

## Brookhaven Passes Building Permit Reform Legislation

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**Farmingville, NY** - The Brookhaven Town Board has passed legislation to reform the building permit processes in an effort to stop the issuance of "Never Ending Permits." The legislation, sponsored by Council members Jane Bonner and Steve Fiore-Rosenfeld, is designed to provide additional motivation for permit holders to complete their projects in a timely manner for safety and esthetic reasons.

"Unfinished work continues to deteriorate over time, creating an eyesore in the neighborhood," said Councilwoman Bonner. "There have been numerous complaints from residents throughout my district and I've worked with our building department to get many of these property owners to comply with our Town codes. Now, this legislation provides an economic incentive to complete the work on schedule instead of dragging it out for years until it gets to the point where it becomes a quality of life issue for those who live nearby."

Building permits expire after one year. Under the current system an applicant can renew each year and never close out the necessary inspection and paperwork needed for a Certificate of Occupancy. This can happen for a number of reasons, including when a homeowner has fallen on personal or economic tough times, and can't complete the work.

"This code change will make our neighborhoods safer, and help in cleaning up Brookhaven of the many buildings where work has remained only partially completed for extended periods," said Supervisor Ed Romaine. "Sometimes, this happens because residents have fallen on tough times, which is why the first renewal will remain at the same fee. Anything beyond that, however, is a problem for the community that requires action."

Under the new code, the first renewal of a building permit will be the same fee as an initial permit. The second renewal will be twice the fee for a permit, and the third and successive renewals will be charged triple the standard fee, with the chief building inspector having the ability to require an inspection for safety reasons. Permits may be renewed indefinitely for one year periods at the standard fee if the exterior is completed to the satisfaction of the Building Division.

Councilman Steve Fiore-Rosenfeld said, "Over the years my office has received countless complaints regarding blighted houses which are forever under construction due to the Town's permitting process. These houses pose a serious danger to the community as they are usually abandoned, unfinished, and with construction debris strewn about the property. After several years of the continuous permit renewal process the house falls into disrepair with siding unfinished, wood rotting, mismatched roofing and windows. This causes blight in our neighborhoods very similar to a house located on Shelbourne Lane in Stony Brook. I am a proud to have co-sponsored and voted in the affirmative after the public hearing. Our code pertaining to the permitting process has been changed. Under the new process homeowners will be required to complete the exterior work on the home in a timely fashion. Also under the new process if homeowners do not complete the exterior work they will now have to pay an increased fee each time they decide to renew their permits, which will hopefully deter them from putting off completion."

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