



LAND USE DEPARTMENTS

Town Hall Annex, 66 Prospect St., Ridgefield, CT 06877
(Phone numbers listed below) Fax 203-431-2737

Frequently Asked Questions about Properties and Land Use

WHAT AGENTS AND AGENCIES ARE LOCATED AT THE ANNEX?

- Planning & Zoning Department / Wetlands 431-2766
Betty Brosius - Director of Planning
Richard Baldelli – Zoning Enforcement Officer
Beth Peyser - Wetlands Inspector / Agent
Gayle Baldelli - Assistant to the Planner
- Health Department 431-2745
Mary Ellen Miller – Office Administrator
Ed Briggs – Director of Health
Geno Gagnon – Registered Sanitarian
- Building Department 431-2743
Bill Reynolds – Building Official
Bert Veilleux – Deputy Building Inspector
Deb Lefebvre – Office Administrator
- Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA – Sewers) 431-2734
Diana Van Ness – Administrator
- Zoning Board of Appeals 431-2786
Marjorie Tippet – Paralegal
- Conservation Commission 431-2713
Colleen Lake – Office Administrator
- Engineering Department
Charles Fisher, P.E. – Town Engineer 431-2751
Jacob Muller – Assistant Engineer 431-2752

Most research questions can be directed to any of the Office Administrators in the Planning & Zoning, Health and Building Departments. Some questions need extra input from the ZEO, Building Official, WPCA, Zoning Board of Appeals Paralegal, or other town agent(s).

- Offices are located at 66 Prospect Street at the back of the Venus Municipal Building (next to the Yanity Gym) and are open from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m., Monday thru Friday.

A sampling of typical questions can be found below.

TYPICAL QUESTIONS FOR THE BUILDING DEPARTMENT

The Building Department was created on January 1, 1960 and has records starting on that date for building permits, demolition permits, and certificates of occupancy. Actual building plans (house plans) are kept for only three years.

The Building Department issues building permits for new construction, alterations, additions, pools, spas and demolition, as well as permits for commercial construction and renovations. “Stand-alone” permits are issued for electrical work, plumbing, HVAC installations, gas fireplaces or stoves, and wood stoves.

Frequently asked questions:

- Are there any outstanding permits for the property? If so, how do they get these permits “closed out”?
- What if something was built without a permit? Are there fines to be paid, and inspections to be done? Does the contractor or owner need to be there for inspections?
- What building code will be applied to an old or “after-the-fact” permit – current code, or code in effect when the construction took place?
- How do we get copies of previous permits and Certificates of Occupancy? Is there a fee for research?
- What fees are required for building permits?

TYPICAL QUESTIONS FOR THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT

The Health Dept. started maintaining records in 1970. There are no files previous to that year unless someone provided information to the Town. The detail of records after 1970 is dependent on the type of work and/or permits that may have been applied for after that date. Obviously, newer homes have the most complete records.

Frequently asked questions:

- Date septic installed
- Date well drilled
- Location of septic and well **
- Size of septic tank
- Number of bedrooms septic sized for
- Permit to Discharge from septic
- Certificate to Utilize Well
- Questions regarding separating distances from septic and/or well in connection with building additions

****If no records are available as to location of septic or well, a septic installer/well driller would have to locate the system in the field, if information is required for permitting.**

TYPICAL QUESTIONS FOR THE WPCA

The Water Pollution Control Authority can confirm that a property is on municipal sewers, and can provide information about “use units” allocated to the property, and billing for sewers.

Frequently asked questions:

- Is the property serviced by Town of Ridgefield sewers?
- If the property is in the sewer district, how can it be connected?
- What are the user fees for single-family residences and commercial properties? (Single-family use is based on bedroom count, and commercial is based on tenant uses and square footage.)
- If the property is not in the sewer district, is it possible for it to be included? What is the process?

TYPICAL QUESTIONS FOR THE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

The Zoning Board of Appeals has extensive files dating back to 1946 on all applications for variances. A listing of all applications by address and Tax Assessor number is available in the ZBA and Town Clerk’s offices, as well as online (www.ridgefieldct.org. Go to: Boards – Zoning Board of Appeals – ZBA applications by address.) Note that variances are given to properties, not owners, in perpetuity, so they should be part of any due diligence research. Other functions of the board, upcoming meetings and agendas, and minutes are also available on the website.

TYPICAL QUESTIONS FOR THE PLANNING & ZONING / WETLANDS DEPARTMENT

Any staff member in P&Z can answer general questions pertaining to zones, permits, setbacks, etc. for residential properties, and can refer specific, detailed questions to the ZEO, Wetlands Agent, or other department officials.

Frequently asked questions:

- What is the zoning district for the property?
- What are the allowed setbacks?
- How is a PRD Subdivision different than a conventional subdivision?
- How do I calculate Floor Area and Lot coverage?
- Are Home Occupations allowed?
- How do I close out an “open” permit?
- Can the property be subdivided?
- Are there wetlands on the property?
- How will wetlands affect the ability to renovate or build an addition?
- Can I get a plot plan or survey of the property from P&Z records?
- Is the apartment in the house “legal”?
- Does grading / filling / earthwork require a permit?

Places to find some of the answers:

- The Zoning Regulations are on the Town’s website at www.ridgefieldct.org. Go to: Departments – Planning and Zoning – Zoning Regulations.
- Residential property requirements are found in Section 3 of the regulations adopted 5/1/07.
- The website (Zoning Regulations page) also has “Helpful Links” to work sheets that show how to calculate Floor Area and Lot Coverage.
- Home Occupation requirements are listed in Section 3 on pages 3-5, 3-6 and 3-8 (Accessory Uses). See also the “Procedures” page on the website.
- Subdividing a property is a complex issue – talk to the ZEO.
- Plot plans and surveys may be available in records from previous permits, or in Health Department files. Ask P&Z or the Health Dept.
- The “legality” of an apartment is not a simple question – talk to the ZEO.
- Real estate signs are permitted as-of-right, as follows:

Real estate signs may be permitted for advertising the sale or rental of the premises upon which the sign is erected or installed, provided that the total area on any one street frontage of any property does not exceed four (4) square feet per any one side.

Real estate directional signs for open houses may be placed on off-premises private property with the owner’s permission, provided that signs are placed only on Saturdays and Sundays between the hours of 12 p.m. and 4 p.m., and provided that no such sign shall exceed four (4) square feet per any one side.