



Staff Report

Planning and Development – Building Division

Report To: Committee of the Whole
Meeting Date: September 16, 2019
Report Number: PDS.19.121
Subject: Overview of the Building Permit Process
Prepared by: Tim Murawsky, Chief Building Official Manager Building Services

A. Recommendations

THAT Council receive Staff Report PDS.19.121, entitled “Overview of the Building Permit Process”; for information purposes.

B. Overview

The Blue Mountains Building Services Division protects the public’s safety, health and general welfare by the proactive enforcement of the Ontario Building Code and Town By-laws governing new construction and renovations/alterations to existing buildings. The building permit process from pre-consultation to completion of work and closing of a permit can continue for an undetermined length of time.

C. Background

The Building Services Division is responsible for the administration and enforcement of the Building Code Act (BCA), the Ontario Building Code (OBC), applicable laws & municipal by-laws such as the Building By-law and the Zoning By-law, in accordance with all applicable corporate policies and procedures. Building Services provides a very important service to the public by ensuring that construction meet the minimum requirements within the Ontario Building Code. Safe construction is paramount and due diligence exercised in enforcing the Code avoids municipal exposure to liability. The Blue Mountains Building Services is proud to have a paperless application process in place.

D. Analysis

Pre-Consultation: Consultation with the applicant during the planning stages is provided to ensure that projects comply with the requirements within the municipal Zoning, as per the current TBM Comprehensive Zoning By-law #2018-65. The Zoning Coordinator and/or building staff provide assistance in interpreting the zoning bylaw and information relating to any building restrictions such as setbacks, height and lot coverage and to inform if other applicable agencies or authorities approvals are required for the project. Even though a building permit may not be required, compliance with the Zoning Bylaw is mandatory. Building Services staff

makes every effort to ensure an efficient turnaround time for permit applications. It is most important that a submitted application is complete for the project to be approved and the permit issued without delay.

Application & Plans Submission & Review: Staff will perform a cursory pre-screening of an application to confirm that all applicable laws have been satisfied, that zoning is compliant, and that required forms and supporting documentation has been provided. All information is uploaded to our system and a permit file is created. If an application is deemed incomplete, the timeframe prescribed by the building code (10 business days) for the Chief Building Official to issue the building permit does not apply. The application is assigned a reference number and the applicant is acknowledged by email that the application has been received. Comments will be provided relating to incomplete items noted during the cursory review.

The Zoning Coordinator will review the proposal to determine compliance with the Zoning Bylaw. Concurrently and if applicable, a review of a submitted proposed grading plan will be conducted.

Once zoning has been deemed compliant, a Plans Examiner will review the project to determine compliance with the regulations within the Ontario Building Code (OBC). Plans examiners provide comments by email to keep the applicant informed of the permit status and provide a statement of fees and charges. A building permit will not be issued until all fees are paid. Permit fees vary with the type of project. A list of all the fees can be found in the current Building By-law (#2014-18).

The most common factors during a plan review that delay processing a permit are missing information and limited details.

Issue Package: Once the reviews are complete and all fees are paid, the permit is issued, and the permit package is electronically sent to the applicant. The permit package contains useful information for the building inspection process. Building Permit placards are required to be posted on site and the reviewed plans shall be printed and made available on-site for the inspector for every stage of inspection. It is the role of every person who causes a building to be constructed, to cause the building to be constructed in accordance with the Building Code Act and the Ontario Building Code for any permit issued under the Act for the building.

Required Inspections: The Ontario Building Code requires that a person who is issued a building permit (or their agent or contractor of record) notify Building Services when they reach each mandatory stage for inspection. Building Services staff work with homeowners, contractors and trades to ensure that projects meet health and safety standards and construction adheres to the minimum building code regulations for the approved project. Depending on the nature of the project, inspectors may visit a site several times. When conducting mandatory inspections, building inspectors must be able to see the part of work under inspection. Any building elements covered before the required mandatory inspection has been made may be asked to be uncovered for inspection and approved before the completion of the project.

All Inspection requests may be by email or telephone. Inspections take place between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday – Friday. All inspection requests require 48 hours' notice (2 business days) to allow for efficient scheduling. Building staff confirm all inspections with requestor. The typical stages of construction for inspection include:

- Footings at completion of formwork and prior to pouring concrete
- Foundations at completion of footings and foundations and prior to backfill
- Water & Sanitary Service when services are installed and under test
- Septic System when septic bed is constructed and prior to backfilling
- Underfloor/In-Floor Plumbing when plumbing is roughed-in below slab, capped, and under test
- Above-Ground Plumbing when water service is installed and all above slab plumbing is completed and under test. Above-ground plumbing inspection is typically required to be completed prior to framing inspection
- Structural Framing when complete and prior to installation of exterior cladding and prior to insulating
- Insulation and vapour barrier at completion and prior to installation of interior finishes
- Fire Separation at completion of all required fire separations and closures and prior to drywall
- Occupancy when all required inspections have been successfully completed. An Occupancy Permit is issued where OBC minimum requirements for residential occupancy have been completed satisfactorily.
- A final lot grading certification (where applicable) is required to be submitted by the project engineer to Building Services for review.
- Final-Interior at completion of all interior construction associated with the issued permit
- Final-Exterior at completion of all exterior construction associated with the issued permit.

Building inspectors may be onsite between 30 minutes and 2.5 hours for any given inspection. A re-inspection fee may be applicable in cases where construction associated with an inspection is not substantially complete or where a re-inspection reveals that previous deficiencies have not been rectified. Building inspectors complete an inspection report and electronically send the report via email to the applicant and/or contractor. Deficiencies noted during the inspection will be noted on the inspection report. All inspections include either a pass or fail outcome.

Engineer Reports: Where engineer's reports are requested, they are required to be forwarded to Building Services prior to a site inspection. Inspectors may consider reports submitted by professional engineers, architects and other design professionals, confirmation that the construction is compliant with the Building Code Act and the Ontario Building Code. The Town of Blue Mountains will not accept consultant reports in lieu of prescribed inspections unless authorized by the Chief Building Official.

Revisions: If plans change during the construction of a building after a building permit has been issued, the proposed revisions will have to be approved by Building Services. All information

relating to the proposed change must be sent to Building Services for review and approval prior to the required stage of inspection. A new stamped approved drawing will be emailed to the applicant and the revise plans shall be printed and added to the previously issued permit package.

A revision fee may be applicable (Building By-law #2014-18) and if assessed, required to be paid prior to the next inspection/re-inspection. Proceeding with changes prior to approval from Building Services, may result in the issuance orders authorized under the Building Code Act.

In Summary: Building Services review permit applications and drawings for proposed construction, issue construction and demolition permits, conduct mandatory building inspections, enforce minimum standards for non-compliance; secure unsafe buildings and provide technical assistance to members of the community; contractors, builders, architects and designers. The Building Services Division focuses on public safety, building knowledge, customer service and integrity.

E. The Blue Mountains Strategic Plan

Goal #4: Promote a Culture of Organizational & Operational Excellence
Objective #1 To Be an Employer of Choice
Objective #2 Improve Internal Communications Across our Organization
Objective #3 To Consistently Deliver Excellent Customer Service
Objective #5 Constantly Identify Opportunities to Improve Efficiencies and Effectiveness

F. Environmental Impacts

N/A

G. Financial Impact

N/A

H. In consultation with

Barb Dooks, Building & Zoning Compliance Coordinator

I. Public Engagement

The topic of this Staff Report has not been subject to a Public Meeting and/or a Public Information Centre as neither a Public Meeting nor a Public Information Centre are required. Comments regarding this report should be submitted to Tim Murawsky at build@thebluemountains.ca

J. Attached

1. Process Flow Chart

Respectfully submitted,

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