

**TOWN OF ACUSHNET
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
RULE REGARDING IMPOSITION OF CONSULTANT FEES**

The following Rule is adopted, pursuant to G.L. c.44, §53G.

1. When considering an application for a variance, special permit, planned development approval, comprehensive permit, or any other permit or approval within the authority of the Conservation Commission (the "Commission") under the Wetland Protection, G.L. c. 131, s 40 or any other applicable federal, state or local requirements or regulations, the Board may determine that the assistance of outside consultants is warranted due, for instance and without limitation, to the size, scale or complexity of a proposed project, because of a project's potential impacts, or because the Commission lacks the necessary expertise to perform the work related to the matter before the Commission. To provide for such assistance, the Commission may require that an applicant deposit a sum of money, in an amount to be determined by the Commission, to retain and utilize the services of such consultants. In the event that such sum is insufficient to fund the necessary consulting services, the Commission may require additional deposits.
2. In hiring outside consultants, the Commission may engage engineers, scientists, financial analysts, planners, lawyers, urban designers or other appropriate professionals who can assist it to ensure compliance with all relevant laws, ordinances, standards and regulations. Such assistance may include, but shall not be limited to, analyzing an application, monitoring or inspecting a project or site for compliance with the applicable statutes, codes, bylaws, regulations and conditions, or inspecting a project during construction or implementation.
3. Funds received by the Commission pursuant to this Rule shall be deposited with the Town Treasurer, who shall establish a special account for this purpose, consistent with the terms and provisions of G.L. c.44, §53G. Expenditures from this special account may be made at the direction of the Commission without further appropriation. Expenditures from this special account shall be made only for services rendered in connection with a specific project or projects for which a project review fee has been or will be collected. Accrued interest may also be spent for this purpose. Failure of an applicant to pay a review fee shall be grounds for denial of the application. Alternatively, in the discretion of the Commission, approval of any such application may be conditioned upon payment of any outstanding review fees.
4. At the completion of the Commission's review, any excess amount in the account, including interest, attributable to a specific project shall be repaid to the applicant or the applicant's successor in interest. A final report of said account shall be made available to the applicant or applicant's successor in interest upon request. For the purpose of this regulation, any person or entity claiming to be an applicant's successor in interest shall provide the Commission with documentation establishing such succession in interest.

5. Any applicant or property owner assessed such a consultant fee may take an administrative appeal from the selection of the outside consultant to the Board of Selectmen. Such appeal must be made in writing and may be taken only within seven days after the Commission has provided notice to the applicant of the selection. The grounds for such an appeal shall be limited to claims that the consultant selected has a conflict of interest or does not possess the minimum, required qualifications. The minimum qualifications shall consist either of an educational degree in, or related to, the field at issue or three or more years of practice in the field at issue or a related field. The required time limit for action upon an application by the Commission shall be extended by the duration of the administrative appeal. In the event that no decision is made by the Board of Selectmen within one month following the filing of the appeal, the selection made by the Commission shall stand.

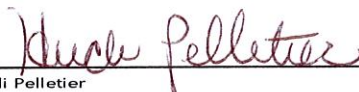
This regulation will become effective on March 13, 2024.

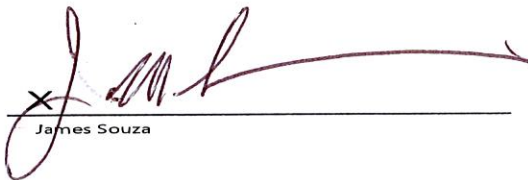
Vote: 5-0-1. One (1) member absent.


Approved and signed by the Conservation Commission on March 13, 2024.

X 
Ryan Rezendes, Chairman

X 
Everett Philla, Vice Chairman

X 
Heidi Pelletier

X 
James Souza

X 
Christian DeSousa