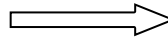


Proposed changes to the grade plane regulations will tentatively be heard by the Planning and Zoning Commission

Greenwich Town Hall Meeting Room on July 18, 2017 and August 1, 2017.

The proposed regulations can be reviewed at



www.greenwichct.org/upload/medialibrary/d64/gradeplanecombined.pdf



All Homeowners, Property Owners, Builders and Remodelers in Greenwich should voice their concerns.

A Licensed Land Use engineer, in comments to the Fairfield County Homebuilders Builders Association, states: "Read the new grade plane regs. carefully as they are absurd and will cost you as a builder even more aggravation. It is terrible for developers and worse for the unsuspecting homeowner who only finds out, or cares, when they go for property improvements. You should email out to anyone and everyone to come out against these changes."

Although these changes do have some positive aspects, the lack of height increase and decrease in the height of the Grade Plane walls will make the newly allowable attic unusable, do to shallow pitched roofs. Clearly there is a conflict with the way the new regulations are written. The Typical Greenwich topography and the current higher ceiling trends in home construction will be difficult to accommodate. Please encourage everyone to come to the meeting(s) and ask for true relief.

Overall the new regulations amount to very little relief and a great deal of cost, complexity and lost property value particularly for sloping lots and smaller properties.

Don't relax on this one, it affects every residential property in Town.

Highlights of the proposed regulation changes:

Re-zoning cannot take place without a Statement of purpose which has not been published with this proposal yet.

- 6-5 45.1 Attic floor area will no longer count unless it exceeds 40% or 50% (depending on the zone) of the floor directly below it. (A very positive development)
- 6-5 (26) Grade Plane width is reduced from 10' wide on all sides of the home to 6' wide (also a positive step although a change in measuring the space between walls make this closer to a 2 1/2' reduction not 4')
- 6-5 (45.2) Story Above Grade will be any story where the distance from the first floor to grade is more than 12' at any point (This was reduced from 14')
- 6-134 (a) Floor area of elevator shafts will only count on one floor (a logical change, although stairs still count on every floor)
- 6-134 (a-1,2) Basement measurements WILL NOT CHANGE. 0-3' from 1st floor to Grade Plane, floor area doesn't count, 3'-5' 50% counts (after exclusions for parking, mechanicals and laundry)
- 6-134 (a-3) If the first floor is more than 5' above grade 100% of basement counts And it **BECOMES A STORY (This forces houses into the ground or you lose the second floor)**
- 6-134 (a-4) This is unclear but seems to imply that if your currently legally nonconforming basement does not meet the standards of 6-134 (a 1,2) it becomes illegal space
- 6-134 (d) Allowable maximum grade plane wall heights in all zones are reduced by 50% in R-6 and R-7, by 40% in R12 and R-20 by 35% in RA-1 and by 20% in RA-2 and RA-4 (This change will lower walls at property lines making it much more difficult to exclude basement areas or build on lots with high water tables. 1-1/2 story Cape Cod style houses will return on sloping lots especially in smaller zones. See Diagrams)
- 6-134 (e) Grade Plane Walls will be measured from the back of each wall to the face of the next. the wall thickness will be added to the separation. What was a 5 foot separation will become 6 feet plus the wall thickness. A typical 18" wide wall will make the separation between walls 7.5'. (This will encourage thinner, un-faced reinforced concrete walls or even metal sheet pilings as retaining walls to save setback width.)

Sloping fill between grade plane walls will be allowed depending on zone but no more than 2% in the actual Grade Plane (6' around the house)

- 6-134 (f) The separation between Grade Plane walls in non-residential zones will now be measured from the back of the lower wall to the face of the next wall increasing the separation from 5' to 5' plus the wall thickness. (Thinner walls un-faced will result see above)