



NEWS RELEASE

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Cobblestone works with Town for interior transformation

When Cobblestone Grill closed on Jan. 21 for remodeling, the restaurant's owners, Kent and Liz Esra, immediately began the process of transforming the space into a more contemporary industrial look. By the time the restaurant reopened on March 3, the entire dining was renovated and included new dark wood flooring, new tables, chairs and lighting, a larger bar area, an updated color scheme and the elimination of a few walls to create a more open dining area. In addition to the remodel, the restaurant rebranded and became simply "Cobblestone."

But before and throughout the remodeling process, the restaurant worked closely behind the scenes with Town officials to ensure the permitting and inspection process went smoothly. Beginning in the fall of 2016, Esra reached out to Wayne DeLong, Director of Planning & Economic Development, to go over rudimentary drawings. DeLong included two building inspectors and Fire Marshal Josh Frost.

"Liz and I walked through the project as we saw it at that particular time and asked, 'what do you think?'" Esra said. "They pointed out many things we were not aware of – including ADA compliant regulations – so when we had architectural plans just a few months later, we were ready to apply for the permit."

The Town's Planning & Economic Development Department reviewed the permit and within just a few weeks, Esra hired a general contractor. For interior remodels, the permit fee is \$350 plus .17 per square foot. This includes three inspections. In an effort to prevent undue delay and streamline the processes, the two Town departments – Planning & Economic Development and Fire Department – plan inspections concurrently. They coordinate on a daily basis to schedule inspection times.

"While performing inspections, we really help each other by looking at projects holistically so between our two to three sets of eyes, we end up with a far superior final product," Frost said.

Going above and beyond the three inspections, Esra worked with Frost and the Town building inspectors for an additional inspection of the ceiling in advance of the final inspection. What they found surprised him.

"When we pulled ceiling down we saw holes that had to be covered and caulked and duct work that that needed to be re-worked," Esra said. "Not everyone will want to pay for an extra inspection but for us it was absolutely well worth it and saved us a lot of time."

According to DeLong, communication early and often and having a knowledgeable staff at Town Hall is key to working through the new construction and remodeling process.

“With Kent, we met early, looked at drawings, had on-site meetings, reviewed the permit and had a second sit down meeting to walk through any concerns and answer questions,” DeLong said. “This isn’t our first rodeo. The folks here care about your project, and with 120 accumulated years of experience, we are here to help.”

In addition to the permitting and planning services that DeLong’s department provides, DeLong emphasizes that the Town is a one-stop shop of resources for any entrepreneur or business owner working on a new build or a remodel. Everything is managed within the walls of Town Hall, including permitting, sewer, electrical and fire.

And for both the Esra’s, it was a process that could not have gone any smoother.

“I would suggest to partner with the people who are ultimately going to have a say in what goes on,” Esra said. “The Town isn’t our enemy. They were able to guide us through the project so that we were able to complete it start to finish in only six weeks.”

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