Town of Penfield Supervisor’s Column

Week of February 12, 2019

Guest columnist: Heidi Boehl, Department Head, Building/Fire Marshal/Zoning

The priority of the Town of Penfield Building Inspectors, Code Enforcement Officers, Zoning Administration, and Fire Marshals is to promote and protect the general health, safety, and welfare of the community as we progress into the future socially, physically, and economically. We enforce the New York State Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code, Town Laws, Town Zoning Ordinances, and Town Design Criteria. Our Building Inspectors, Code Enforcement Officers and Fire Marshals are out in the field year-round conducting periodic inspections, required construction inspections, and addressing citizen concerns to ensure the safety of residents, families, and visitors to establishments in our community.

From Building and Zoning:

With February recess just around the corner, now is a good time to submit your building permit application for our staff to review. Once spring arrives, many homeowners tend to get the “spring bug” and decide to enhance their homes with a new deck, pool, shed or a remodel/addition of a room or a few rooms. Here are a few reminders as you plan your next project.

Property owners are responsible for ensuring permits are obtained PRIOR to work being started when they intend to:

- construct, enlarge, alter, repair, move, demolish, or change the occupancy of a building or structure
- install, enlarge, alter, repair, remove, convert or replace any electrical or plumbing system
- install a solid fuel burning heating appliance, chimney or flue in any dwelling unit (installation is regulated by New York State Building Codes)

The property owner is also responsible for ensuring that all required inspections have been performed—including the final inspection—and that a Certificate of Occupancy/Certificate of Compliance has been issued. **We strongly urge property owners to confirm with the building department that all inspections have been completed and that a Certificate of Occupancy/Certificate of Compliance has been issued prior to final payment to a contractor.** If you do not find a copy of a Certificate of Occupancy/Certificate of Compliance for a completed project, please call our department at (585)340-8636 to confirm compliance status and to obtain a copy for your records. Failure to complete this process will complicate future projects and delay real estate transactions.
**From Code Enforcement:**

Our Code Enforcement officers are busy monitoring and enforcing a variety of applicable ordinances, codes, and regulations related to zoning, land use, nuisance housing, building codes, health and safety, and other matters of public concern. The New York State Code states that residents shall maintain clean, safe, and sanitary structures and exterior of one’s property. Here are a few reminders to help keep our town looking great.

- All garbage is required to be kept in approved containers such as totes, dumpsters, trash cans.
- A maximum of one unregistered or uninspected vehicle is permitted, however it must be parked in the driveway and owned by the resident.
- A resident may keep and maintain a compost pile consisting of organic materials including leaves and grass clippings on their property provided it is 10 feet from the property line and not obstructing drainage or utility access.
- One accessory structure is allowed on the property.

Let’s all work together and help our neighbors towards a common goal. Help Mrs. Smith who just lost her husband by mowing her lawn, or help Mr. Jones who just had hip replacement surgery and is “too proud” to ask for assistance by bringing his garbage in from the curb. A strong neighborhood means better peace of mind for all who live and work there.

**From our Fire Marshals:**

As winter is not over quite yet, we want to remind everyone to help keep fire hydrants clear of snow. Please discuss this with your neighbors and adopt a hydrant in your area to protect your neighborhood. Hydrants that are clearly visible and accessible to emergency responders will help them get water on a fire more quickly than if they have to search for and clear a hydrant that may not even be the closest to a burning structure. Snow should be cleared three feet all the way around the hydrant with a clear path to the roadway.

It is equally important to keep vents from high efficiency furnaces and water heaters clear of snow and debris. These type of vents typically terminate within a few feet of ground level on the outside of the structure. If these vents are obstructed by snow, the appliance served by the vent will begin to malfunction. This malfunction could cause excess carbon monoxide (CO) to build up in the structure. High levels of CO can cause illness and/or death. When clearing your driveway of snow, take your shovel for a walk around your house to complete this critical task.

Keeping exits clear of snow is not just an issue for commercial buildings. It is important to clear the exits in your own home as well. This includes shoveling your front sidewalk and porch, regardless of how much you use it. In an emergency, you want to have a minimum of two ways out of your home at all times. Clearing more than two exits is even better! This can include a back door leading to a deck or patio. Keep a path cleared of snow leading from the door, across the deck/patio and into the yard. A cleared path to the front of the house will help emergency services access your home if needed. If you live in a rental, apartment, or a location where you are not responsible for clearing snow and you notice an issue, report it to your landlord or maintenance contractor. If the situation is not resolved and you believe it to be a life hazard please contact my office; we will investigate and ask the responsible party to remedy the hazard as well.
Supporting our Community:

Do you know there is a drop off bin for The Penfield Ecumenical Food Shelf (PEFS) at the town hall? It is located in the Town Hall atrium and is decorated by the season. Right now it is decorated with Valentine’s Day in mind. Stop in and drop off donations of non-perishable food as we express our kindness to those in need. At the end of every month we take it over to the food shelf on Jackson Rd. Thank you in advance for supporting this wonderful resource in our community…it makes a difference to so many lives.

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