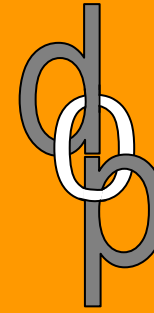


FLOATING ZONES



DEFINITION

A Floating Zoning is a zoning tool, which involves the creation of zoning districts that defines a use, such as an office, mixed use, reuse of a vacant mill, or attached housing. The floating zone is a zoning district, which does not have any specific geographic relationship at the time of adoption, and can only be used in conjunction with a Master Plan.

PURPOSE

The Town has several sites that could have a defining impact on the community, and the neighborhood should be engaged in the dialog about what direction this development takes. It is important to note that the neighbors do not control the decision-making process in these matters and that this zoning tool is intended to improve the dialog.

The purpose of adding floating zones to the Stonington Zoning Regulations is to add flexibility, and to shift the discussion about development, from a Public Hearing before the Planning and Zoning Commission, to the neighborhood. In doing so, the neighbors have a direct role in the development, and can work with the development team to create a mutually beneficial project, as has been the case with the Industrial Heritage Reuse District (IHRD) and Maritime Heritage District (MHD).

IMPLEMENTATION

The Creation of a Floating Zone requires a number of steps:

First, the Zoning Regulations have to be amended to create the Zoning District. This process, called a Zoning Regulation Amendment, is administered by the Planning and Zoning Commission.

As part of this process, the Commission will conduct a public hearing, and evaluate the proposed language. The Floating Zone does not become official until the regulation amendment is approved and an effective date is established. If approved, the district does not immediately affect any property within the community, approval of a Master Plan is required to effectuate any changes. Zoning Text Amendments require the Planning and Zoning Commission to conduct a Public Hearing.

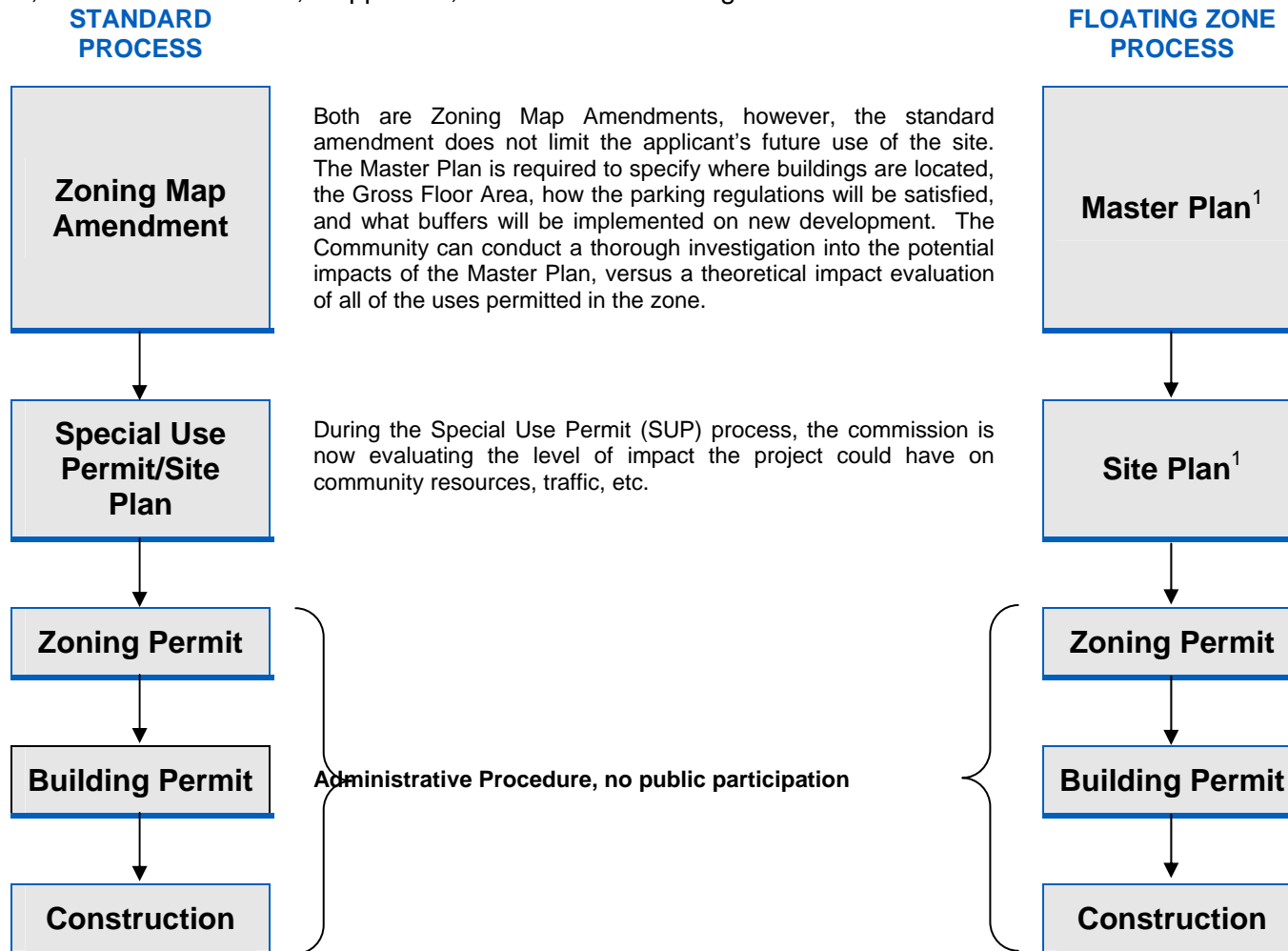
The creation of a Master Plan. The master plan is a combination of text and graphics that create the district parameters. This process is a combination of the Zoning Map Amendment process and elements of the Special Use Permit process. Past projects approved under this mechanism within the Town of Stonington have not included site plan level data, but have provided information about minimum landscaping, parking, stormwater runoff, building



design, height, location, size, etc. The Master Plan process requires the Planning and Zoning Commission to conduct a Public Hearing.

THE MASTER PLAN

The Town of Stonington Planning and Zoning Commission have elected to create Floating Zones that require the submission of a Master Plan (see Zoning Regulation Section (ZR) 8.4.3). The Master Plan has to depict the proposed buildings, parking area, drives, buffers, uses, etc. The Town has also required elevation drawings for the Floating zone as well. The Planning and Zoning Commission can only approve a Floating Zone if a Master Plan is included, and the Master Plan, if approved, then becomes the regulations for this site.



¹ A Master Plan can include a site Plan, if the developer wants to provide this level of detail at this time.

AUTHORITY

The Planning and Zoning Commission's authority to create zoning districts is established in Section 8-2 of the Connecticut General Statutes.
<http://www.cga.ct.gov/2005/pub/Chap124.htm> - [Sec8-2.htm](#)

HISTORY

The Town currently has three district enabling tools: Industrial Heritage Re-use District (IHRD), Maritime Heritage District (MHD), and the Neighborhood Development District (NDD).

Since 2004, three IHRD projects have been approved:

- ☐ IHRD-1 Threadmill (Pawcatuck);
- ☐ IHRD-2 Mystic Harbour (Mystic) and
- ☐ IHRD-3 Pawcatuck Landing (Pawcatuck)

One MHD project has been approved:

- ☐ Mystic Seaport (Mystic)

One NDD project has been approved:

- ☐ Prospect Place (Pawcatuck)