



TOWN OF CHARLTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Regulation and Procedure – Special Municipal Account Special Permit, Site Plan Review & Subdivision Consultant Review Fees and Procedures

- 1. Adoption by local Commission/Authority:** Adoption by the Conservation Commission as provided under MGL Ch.44, Section 53G :'Employment of Outside Consultants' as it relates to the Commission's purview under the State's Zoning Act (MGL Chapter 40A) and Subdivision Control Law (MGL Chapter 41)
- 2. Purpose:** When reviewing an application for a Special Permit, Site Plan Review or Subdivision, the Commission, at its sole discretion, may determine that the assistance of outside consultants is warranted due to the proposed project's size, scale, complexity, potential impact or use of land.
The Commission may require that applicants pay a "review fee" consisting of the reasonable costs incurred by the Commission for the employment of a qualified independent consultant engaged by the Commission to assist in review of application for the Special Permit, Site Plan Review or Subdivision. Such review fee shall be submitted ten days after the Commission's determination that an outside consultant is warranted and a scope of services is prepared.
- 3. Consultant Selection:** In hiring outside consultants, the Commission may engage architects, planners, engineers, lawyers, or other appropriate professionals who can assist the Commission analyzing a project to ensure compliance with all relevant laws, ordinances/bylaws and regulations. An outside consultant shall assist the Commission prior to action by the Commission, in plan review, impact analysis, inspection or other technical or legal assistance necessary to ensure compliance with all relevant laws and regulations. Minimum qualification of an outside consultant shall consist wither of an educational degree in the field at issue and, if the field is licensed or registered by the Commonwealth, the respondent holds such license or registration.

Outside consultants shall be selected by the Commission and retained by the Commission (in accordance to with the Town's procurement requirements), with the actual and reasonable costs for their services to be paid by the applicant. Copies of plans and supporting documentation for projects that are deemed by the Commission to require review by outside consultants shall be delivered to the selected consultant(s), who shall submit a cost proposal for the requested consultant services to the Commission. To the extent possible, the Commission shall select consultants that are not working or an applicant currently before the Commission.

4. **Submittal of Funds:** Funds received by the Commission pursuant to this section shall be deposited with the Town Treasurer who shall establish a special account for this purpose. Expenditures from the special account may be made at the direction of the Commission without further appropriation and shall be made only in connection with the review of a specific project or projects for which a review fee has been or will be collected from the applicant. Failure of an applicant to pay for review fees shall be grounds for denial of the respective application or permit.
5. **Definition of “project” under 53G:** For purposes of the management of consultants fees under the 53G procedure herein, the term “project” shall mean the work of the designated consultant and the conclusion of the “project” shall occur when the Commission approves the report submitted by the consultant.
6. **Handling of Consultant review Fees:** The consultant review fee is to be deposited into a special account designated by the Town Treasurer as set forth in M.G.L. Ch.44, section 53G. The Town Treasurer shall, from time to time, issue such rules and regulations for administration of these funds and deposits as may be necessary, providing that such rules and regulations shall be consistent with best accounting practices, with the Town’s bidding and accounting procedures and in conformance with applicable state and federal laws and regulations, including Section 53G of Chapter 44.
7. **Appeal from the Selection of the Consultant:** The applicant shall be notified of the consultant selection prior to initiation of the consultant’s efforts. As provided in M.G.L. Ch.44 section 53G, any applicant may take an administrative appeal from the selection of the outside consultant to the Board of Selectmen. The grounds for an administrative appeal shall be limited to claims that the consultant selected has a conflict of interest or that the proposed consultant does not possess the minimum required qualifications. Such appeals may be initiated by the applicant filing notice with the Town Clerk within seven calendar days of notice of selection. The consultant selection made by the Commission shall stand if one month passes without a decision by the Board of Selectmen on said appeal. The required time limits for action upon an application by the Commission shall be extended by the duration of the administrative appeal. This appeal shall not preclude further judicial review, if otherwise permitted by law, on the grounds provided for in this section.
8. **Remedy:** Failure of an applicant to pay the consultant review fee determined by the Commission, or to replenish the special account when requested, may be grounds for denial.
9. **Effective Date:** This regulation was adopted by the Conservation Commission on 2/19/2020, in accordance with the requirements of M.G.L. Ch.40A Section 9 and 12 and M.G.L Ch.41, Section 81Q.