

# TOWN OF BELMONT

## OPENING A NEW BUSINESS – PROCEDURES & PERMITS

Revised December 4, 2024

The following information was designed to make the process of opening a new business as efficient and timely as possible. This document includes all of the tasks that must be completed in order to open your business.

Please note that each department has their own permit/license procedures. As a result, the entire process can take up to six (6) months. A checklist for is attached at the end of this document for your convenience. Additional information can be obtained on the town’s website at [www.belmont-ma.gov](http://www.belmont-ma.gov) or in person at the Town Offices.

**PLEASE** read this entire document carefully to obtain a complete understanding of the process. Do not hesitate to ask questions of each department as they arise. Proceeding forward with unanswered questions or failing to complete a required task may result in a failure to meet timing deadlines and possible financial consequences.

### STEP 1 – DETERMINE APPLICABLE PERMITTING PROCESS

- 1A** Contact the Office of Planning & Building (617-993-2650) to determine if your proposed business is allowed “by-right” or requires action by either the Zoning Board of Appeals and/or the Planning Board.
- If your business involves the sale of food, proceed to **STEP 2**.
  - If your business requires action from the Zoning Board of Appeals and/or Planning Board and does not involve the sale of food, proceed to **STEP 3**
  - If your business is allowed “by right” but does not involve the sale of food, proceed to **STEP 4**.

\_\_\_\_\_ Obtain Zoning Status for Your Business

- 1B** If your proposal requires action by the Zoning Board of Appeals and/or the Planning Board, please contact the Office of Planning & Building (617-993-2650) to make an appointment with Ara Yogurtian, to discuss the intended use of the space that you would like to build, purchase or rent.

Approval from the Zoning Board of Appeals/Planning Board requires the submission of an application and public hearing. The Assistant Director will provide you with an information package explaining the process. All information should be read carefully - you should determine at this point if you will need legal/architectural and/or engineering assistance to proceed with the project.

\_\_\_\_\_ Date of Appointment with Planning Coordinator

\_\_\_\_\_ Next Available Zoning Board of Appeals Public Hearing Date

\_\_\_\_\_ Next Available Planning Board Public Hearing Date  
**STEP 2 – RESTAURANT REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING**

If your business involves the sale of food, you must meet with the Restaurant Review Committee. The Restaurant Review Committee is an ad hoc committee comprised of representatives from various Town departments that are involved with permitting restaurants. Call Community Development staff (617-993-2666) to arrange this meeting. You will need to provide a description of your business, including the hours of operation, numbers of employees, deliveries, dumpster pick up, etc., an interior layout of the establishment (all fixed equipment and movable furniture), and a menu.

Subsequent follow-up meetings may be necessary depending on the complexity of the issues that come up during this meeting. The Zoning Board of Appeals **WILL NOT take action** on any application until the Restaurant Review Committee is satisfied with your plan.

\_\_\_\_\_ Date of Restaurant Review Committee Meeting

Businesses that require ZBA/Planning Board approval proceed to **STEP 3**.

Businesses that do **NOT** require action from either the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) or the Planning Board please proceed to **STEP 4**.

**STEP 3 – ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS/PLANNING BOARD APPROVAL**

If Zoning Board of Appeals and/or Planning Board action is required, the applicable application(s) should be completed and returned to the Office of Planning & Building. **This should be done as soon as possible.**

The ZBA meets the first Monday of every month and the Planning Board meets the second and fourth Tuesday of every month. If you require action from both Boards, a joint public hearing will be held, usually occurring at the regularly scheduled Zoning Board of Appeals meeting.

**Please note** - meeting agendas can fill quickly so an application may not be considered for a few months. Therefore, check with Office to confirm the deadline for application submittals and possible meeting dates.

Your attendance is required at the public hearing.

\_\_\_\_\_ Date Packet Due to the Office of Planning & Building

\_\_\_\_\_ Date of Zoning Board of Appeals Public Hearing (if applicable)

\_\_\_\_\_ Date of Planning Board Public Hearing (if applicable)

\_\_\_\_\_ Due date for Planning Board Decision (if applicable)

\_\_\_\_\_ Due date for Zoning Board of Appeals Decision (if applicable)

## STEP 4 – OTHER APPLICABLE PERMITS/LICENES

Additional permits/licenses may be required to open your business. Please contact each department directly to determine what permits are required. Each department has a separate process and application documents for each permit that is required.

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|-----------|---|--|
| <b>4A</b> | <b>Planning &amp; Building:</b><br>617-993-2650 | Required: Building Permit (Change of Use and/or Occupancy)<br>Certificate of Occupancy (CO) Sign-Off Addendum<br>If applicable: Electrical, Plumbing, Gas, Signs |
| <b>4B</b> | <b>Health Department:</b><br>617-993-2720       | Plan Review Checklist. Additional permits/licenses for specific types of businesses may be required  |
| <b>4C</b> | <b>Light Department:</b><br>617-993-2800        | Meter Service, if applicable   |
| <b>4D</b> | <b>Fire Department:</b><br>617-993-2210         | Fire Detection/Protection Permit   |

\_\_\_\_\_ Identified Other Applicable Permit(s)

\_\_\_\_\_ Submitted Applicable Permit Application(s)

\_\_\_\_\_ Received Applicable Permit(s)

- 4E. Inspections:** During construction, there are multiple inspections required. Most of these are detailed on your Building Permit and the applicable Inspector must initial this Permit.

*It is your responsibility to call for all appropriate inspections.*

## STEP 5 BUSINESS CERTIFICATE

If this is a new business in Town or you are the new owner of an existing business, and the business name is not your own personal name, or your bank requires it, you may be required to apply for a Business Certificate (pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 110, Section 5) in person, at the Town Clerk's Office. Business Certificates expire in four years and should be renewed and kept up to date. The Town Clerk is located within the Town Hall and can be reached at 617-993-2603 during regular business hours. The Business Certificate application can be filed after a Building Permit has been issued and is typically issued immediately upon filing of the application, that includes providing a photo ID and completion of Federal Employer ID or Social Security Number on a MA Tax Attestation.

\_\_\_\_\_ Applied for Business Certificate at the Town Clerk's Office

\_\_\_\_\_ Received Business Certificate from Town Clerk

## STEP 6 SELECT BOARD LICENSES

### 6A. Licenses

Certain businesses require a license from the Select Board. **Specific license types are:** Restaurants with Seating (Common Victualler License), Livery License, Class I Used Car License, Class II Used Car Sales License, Taxi License, Second Hand Goods (Antiques) License, Junk Dealer License and Entertainment License. Business License Application forms may be printed from the Town Clerk web page [www.belmont-ma.gov](http://www.belmont-ma.gov) . Such completed license application must be filed with the Town Clerk's office approximately two (2) to four (4) weeks prior to the planned opening of the establishment. If you were required to go to the ZBA or Planning Board, you should apply for this License while waiting for the decision to be filed with the Town Clerk. All relevant Town Departments will review the application and recommend approval or denial. Once all departments recommend approval, the Town Clerk will forward the recommended application to the Select Board's office for scheduling a review and vote at a public meeting of the Board. The Select Board usually acts on the applications during a regularly scheduled meeting (Monday evenings) two (2) to three (3) weeks after receipt of such. You are not required to attend this meeting however it is strongly recommended; the meeting will allow you to speak about your new business to get some visibility and answer any questions the Board may have prior to voting. The Select Board will typically approve the license provided that the Town departments do not have any issues with your business. Contact the Office of the Select Board at 617-9932610 to obtain the exact date and time the application will be discussed.

\_\_\_\_\_ Date Received Packet for License

\_\_\_\_\_ Date filed Application for License

\_\_\_\_\_ Date of Select Board meeting to discuss the Application

\_\_\_\_\_ Date of License Approval

### 6B. Alcohol Licenses

If you are opening a restaurant or retail establishment and would like to serve or sell alcohol, a license from the Select Board is required. This application should be filed a minimum of four (4) months prior to the planned opening of the establishment. Please contact the Office of the Select Board at 617-993-2610 prior to completing the application to determine whether the desired license is available and to obtain assistance with the application process. If you were required to go to the ZBA or Planning Board, you should apply for this license while waiting for the decision to be filed. The Town is authorized to issue up to sixteen licenses to serve beer and wine to establishments with 39 or more seats, ten all alcohol licenses to establishments with 60 or more seats, two licenses to a retail establishment to sell all alcohol, and four licenses to retail establishments to sell beer and wine.

You must have a Common Victualler license if you wish to obtain an alcohol license to serve alcohol at a restaurant.

An alcohol license application must be filled out at the Massachusetts Alcohol Beverages Control Commission website [www.mass.gov/abcc](http://www.mass.gov/abcc) - print it out and submit it to the Office of the Select Board with a \$500 application fee.

\_\_\_\_\_ Date Application filed with Select Board’s Office

\_\_\_\_\_ Dates within which certified notice of hearing is transmitted to abutters

\_\_\_\_\_ Date of Select Board’s public hearing to discuss the Application

\_\_\_\_\_ Date application approved by Select Board’s

Once approved by the Select Board the application will be submitted to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Beverages Control Commission for its final approval.

### **STEP 7      CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY**

When a business changes hands or a business is taking over a space and does not plan to make any changes to the physical space, they still must file for an appropriate Certificate of Occupancy (CO) from the Office of Planning and Building.

This process will require a Building Permit (whether construction is involved or not) and appropriate final inspections by the local Building Inspector. The Certificate of Occupancy is required even if no building permits were needed.

In general, a CO will be issued when all of the departments listed on the Certificate of Occupancy Form determine that your business meets the standards and/or regulations established by that department. If the business involves food, a final inspection by the Health Department is required and is usually completed 12-24 hours prior to the opening of the establishment.

\_\_\_\_\_ Date Received Certificate of Occupancy

### **STEP 8 – PERMIT AND LICENSE RENEWALS**

#### **PERMIT AND LICENSE RENEWALS**

Many of the permits and licenses that you obtained during the process of opening your business expire. The expiration dates are usually written on the front face of the document for your convenience. There is a yearly fee for each type of license. Reminders may be sent from the appropriate department, but please remember that you are responsible for having up-to-date permits to run your business at all times. Please call the department responsible for the permit if you have questions about the renewal process and when it will be conducted.

<b>Permit/License</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Date of Renewal</b>
Special Permit	Zoning Board of Appeals	May be stated in ZBA decision
Certificate of Occupancy	Office of Planning & Building	No Renewal Required.
Certificate of Inspection	Office of Planning & Building	Originally issued as a Building Permit. No Renewal Required.
Free-Standing Sign	Office of Planning & Building	Every 5 years

Business License	Select Board	Annual - either December 31 or April 30 (refer to the specific business license)
Common Victualler	Select Board	Annual – Expires December 31st
Alcohol	Select Board	Annual – Expires December 31st
Food Service	Health Department	Annual - May 31
Milk & Cream	Health Department	Annual - May 31
Frozen Dessert	Health Department	Annual - May 31
Tobacco	Health Department	Annual - July 31
Dumpster	Health Department	Annual - December 31
Tanning	Health Department	Annual – September 30
Muscular Therapy	Health Department	Annual – May 01

## IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

### OFFICE OF PLANNING & BUILDING

Building Division  
Ara Yogurtian

617-993-2650  
[ayogurtian@belmont-ma.gov](mailto:ayogurtian@belmont-ma.gov)

Planning Division  
Christopher Ryan

617-993-2650  
[cryan@belmont-ma.gov](mailto:cryan@belmont-ma.gov)

Plumbing and Gas

617-993-2662

Electrical

617-993-2661

### FIRE PREVENTION

617-993-2210

### HEALTH DEPARTMENT

617-993-2720

Wesley Chin, Director

[wchin@belmont-ma.gov](mailto:wchin@belmont-ma.gov)

### SELECT BOARD’S OFFICE

617-993-2610  
[selectboard@belmont-ma.gov](mailto:selectboard@belmont-ma.gov)

### TOWN CLERK

617-993-2600

Ellen O’Brien Cushman, Town Clerk  
Meg Piccione, Assistant Town Clerk

[ecushman@belmont-ma.gov](mailto:ecushman@belmont-ma.gov)  
[mpiccione@belmont-ma.gov](mailto:mpiccione@belmont-ma.gov)

## OPENING A NEW BUSINESS – CHECKLIST

The following items need to be completed prior to opening a new business and must be completed in the order they appear, unless otherwise specified in the preceding document.

- STEP 1A** \_\_\_\_\_ Obtain **Zoning Status** for Your Business
- STEP 1B** \_\_\_\_\_ Date of **Appointment with Planning Coordinator**  
\_\_\_\_\_ Next Available Zoning Board of Appeals Public Hearing Date  
\_\_\_\_\_ Next Available Planning Board Public Hearing Date
- STEP 2** \_\_\_\_\_ Date of **Restaurant Review Committee Meeting** (if applicable)
- STEP 3** \_\_\_\_\_ Date Packet Due to **Office of Planning & Building**  
\_\_\_\_\_ Date of **Zoning Board of Appeals** Public Hearing (if applicable)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Date of **Planning Board** Public Hearing (if applicable)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Due date for Planning Board Decision (if applicable)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Due date for Zoning Board of Appeals Decision (if applicable)
- STEP 4** \_\_\_\_\_ Identified **All Applicable Permit(s)** – Building Permit required (Change of Use and/or Occupancy) & Certificate of Occupancy (CO) Sign-Off Addendum  
\_\_\_\_\_ Submitted Applicable Permit Application(s)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Received Applicable Permit(s)
- STEP 5** \_\_\_\_\_ Applied for **Business Certificate** at the Town Clerk’s Office  
\_\_\_\_\_ Received Business Certificate from Town Clerk
- STEP 6A** Business License (If applicable)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Date Business License application downloaded/received from Town Clerk (<https://www.belmont-ma.gov/town-clerk/pages/business-licenses>)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Filed completed application with Town Clerk  
\_\_\_\_\_ Notified by Town Administrator of Select Board meeting and scheduled vote  
\_\_\_\_\_ Vote by Select Board, with or without conditions
- STEP 6B** Alcohol License (if applicable)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Date application for alcohol license voted by Select Board, with or without conditions

\_\_\_\_\_ Date of published notice of public hearing on alcohol license application, and notice transmitted to abutters

\_\_\_\_\_ Date application for alcohol license voted by Select Board, with or without conditions abutters

**STEP 7** \_\_\_\_\_ Date Received Certificate of Occupancy