

INSTRUCTIONS TO APPLICANTS APPEALING TO THE BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

The board strongly recommends that, before making any appeal, you become familiar with the Northfield Zoning Ordinance, and also with the New Hampshire Statutes TITLE LXIV, RSA Chapters 672- 677, covering planning and zoning.

Four types of appeals can be made to the board of adjustment:

1. VARIANCE: A **variance** is an authorization, which may be granted under special circumstances, to use your property in a way that is not permitted under the strict terms of the zoning ordinance.

For a variance to be legally granted, you must show that your proposed use meets **all five** of the following conditions:

- (1) The variance will not be contrary to the public interest;
- (2) The spirit of the Northfield Zoning Ordinance is observed;
- (3) Substantial justice is done;
- (4) The values of surrounding properties are not diminished; and
- (5) Literal enforcement of the provisions of the Northfield Zoning Ordinance would result in an unnecessary hardship.

(A) For purposes of this subparagraph, ""unnecessary hardship" means that, owing to special conditions of the property that distinguish it from other properties in the area:

- (i) No fair and substantial relationship exists between the general public purposes of the ordinance provision and the specific application of that provision to the property; and
- (ii) The proposed use is a reasonable one.

(B) If the criteria in subparagraph (A) are not established, an unnecessary hardship will be deemed to exist if, and only if, owing to special conditions of the property that distinguish it from other properties in the area, the property cannot be reasonably used in strict conformance with the ordinance, and a variance is therefore necessary to enable a reasonable use of it.

If you are applying for a variance, you must first have some form of determination that your proposed use is not permitted without a variance. Most often, this determination is a denial of a building permit. A copy of the determination must be attached to your application.

2. SPECIAL EXCEPTION: Certain sections of the zoning ordinance provide that a particular use of property in a particular zone will be permitted by special exception if specified conditions are met. The necessary conditions for each special exception are given in the ordinance. Your appeal for a special exception will be granted if you can show that the conditions stated in the ordinance are met.

If you are applying for a special exception, you may also need site plan or subdivision approval, or both, from the planning board. Even in those cases where no planning board approval is needed, presenting a site plan to the planning board will assist in relating the proposal to the overall zoning. This should be done before you apply for a special exception.

3. APPEAL FROM AN ADMINISTRATIVE DECISION: If you have been denied a building permit or are affected by some other decision regarding the administration of the zoning ordinance, and you believe that the decision was made in error under the provisions of the ordinance, you may appeal the decision to the board of adjustment. The appeal will be granted if you can show that the decision was indeed made in error. If you are appealing an administrative decision, a copy of the decision appealed from must be attached to your application.

4. EQUITABLE WAIVER OF DIMENSIONAL REQUIREMENTS: The board may grant an equitable waiver only for existing dimensional nonconformities provided the applicant can meet the required standards.

a) The nonconformity was not discovered until after the structure was substantially completed or after a vacant lot in violation had been transferred to a bona fide purchaser;

b) The nonconformity was not an outcome of ignorance of the law or bad faith but was instead caused by a legitimate mistake; if these conditions are satisfied, the board can move on to the additional findings to grant the waiver:

c) The nonconformity does not constitute a public or private nuisance nor diminish the value or interfere with future uses of other property in the area; and

d) The cost of correction would far outweigh any public benefit to be gained.

In lieu of the requirements in paragraphs (a) and (b), the violation has existed for 10 years or more with no enforcement action, including written notice, commenced by the town.

For any appeal, the application form must be properly filled out. The application form is intended to be self-explanatory, but be sure that you show:

WHO owns the property? If the applicant is not the owner, this must be explained.

WHERE is the property located?

DESCRIBE the property. Give area, frontage, side and rear lines, slopes and natural features, etc.

WHAT do you propose to do? Attach sketches, plot plans, pictures, construction plans, or whatever may help explain the proposed use. Include copies of any prior applications concerning the property.

WHY does your proposed use require an appeal to the board of adjustment?

WHY should the appeal be granted?

Prepare a list of all abutting property owners, have it verified at the city/town office, and attach it to your application. If you have any difficulty, consult the assessor's office, but the accuracy of the list is your responsibility. Include 3 sets of mailing labels for the applicant, abutters and any engineers, surveyors, wetland scientists, etc involved in the project.

Mail or deliver the completed application, with all attachments to the Clerk of the Board or to the office of the Board of Selectmen. The application fee plus the cost of notifying abutters, the

applicant and any surveyors, engineers, wetland scientists, etc must be included with the application. Make check payable to the Town of Northfield and remit with your application.

The Zoning Board of Adjustment meets on the 4th Monday of each month. Applications must be submitted by 5:00 PM on the Friday before the 15 days required notice prior to the meeting. Public notice of the hearing will be posted and printed in a newspaper, and notice will be mailed by certified mail to you and to all abutters and to other parties whom the board may deem to have an interest, at least five days before the date of the hearing. You and all other parties will be invited to appear in person or by agent or counsel to state reasons why the appeal should or should not be granted.

After the public hearing, the board will reach a decision. You will be sent a notice of decision. If you believe the board's decision is wrong, you have the right to appeal. The selectmen, or any party affected, have similar rights to appeal the decision in your case. To appeal, you must first ask the board for a rehearing. The Motion for Rehearing may be in the form of a letter to the board. The motion must be made within 30 days after the decision is filed and first becomes available for public inspection in the board's office, and must set forth the grounds on which it is claimed the decision is unlawful or unreasonable.

The board may grant such a rehearing if, in its opinion, good reason is stated in the motion. The board will not reopen a case based on the same set of facts unless it is convinced that an injustice would be created by not doing so. Whether or not a rehearing is held, you must have requested one before you can appeal to the courts. When a rehearing is held, the same procedure is followed as for the first hearing, including public notice and notice to abutters. See [RSA Chapter 677](#) for more detail on rehearing and appeal procedures.

Date Filed _____
Fee Paid _____
Check # _____

APPLICATION FOR A VARIANCE

To: Board of Adjustment,
Town of Northfield

Name of applicant _____

Address _____

Owner _____

(If same as applicant, write "same")

Tel. # _____ Email address _____

Location of property _____

(Street address and Tax Map and Lot #)

Description of Property: _____

(Acreage, dimensions, natural features, etc)

Zoning District: (R1) (R2) (C/I) (Conservation) (Groundwater Protection)

(Circle one)

NOTE: This application is not acceptable unless all required statements have been made.
Additional information may be supplied on a separate sheet if the space provided is inadequate.

A variance is requested from article _____ section _____ of the Zoning Ordinance
to permit _____

Facts in support of granting the variance:

1. Granting the variance would not be contrary to the public **interest** because:

2. If the variance were granted, the **spirit** of the ordinance would be observed because:

3. Granting the variance would do substantial **justice** because:

4. If the variance were granted, the **values** of the surrounding properties would not be diminished because:

5. Unnecessary Hardship

A. Owing to special conditions of the property that distinguish it from other properties in the area, denial of the variance would result in unnecessary **hardship** because:

i. No fair and substantial relationship exists between the general public purposes of the ordinance provision and the specific application of that provision to the property because:

and

ii. The proposed use is a reasonable one because:

B. Explain how, if the criteria in subparagraph (A) are not established, an unnecessary hardship will be deemed to exist if, and only if, owing to special conditions of the property that distinguish it from other properties in the area, the property cannot be reasonably used in strict conformance with the ordinance, and a variance is therefore necessary to enable a reasonable use of it.

Applicant _____ Date _____
(Signature)

Date Filed _____
Fee Paid _____
Check # _____

APPLICATION FOR A SPECIAL EXCEPTION

To: Board of Adjustment,
Town of Northfield

Name of applicant _____

Address _____

Owner _____

(If same as applicant, write "same")

Tel. # _____ Email address _____

Location of property _____

(Street address and Tax Map and Lot #)

Description of Property: _____

(Acreage, dimensions, natural features, etc)

Proposed use: _____

Zoning District: (R1) (R2) (C/I) (Conservation) (Groundwater Protection)

(Circle one)

NOTE: This application is not acceptable unless all required statements have been made.
Additional information may be supplied on a separate sheet if the space provided is inadequate.

Explain how the proposal meets the special exception criteria as specified in Article 8, Section 8.2 of the Northfield Zoning Ordinance:

Criteria 1 – Whether the site proposed for the use is appropriate based upon existing development, the master plan, availability of public facilities and utilities, character of the site, and nature of the proposed use?

Criteria 2 – Compatibility of the site with property and land uses in the vicinity.

Criteria 3 – Adequacy of, and plans for, sanitary facilities, water supply and road access

Criteria 4 - Such other factors as may be appropriate

Applicant _____ Date _____
(Signature)

Date Filed _____

Fee Paid _____

Check # _____

APPEAL FROM AN ADMINISTRATIVE DECISION

To: Board of Adjustment,
Town of Northfield

Name of applicant: _____

Address: _____

Owner: _____

(If same as applicant, write "same")

Tel. # _____ Email address _____

Location of property: _____

(Street address and Tax Map and Lot #)

Description of Property: _____

(Acreage, dimensions, natural features, etc)

Zoning District: (R1) (R2) (C/I) (Conservation) (Groundwater Protection)

(Circle one)

Note: This application is not acceptable unless all required statements have been made.
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Relating to the interpretation and enforcement of the provisions of the Northfield Zoning Ordinance.

Decision of the enforcement officer to be reviewed _____

_____ Number _____ Date _____

Article _____ section _____ of the zoning ordinance in question: _____

Applicant _____ Date _____

(Signature)

Date Filed _____
Date Filed _____
Fee Paid _____
Check # _____

APPLICATION FOR AN EQUITABLE WAIVER OF DIMENSIONAL REQUIREMENTS

To: Board of Adjustment,
Town of Northfield

Name of applicant _____

Address _____

Owner _____

(If same as applicant, write "same")

Tel. # _____ Email address _____

Location of property _____

(Street address and Tax Map and Lot #)

Description of Property: _____

(Acreage, dimensions, natural features, etc)

Zoning District: (R1) (R2) (C/I) (Conservation) (Groundwater Protection)

(Circle one)

NOTE: This application is not acceptable unless all required statements have been made.
Additional information may be supplied on a separate sheet if the space provided is inadequate.

An Equitable Waiver of Dimensional Requirements is requested from article _____ section
_____ of the Northfield Zoning Ordinance to permit

1. Does the request involve a dimensional requirement, not a use restriction?

() yes () no

2. Explain how the violation has existed for 10 years or more with no enforcement action,
including written notice, being commenced by the town _____

- Or -

Explain how the nonconformity was discovered after the structure was substantially completed or after a vacant lot in violation had been transferred to a bona fide purchaser:

_____ and how the violation was not an outcome of ignorance of the law or bad faith but resulted from a legitimate mistake _____

3. Explain how the nonconformity does not constitute a nuisance nor diminish the value or interfere with future uses of other property in the area _____

4. Explain how the cost of correction far outweighs any public benefit to be gained

Applicant _____ Date _____
(Signature)