



Town of Falmouth Community Development Department
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Memorandum

Date: February 17, 2016
To: Karen Farber, Town Councilor
From: Ethan J. Croce, Senior Planner
Cc: Town Council
Nathan A. Poore, Town Manager
Amanda L. Stearns, Community Development Director
Re: Minor Site Review Amendments

Based on our recent discussions, staff have prepared proposed amendments to the Minor Site Review provisions of the Zoning and Site Plan Review Ordinance. The two substantive changes to the Ordinance can be summarized as follows:

1. Repeal the Minor Site Review “Sunset Provision”
This proposed change would eliminate the current sunset provision in the Ordinance, whereby the Minor Site Review process is otherwise scheduled to be automatically repealed on August 26, 2016, and would allow the Minor Site Review process to be enacted on a permanent basis.
2. Increase the size of individual building additions allowed under Minor Site Review.
The current Minor Site Review provision restricts the size of building additions to 500 square feet for any one individual application, but allows for cumulative building additions of up to 1,000 square feet in any ten year period of time. Staff recommend increasing the per-application building expansion threshold from 500 square feet per application to 1,000 square feet per application. This change would allow applicants the ability to go through only one permitting process to realize the 1,000 square foot building addition allowance every ten years instead of the current process which requires applicants to go through two separate permitting processes to achieve the 1,000 square foot building addition allowance.

Minor Site Review Background

The Minor Site Review provision was adopted in August 2013. The intent of the Minor Site Review provision was to allow certain smaller-scaled commercial and multi-family projects to be approved under an expedited and simplified permitting process. Projects that qualify for Minor Site Review may be approved by Planning staff and are not required to be reviewed or approved by the Planning Board.

Since the adoption of the Minor Site Review provision, staff have approved 15 Minor Site Review applications that would have otherwise required Planning Board review and approval prior to the adoption of the Minor Site Review process. Of the 15 applications approved, four of the applications involved building expansions and four applications involved the construction of new accessory buildings. A summary of these approved building expansions/additions are as follows:

- Falmouth Rod and Gun Club (356 Gray Road) - 427 square foot building addition, access ramp and deck;
- Falmouth Veterinary Clinic (174 U.S. Route One) - 490 square foot building addition;
- TD Bank (70 Gray Road) – 80 square foot concrete pad and bus shelter;
- Family Ice Center (20 Hat Trick Drive) - 500 square foot building addition;
- Gnome Landscapes (305 U.S. Route One) – 496 square foot storage building;
- Goodwill Industries (251 U.S. Route One) – 408 square foot loading dock/platform;
- Emmaus Lutheran Church (265 Middle Road) - 240 square foot storage shed;
- Falmouth Little League (Depot Road) - 308 storage shed/scorer's booth.

When the Minor Site Review process was initially adopted, it was adopted with a “sunset provision” whereby the Minor Site Review process is automatically repealed on August 26, 2016 unless the Town Council votes to extend the ordinance provision. Since Minor Site Review was a new and untested permitting process at the time of its adoption, it was thought that a sunset provision would be appropriate in order to provide an opportunity to review how the process has worked from both an applicant's standpoint and from a staff administration standpoint.

Over the past two and a half years, staff have generally received positive feedback on the Minor Site Review process. In light of the success of Minor Site Review, it seems warranted to repeal the sunset provision and to allow for Minor Site Review on a permanent basis.