

Building Inspections FAQ

Where do I obtain a building permit?

Building Permits are available at <https://evolve-public.infovisionsoftware.com/beaufort/>.

The application process involves checking the zoning for the site, checking the submitted material for compliance with the NC State Building Codes, and compliance with Town Codes and Ordinances.

State law requires assigning an approved Lien Agent from the NC Liens website if a job submitted has a construction value over \$40,000.

- NC Liens website: <https://www.liensnc.com/>

When do I need a permit?

A permit is needed for renovations, remodeling, new structures, demolition, additions and changes or additions to electrical, mechanical or plumbing services when:

- A new structure is being added to a property and the new structure will be 12 feet or more in any direction - length, width, or height.
- A renovation or remodel involves structural work such as walls being added or removed, adding doors, windows, etc.
- Something is being detached or removed from an existing structure, such as a porch, deck, shed, storage building, room addition, etc. and is being replaced.
- The residential construction value of an addition, construction, renovation, etc., is \$15,000 or more.
- New services for appliance changes (electric to gas) for electrical, mechanical (HVAC, gas), plumbing are being installed.
- Electricity, plumbing, or HVAC equipment is being changed, replaced, etc. Changing out a hot water heater, a toilet, a sink, etc. does not require a building permit. However moving such fixtures or going from electric to gas, which can involve moving or adding water lines or adding electric service DOES require a building permit.
- A new dock is being built or a boat lift is being added to an existing dock.
- A storage building is being moved onto (or off of) a property and the storage building is larger than 12' x 12' x 12'.
- A structure or building is being moved from one site in Town to another site in Town, the ETJ, or to another town or city not in the Town of Beaufort.
- When opening a new business or moving an existing business to a new location.

Homeowners are allowed to do their own work but must follow the NC State Building Codes. A [Homeowner Affidavit](#) may be required if the project cost is over \$40,000.

Building permit applications must be obtained prior to any work proceeding except excavation on a property. Other applications, such as a Site Plan Review, Preliminary and Final Plat, Variance, Certificate of Appropriateness or Minor Works signification, etc., may be necessary for certain permit applications. Good communication with the Planning and Inspections Department prior to actual start date should be a high priority. Building permits and inspections are available at <https://evolve-public.infovisionsoftware.com/beaufort/>

After substantial work has been completed, an inspection should be performed in order to make sure the job is in compliance with the NC State Building Codes and Town codes. The department requires a 24-hour notice to schedule an inspection in order to make sure the inspector has ample time on the job site.

I want to build a garage/accessory structure in my backyard - how close to my property lines can it be and do I need a building permit?

- If the garage or accessory structure is 16 feet or less in height you are allowed to be within 5 feet from both the side and rear setback (property) lines.
- If your garage or accessory structure is over 16 feet in height, you need to refer to the [Land Development Ordinance](#) (last updated 5.14.18) for the particular zoning district's setbacks for all structures over sixteen feet in height.

My insurance premium states my property is in a flood zone. Where can I go to find out what flood zone I am in? Why is this significant?

- Flood zones are designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and affect parts of the Town and ETJ.
- Please refer to the [FEMA Community Ratings System \(CRS\)](#) for more information regarding how flood zones affect flood insurance.
- The Planning and Inspections zoning staff is actively involved in the Town's CRS certification which creates discounts on flood insurance in our community.
- Please refer to the [State of NC Flood Risk Information System](#) to find the flood zone for your property or contact zoning staff for help.

What is a rezoning and how can I rezone my property?

- Rezoning is a procedure available to property owners or other citizens who are interested in changing the current zoning classification of any property.
- Rezoning must be handled through a "permitting" process in order to give adjacent property owners the opportunity to express opinions on the proposed zoning change.

- Please complete the [Rezoning Application](#) with required attachments for a Rezoning Request with Land Use Plan Change. The applications are heard by the [Planning Board](#) and the [Board of Commissioners](#) in their regular meetings for compliance issues. The process for a rezoning is as follows:

Submittal/Review Process:

- Submit a completed application and description of area to be rezoned by the appropriate deadline. The application is checked for completion and accuracy by Town Staff and is not deemed accepted until it has been approved.

Public Notification Process:

- Rezoning requests are advertised in the local newspaper before the proposed meeting(s).
- The Town posts an information sign on the property.
- Notification letters are mailed to all property owners within 100 feet of the subject property to inform them of the meeting date(s), public hearing, what property is being considered, and what kind of rezoning request is being made. A map is also enclosed with the letter showing the exact location of the property applying for rezoning. These notification letters are sent prior to both the Planning Board and Town Board of Commissioners meetings.

Planning Board Process:

- The case is first heard before the Town Planning Board. The Planning Board makes a determination of recommending approval or denial to send the project to the Board of Commissioners after hearing recommendations from Town Staff.
- Town Staff will present information on the surrounding land use(s), the surrounding zoning district(s), what the adopted Land Use Plan recommends as the long range plan for this area, staff's recommendation for approval or denial, and reasons for such recommendation.

Public Hearing & Decision Process:

- Once the Planning Board makes a determination, the request proceeds to the Town Board of Commissioners who has the final authority to approve or deny the rezoning. The Board of Commissioners will conduct a public hearing where those in favor or opposed to the rezoning will have an opportunity to speak before the Board.
- The Commissioners discuss the material presented to them either by application, Town Staff, the Planning Board, or testimony given by adjacent property owners to make their final decision.

I want to divide my property but I have been told I may have to have it subdivided. What is a subdivision and what is the process to do this?

- A subdivision is a tract or parcel of land divided into two or more individual lots. Subdivision plan review is necessary to insure the proposed development of the land is consistent with all Federal and State land and water regulations.
- Subdivision plans are looked at in two phases, [Preliminary Plat](#) and [Final Plat](#), in order to ensure the developer has considered all necessary items and infrastructure in the proposed development.
- Subdivisions are not limited to residential uses; in rare situations a commercial subdivision can be developed. The process for submitting a subdivision is as follows:

Submittal/Review Process:

- Submit a completed application and description of area to be subdivided by the appropriate deadline. The application is checked for completion and accuracy by Town Staff and is not deemed accepted until it has been approved.
- Submit a preliminary plan showing the proposed division of the property and its infrastructure improvements (water and sewer lines, parking, sidewalks, etc.) by the [Planning Board meeting deadline](#). The application is checked for completion and accuracy by Town Staff and is not deemed accepted until it has been approved.

Planning Board Process:

- The preliminary plan application is first heard by the Town Planning Board. The Planning Board makes a determination for approval or denial to send the project to the Board of Commissioners after hearing recommendations from Town Staff.
- Town Staff will present information regarding how the proposed preliminary plan meets Town standards as well as provide a recommendation for approval or denial, and the reason(s) for such recommendation.

Board of Commissioners Decision Process:

- Once the Planning Board makes a determination, the preliminary plan will proceed to the Town Board of Commissioners who has the final authority to approve or deny the proposal. The Board of Commissioners will review the information provided by Town Staff and the Planning Board and they discuss the project and render a final decision.

(The process for a final plat is almost identical except prior to recording the final plat with the County Register of Deeds, all infrastructure must be installed or financially guaranteed.)