

Dark Skies ByLaws Summary Document 3/2/2026

The Dark Skies Subcommittee of the Lincoln Planning Board proposes to revise the Zoning Bylaw 13.5 regarding exterior lighting.

Excessive artificial light is known to cause negative effects on natural ecosystems, agriculture yields, and human well-being. Mammals and birds avoid artificially lit areas, reducing their habitat. Insects are lethally attracted to light, and pollinators avoid fields that are illuminated at night. In addition, glare from bright lights reduce road visibility and diminishes our ability to see the stars.

The purpose of this amendment is to ensure that exterior lighting on **new construction** and major renovations is designed to minimize glare, light trespass, light intensity, and sky glow while providing reasonable illumination for safety and security.

Existing exterior lighting installed prior to the adoption of the bylaw **may remain without modification.** However, new lighting, added to existing structures must be compliant with the updated bylaw.

New construction and major renovation projects must have exterior luminaires that are fully shielded with a maximum intensity of 900 lumens (equivalent to a 60-watt incandescent bulb).

All exterior luminaires shall have a color correlated temperature (CCT) of 2700K (Kelvin) or less. This provides light in the warm color range, which is less harmful to wildlife.

Exterior lighting, not associated with an active use on **newly constructed premises** shall be extinguished between 10 PM and sunrise. Motion activated lighting may be installed for use after 10 PM.

Certain exemptions apply. Please refer to the attached bylaw document.

The Lincoln Dark Skies Subcommittee will continue to encourage residents of existing homes to voluntarily reduce nighttime lighting. Information will be provided on the Dark Skies Website, through mailings, and via educational presentations and informational meeting.

