

Town of Lake Santeetlah – Zoning Process and Procedures (January 2026)

(Disclaimer: This document is for educational purposes/guidance only: please refer to the actual ordinance as you complete your application.)

A-B-C's of Zoning Compliance

A. ASK: Do You Need a Zoning Certificate of Compliance?

If you are constructing, moving, or adding to a building or structure (houses, out buildings, fences, stairs, etc.), you should call the TOLS office and talk with the Town Administrator about your project to see if you need to fill out a zoning application.* The Town Administrator will confer with the Zoning Administrator to make a determination.

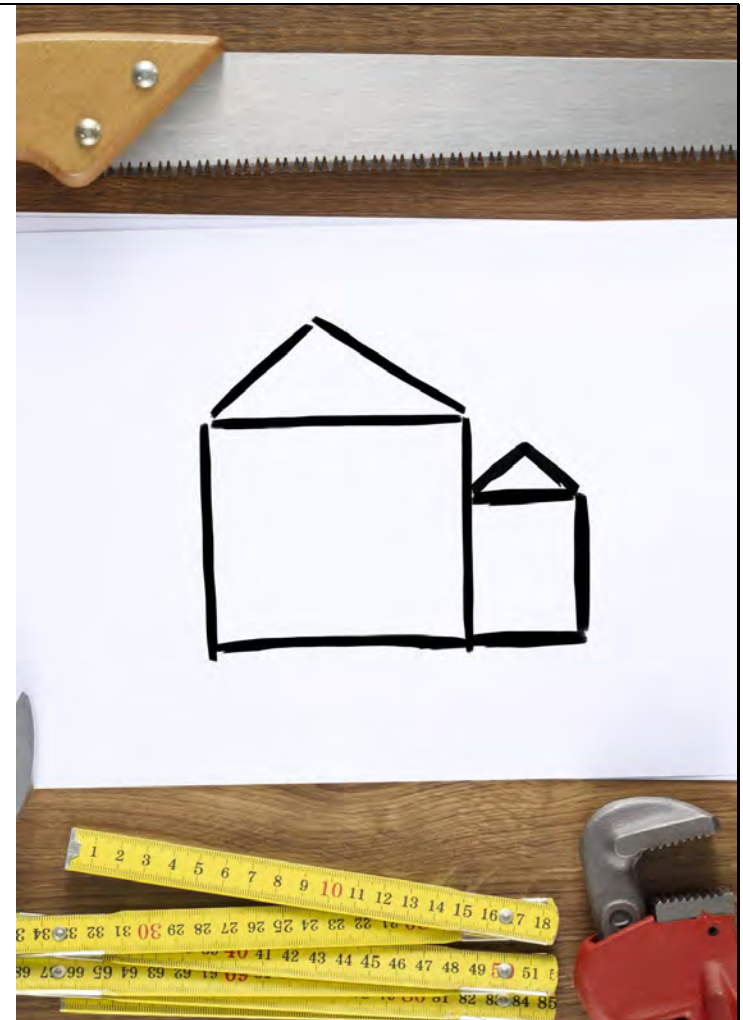
B. BEFORE BUILDING: Apply for Zoning Certificate

If needed, submit an application with all the needed details to TOLS to obtain necessary zoning compliance approvals before construction. The application will be forwarded to the Zoning Administrator to make a determination. If it is denied, you may appeal to the Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA) for a variance determination.

C. CONSTRUCTION & CERTIFICATE: Build & Review

After construction, you will receive a final review to all requirements are met and a Zoning Certificate of Completion (15302) will be issued for your project.

**NOTE: If you are making repairs to existing structures that do not change the footprint or height of the structure or change structural components, you do not need a zoning certificate. But to be sure, call the office to confer with staff.*



Zoning Compliance Process: In A Nutshell

FILLING OUT THE APPLICATION

The application is on the TOLS web site. You will need to include the following information:

- Description and diagram describing
 - Dimensions of the lot
 - Direction of lot and buildings (N,S,E,W)
 - Scale of diagram
 - Adjacent streets
 - Dimensions of any structures to include
 - Height
 - Setback distance of structure(s) from the lot line
 - Structure's orientation on the lot
 - Ingress and egress and parking
 - Septic/sewer approval from Graham County (applicable only to new structures)
 - *Floor plan drawings with front and side elevations are recommended.*

GETTING APPROVAL: THE STEPS

- 1) You submit the zoning application to the Town Administrator, who sends it to the Zoning Administrator.
- 2) Your application is reviewed by the Zoning Administrator.
 - If the application is approved, you may proceed with building.
 - If the application is not approved, you will need to consider other options, which may include appealing the denial or seeking a variance. .
- 3) If needed, you submit a variance request to the Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA).
- 4) Your variance request is reviewed by the ZBA for a hearing.
 - If the variance is approved, you may proceed with building.
 - If the variance request is not approved, you can revise your plans and resubmit you can revise your plans and resubmit your zoning compliance application.
 - Or you can appeal the ZBA determination to Superior Court.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE! Answers below.

SCENARIOS	Is a Zoning Compliance Application Needed?
<p>1. You have some stone stairs on your property coming from the street and you want to build a wooden staircase that is easier to use beside the old steps. You will leave the stone stairs as is, but you might remove them later. You will need to fill out a zoning application so that the town can review if the staircase encroaches further into the setback. You may require a variance.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<p>2. You are repairing an existing parking deck and you will be digging out part of it to put in reinforcing concrete. After that you will have stone masonry repair on the walls of the parking pad. There will be no change to the footprint of the existing structure. To make sure that you do not need a zoning certificate of compliance, you should call the office.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<p>3. You are building a canoe and kayak rack on your property. It can be moved (i.e. it is not permanent) to any location in the property if desired. <i>[Bonus Q: Would your answer change if the structure is to be permanent?]</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<p>4. You are building a storage shed that is well away from all the property lines.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Answers: 1-Y; 2-Y; 3-N (Y); 4-Y.

ORDINANCE LANGUAGE	WHAT IT MEANS
<p><u>Section 800. Zoning Affects Every Building and Use.</u></p> <p><i>No building or land shall be used or occupied, and no building or part of a building shall be erected, moved, or structurally altered except in conformity with the use and dimensional regulations of this Ordinance, or amendments thereto, for the district in which it is located.</i></p>	
<p><u>Section 801. Certificate of Zoning Compliance Required.</u></p> <p><i>No building or structure shall be erected, moved, added to or structurally altered, nor shall any change in the use of any building or land be made until a Certificate of Zoning Compliance has been issued by the Zoning Administrator. No Certificate of Zoning Compliance shall be issued except in conformity with the provisions of this Ordinance. This Article shall in no case be construed as requiring a Certificate of Zoning Compliance or a certificate of occupancy in the event of a change in ownership or tenancy only, without a change in use or intended use, provided that no repairs, alterations or additions are proposed for such building.</i></p>	<p>A certificate of Zoning Compliance is required for ANY change to the property that involves a structure (i.e.: deck, steps, patio), not just the house.</p>
<p><u>Section 801.01 Application for Certificate of Zoning Compliance.</u></p> <p><i>All applications for Certificates of Zoning Compliance shall be accompanied by plans showing the actual dimensions of the plot to be built upon, and the location on the lot of the building(s) or structure(s) proposed to be erected or altered, and such other information as may be necessary to provide for the enforcement of the provisions of this Ordinance. A copy of the approved Application for a Certificate of Zoning Compliance is found in the Appendix to the Ordinance. The Town may charge a reasonable fee for the administration and issuance of the Certificate.</i></p>	<p>The fee for the Zoning Compliance Certificate is \$100. If an existing structure is being modified, plans or photos showing the original structure should also be provided with the application. If the application is deemed by the Zoning Administrator to not be in compliance and a variance is requested, the fee for a Variance Application is \$300. An example of an application document is at the bottom of this file.</p>

ORDINANCE LANGUAGE	WHAT IT MEANS
<p><u>Section 1503. Zoning Administrator.</u></p> <p><i>It shall be the duty of the Zoning Administrator to administer and enforce the provisions of this Ordinance.</i></p> <p><u>Section 1503.01. Questions.</u></p> <p><i>All questions arising in connection with the enforcement of this Ordinance shall be presented in writing first to the Zoning Administrator who shall be responsible for the day-to-day administration of this Ordinance.</i></p> <p><u>Section 1503.02. Certificate of Zoning Compliance; Final Inspection.</u></p> <p>(1) <i>Application. The Zoning Administrator shall receive all applications for Certificates of Zoning Compliance in writing. The Zoning Administrator shall review the application for compliance with the standards Of this Ordinance, make a site visit, if necessary, and provide an interpretation and decision on any questions or issues raised or discovered.</i></p> <p>(2) <i>Issuance of Certificate of Zoning Compliance. Once the Zoning Administrator is satisfied that the application is complete and satisfies all standards of this Ordinance, a Certificate of Zoning Compliance shall be issued.</i></p> <p>(3) <i>Final inspection. The Zoning Administrator shall make a final inspection and be responsible for the issuance of a certificate of completion as provided for in Section 810.</i></p>	<p>Description of duties and process as given.</p>
<p><u>Section 1503.03. Minor Variance.</u></p> <p><i>The Zoning Administrator is authorized to issue minor variances as defined in Article V for development projects. Section 1504. Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA).</i></p>	<p>Minor variances can be approved by the Zoning Administrator and may not require a variance from the Board of Adjustment.</p>

ORDINANCE LANGUAGE	WHAT IT MEANS
<p><u>Section 1504.01. Composition and Statutory Duties.</u></p> <p><i>The ZBA shall consist of five members who are Town property owners. ZBA composition and duties shall be carried out in accordance with N.C.G.S. 160D302(a) and (b).</i></p> <p><u>Section 1504.02. Terms.</u></p> <p><i>Members of the Board shall be appointed by the Town Council for three year (3) terms.</i></p> <p><u>Section 1504.03. Dual Office Holding.</u></p> <p><i>Planning Board members shall become ZBA members and shall not be considered as dual office holding.</i></p> <p><u>Section 1504.04. General Duties.</u></p> <p><i>The powers and duties of the ZBA shall be conducted in accordance with N.C.G.S. 160D-302(b) and 160-406.</i></p> <p><i>General duties are as follows:</i></p> <p>(1) <i>Interpretation. To interpret the Town's Zoning Map and examine disputed questions of lot lines or district boundary lines and any other questions of interpretation that may arise in the administration of this Ordinance in the context of an appeal from the Zoning Administrator.</i></p> <p>(2) <i>Administrative Review. To hear and decide appeals from any order, requirement, decision or determination made by the Zoning Administrator in the enforcement of this Ordinance as provided in this Ordinance and in accordance with N.C.G.S. S160D-406. The concurring vote of a majority of the members of the ZBA shall be necessary to reverse any order, requirement, decision or determination of the Zoning Administrator, or to decide in favor of the applicant on any matter which it is required to pass under the Zoning Ordinance other than a major variance which shall require a four fifths approval. The decision of the ZBA may be appealed to a court of competent jurisdiction.</i></p> <p>(3) <i>Variances. To review and consider the grant or denial of a major variance from the terms of this Ordinance pursuant to N.C.G.S. SI 60D-705(d).</i></p>	<p>Description of duties as given.</p>