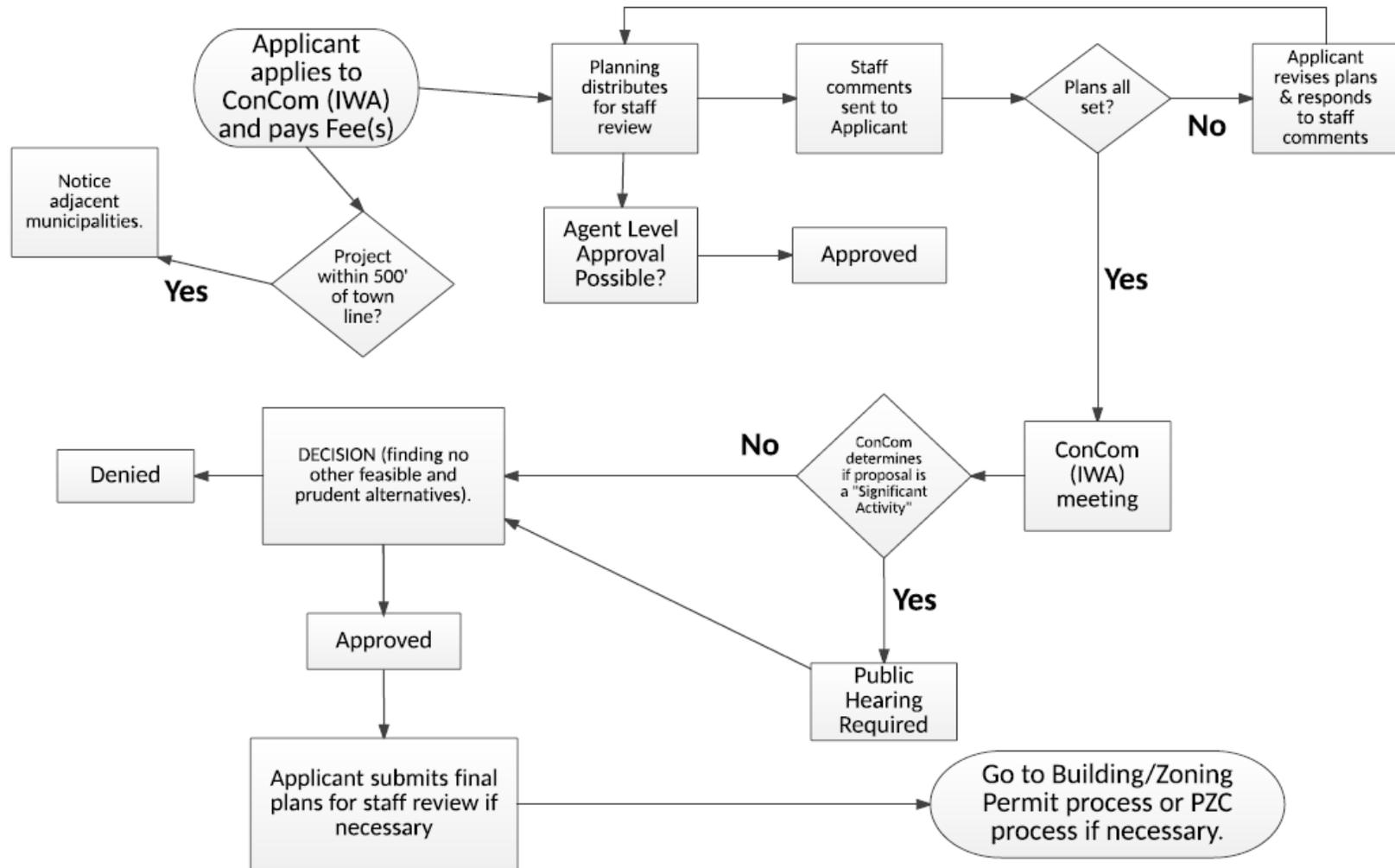
CONSERVATION COMMISSION (WETLANDS)

Highlights - Tips- Important Notes

- When an application involves a regulated activity, any portion of which is within 500 feet of the town line, the **applicant** must notify the municipal wetland agency of the adjacent municipality, by certified mail, the same day the application is filed with Southington.
- When an application involves property within 500 feet of the town line, the **town** must notify the Town Clerk of the adjacent municipality, by certified mail, within seven (7) days of receipt of the application.
- The commission must determine whether a proposed activity will have a significant impact on a wetlands or watercourse. If they make such a finding, an analysis of feasible and prudent alternatives must be provided by the applicant. A public hearing would be required in such a case.

TOWN OF SOUTHLINGTON DEVELOPMENT REVIEW GUIDE

GENERAL INLAND WETLANDS APPLICATION PROCESS



**TOWN OF SOUTHLINGTON
DEVELOPMENT REVIEW GUIDE**

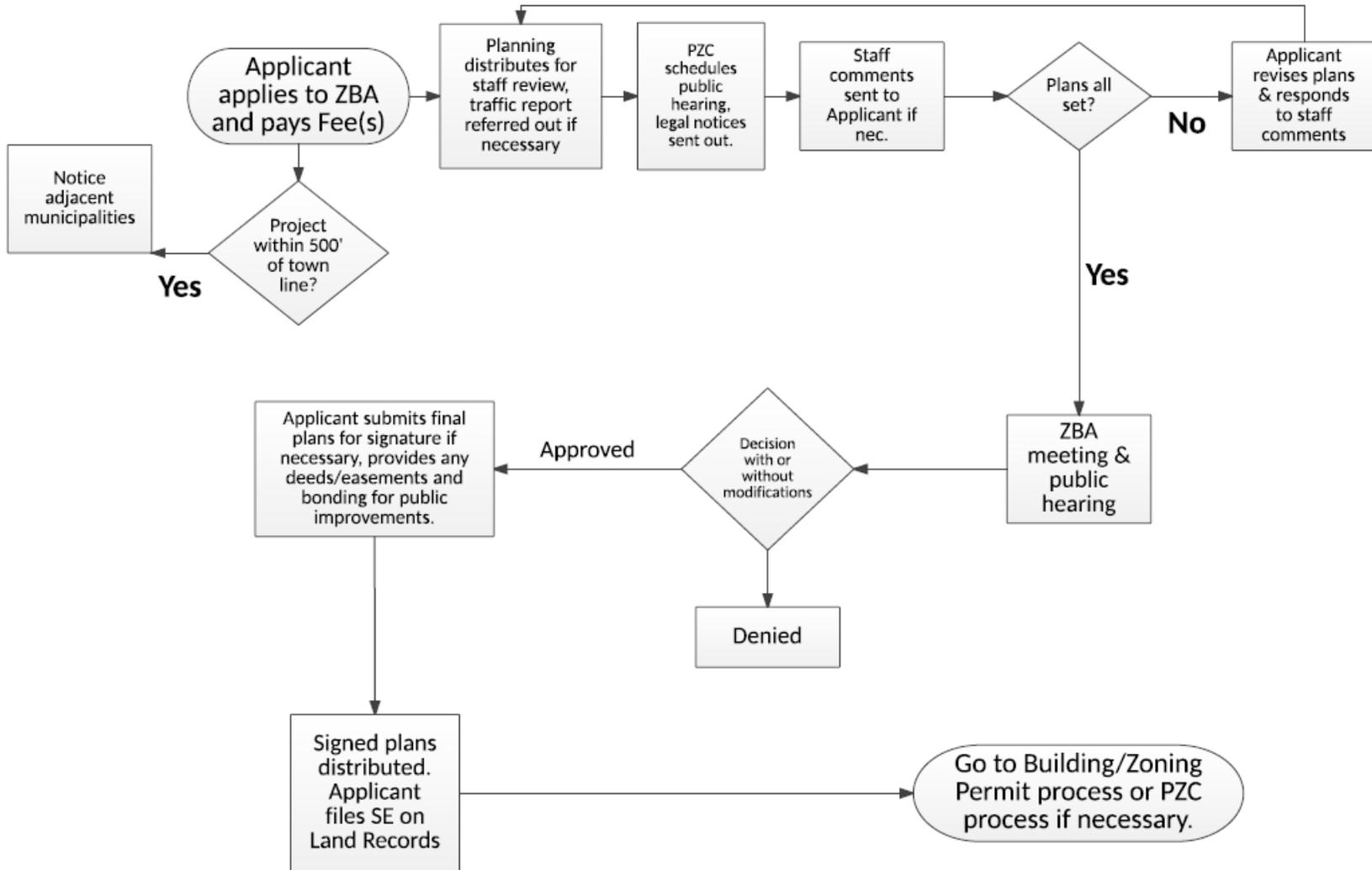
SPECIAL EXCEPTION / VARIANCES / APPEALS OF ZEO (ZBA)

Highlights - Tips- Important Notes

- If the site is within 500 feet of the town line the planning department will notify the adjacent municipality within seven (7) days of the Planning and Zoning Commission's receipt of the application.
- All applications before ZBA require a formal public hearing and legal notice to abutting landowners.
- Appeals of the ZEO are treated like a legal hearing where evidence is presented by the town and the subject party for the ZBA to make a determination to support the enforcement, modify and support the enforcement, or overturn the ZEO's action.
- The posting of a sign at the subject property(s) are required.

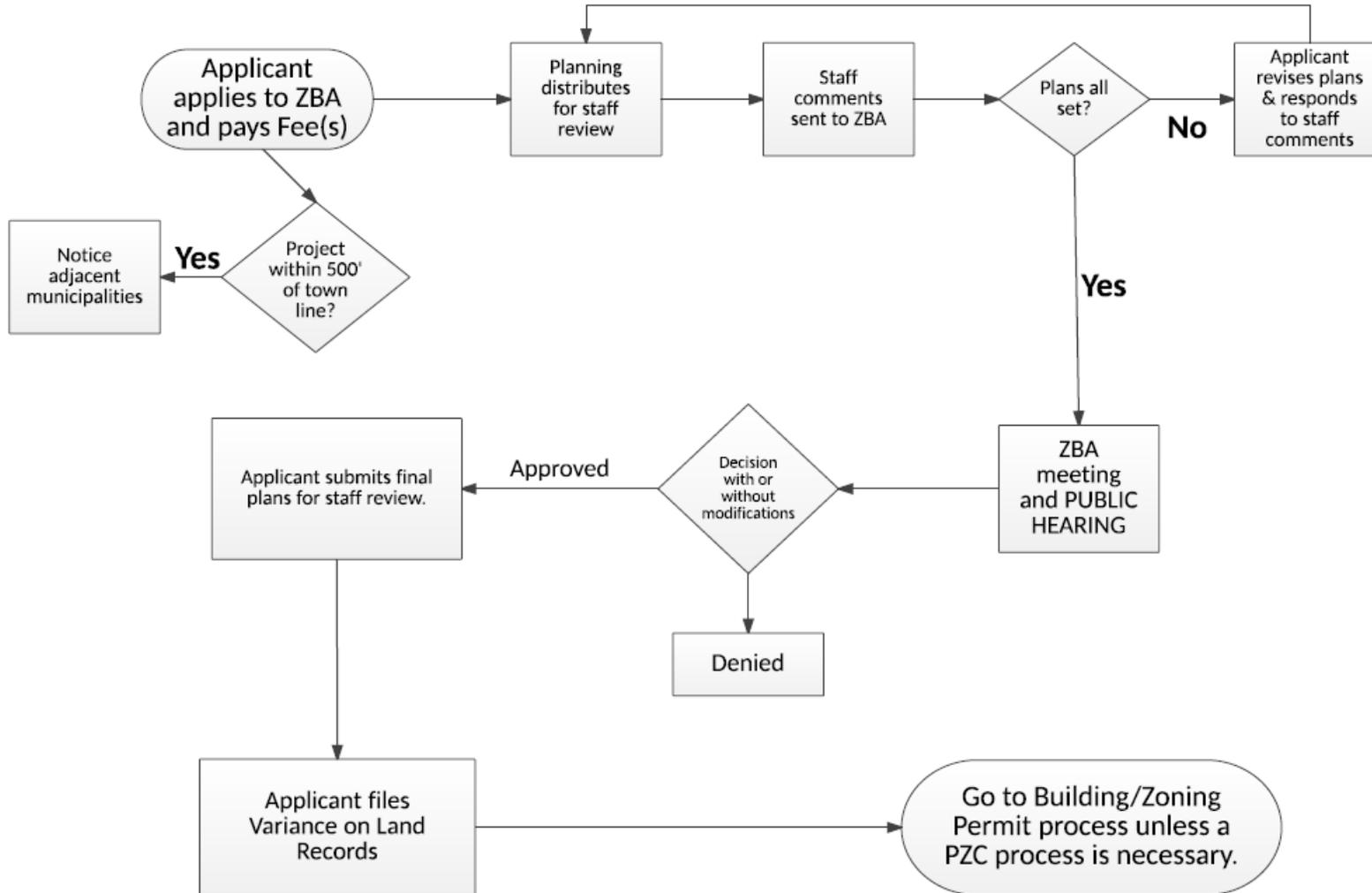
**TOWN OF SOUTHLINGTON
DEVELOPMENT REVIEW GUIDE**

**GENERAL ZBA SPECIAL EXCEPTION (SE)
APPLICATION PROCESS**



**TOWN OF SOUTHLINGTON
DEVELOPMENT REVIEW GUIDE**

**GENERAL ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS (ZBA)
VARIANCE PROCESS**



**TOWN OF SOUTHLINGTON
DEVELOPMENT REVIEW GUIDE**

Fees for Land Use Applications (REVISED – April 2, 2014)

CHECKS SHOULD BE MADE PAYABLE TO “TOWN OF SOUTHLINGTON”	
APPLICATION TYPE	FEE (includes \$60.00 State fee)*state fee increased to \$60.00 October 1, 2009
Earth Excavation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grading • Ongoing Operation • EE Renewal 	\$560.00 \$1,060.00 \$560.00
Expansion of Nonconforming Use	\$560.00
Extensions of Approvals	\$160.00
Floodplain Filling	\$280.00
Home Occupation	\$130.00
Lot Line Revision	\$100.00
Motor Vehicles Sales, Service or Repair - Location Approval	\$280.00
Planned Unit Development or Site Plan (MF)	\$280.00 base fee + \$20.00 per unit
Resubdivision	\$280.00 base fee + \$50.00 per lot + \$50.00 per 100 linear feet of new roadway
Site Plan	\$280.00 base fee + \$50.00 per building plus Fire Dept. plan review fee
Site Plan Modification	\$230.00 plus Fire Dept. plan review fee
Plan Review Fee – Fire Department	Building Plans < 2500 sq.ft. - \$ 75.00 2501- 5000 sq.ft. - 150.00 5000 - 10,000 sq.ft. 200.00 10,001 - 49,999 sq.ft 250.00 over 50,000 sq.ft. 350.00
Special Exception	\$280.00

**TOWN OF SOUTHLINGTON
DEVELOPMENT REVIEW GUIDE**

Special Permit Use - Parent/Grandparent Apt	\$280.00
- Location Approval	\$280.00
- Private Garages greater than 3 spaces	\$280.00
- All Others	\$560.00
Special Permit Use Modification	\$560.00
Subdivision	\$280.00 base fee + \$50.00 per lot + \$50.00 per 100 linear feet of new roadway
Temporary A-frame sign application	\$25.00
Wetland Filling	\$160.00 or \$110.00 for single family
Wetland Map Amendment	\$160.00
Wetland Permit	
• Private Residential	\$110.00
• All others	\$160.00
Wetland Regulation Amendment	\$110.00
ZBA - Variance	\$260.00
- All others	\$280.00
Zoning Boundary Change	\$260.00
Zoning Permit	\$80.00 for accessory structure/minor addition \$160.00 for new construction or commercial
Zoning Text Amendment	\$260.00

FEES FOR POST APPLICATION ROAD AND SEWER INSPECTIONS (EFFECTIVE 10/1/08)	
Road and sewer inspection fee	\$2.00 per linear foot at new street centerline payable upon approval
Inspection for road acceptance and follow up inspection	No charge
Any additional inspections	\$500.00 per inspection

**TOWN OF SOUTHLINGTON
DEVELOPMENT REVIEW GUIDE**

Fees for Copies of Regulations and Maps (Free Digital Files Online as Noted)

REGULATIONS AND MAPS CAN BE FOUND AT WWW.SOUTHLINGTON.ORG	
Zoning Regulations	\$25.00
Zoning Map - Color	\$25.00
- Black and white	\$ 8.00
Subdivision Regulations	\$10.00
Inland Wetland/Watercourses Regulations	\$10.00

I:\Planning and Zoning\FORMS\Fee schedule rev. 4.2.14.doc