

## WORKING WITH YOUR BUILDING DEPARTMENT

Though it may sometimes seem like a bother, working with your municipal Building Department is just that, 'working with' indicating a collaboration between the applicant/owner and the Building Department staff, all in an effort to ensure safe and reliable construction. The CT State Building Code is in place through enabling legislation to protect the public and building structures from undue losses during its expected lifetime and especially in the event of an emergency. I've seen it more than once when the potential sale of a property falls through because the lending institution and prospective buyers have pulled out of the agreement because of work done without permits or inspections. Besides the more dangerous risks of injuring someone or losing the structure to fire, that is just one of the many reasons to stop by or call the Building Department when you *begin* contemplating any type of building construction or renovation. Here are some tips for getting your project off to the best possible start:

- When interviewing contractors, listen for their willingness to be involved with the preparation of plans and the permit process as part of their responsibilities. Always ask for copies of permits and inspection records.
- As a home owner you are allowed by law to tackle almost anything in your own home, and a conversation with your Building Official about your ideas can be an invaluable education.
- An inspector's job is not to help you design, or draw up a professional quality set of plans along with a complete list of materials. His responsibility is to review the plans and approve them in accordance with the applicable code. Make an appointment with the inspector to go over anything you may not be sure of prior to deciding on the final plan. Listen carefully and take notes. Ask for any helpful handouts he may have to assist you in understanding code requirements.
- Be sure you understand the inspections required and what is expected of you when the inspector shows up.
- A note of caution, the Building Official is the *last* authority to sign off on a Certificate of Occupancy therefore, be sure to satisfy all the requirements of other Departments having jurisdiction over your project such as Zoning, Health, Fire Marshal or Dept of Public Works

There is always a level of stress involved in any kind of construction project however this can be substantially reduced by following these guidelines and asking lots of questions. Good Luck!