



Town of Bristol, Rhode Island
Department of Community Development

10 Court Street
Bristol, RI 02809
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March 13, 2026

TO: Honorable Town Council

FROM: Diane M. Williamson, Director
Edward M. Tanner, Zoning Officer

Diane W.
EMT

RE: Zoning Related Fees

As part of our Department's budget review, we have reviewed the fees that the Town charges for various zoning related permits and services. Based on this review, we recommend amendments to the Comprehensive Schedule of Fees found in section 11-1 of Town Code – specifically, to increase the fees for dimensional variances for “single-family and two-family, accessory structures, fences and signs” and the fee for zoning certificates. We have studied the fees charged by other Rhode Island communities for these same services and found that Bristol is very much on the low end of the fee scale. We also recommend that we add a new fee to the schedule for zoning modification permits.

- Section 11-1(61)(f) Certificate of Zoning – this is a formal interpretation of a property's zoning designation as well as its current and potential legal uses. Preparation of zoning certificates involve research in land evidence and assessor's records, as well as a review of previous permits and zoning/planning decisions. This research can be quite time consuming and occasionally involves consultation with the solicitor's office. The Town currently charges \$25.00 for this service. Fees charged in other communities range from a low of \$20 to a high of \$100. We recommend that the Town revise this fee to \$50.00. It is also noted that this item is listed in the ordinance under Section 61 Planning Board and it should be moved to Section 62 Zoning Board.
- Section 11-1(62)(a) Variance requests – “single-family and two-family, accessory structures, fences and signs”. This includes most dimensional variance requests that come before the zoning board of review. Costs associated with these applications include staff time for reviewing and processing the application; as well as newspaper and postal fees associated with public notice requirements. The Town currently charges \$125.00 for this type of application. Fees charged in other communities range from a low of \$100 to a high of \$450. We recommend that the Town revise this fee to \$175.00.
- Add a fee for zoning modification permits to Section 11-1(62). There is currently no fee for this type of application, although we do charge for the newspaper legal advertisement. With recent amendments to state law, we have seen a sharp increase in this type of application. The time commitment for application review and processing, public notice, and decision recording is similar to that of a variance application to the zoning board. Therefore, we recommend that this fee be the same as that of a dimensional variance and propose a fee of \$175.00.

Thank you.