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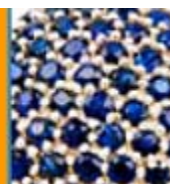
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Tuesday, January 09, 2007

Redvelopment authority director offers details on building code inspections

By Paul Sunyak, Herald-Standard
05/27/2004

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As Fayette County moves closer to implementing the Uniform Construction Code and its attendant inspection requirements, the executive director of the Fayette County Redevelopment Authority cautions against public hysteria without all the facts.

Raymond C. Polaski says that while the new code will require inspections and added costs for a myriad of things that weren't previously covered, it shouldn't be overly burdensome to the do-it-yourselfer.

For example, Polaski says that if you need to replace your existing hot water tank and do so in the same location, using the same type of heating system, you don't need to have the work inspected.

But if you move the tank, even across the room, or if you switch from an electric to a gas tank or vice versa, you'll need to have the work inspected at a proposed cost of \$40, says Polaski.

The same principle applies for replacing an electrical outlet or switch. If you pop out the old one and replace it with a new one, no inspection is required. But if you decide to add an outlet or switch to your home, or to move one to a different location, either of which would require installing and wiring up a new device, Polaski says you'll need to pay a \$60 inspection fee if the county commissioners approve the tentative fee schedule.

According to information distributed by Polaski and prepared

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by the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry, the following types of work are not considered "ordinary" repairs and would require a UCC permit:

- ? Cutting away a wall, partition or portion of a wall.
 - ? Removal or cutting of any structural beam or load-bearing support.
 - ? Removal or change of any required means of egress, or rearrangement of parts of a structure affecting the egress requirements.
 - ? Addition to, alteration of, replacement or relocation of any standpipe, water supply, sewer, drainage, drain leader, gas, soil, waste, vent or similar piping, electric wiring or mechanical device, unless is it listed in the exclusion list.
- That rather extensive list puts forth the types of things that do not require a UCC permit and related inspection. The exclusion list - or things you can do without an inspection - includes:
- ? Fences no more than six feet high.
 - ? Retaining walls not over four feet high, with some further requirements.
 - ? Sidewalks and driveways that are 30 inches or less above adjacent grade, with some further requirements.
 - ? Exterior or interior painting, papering, tiling, carpeting, flooring, cabinets, counter tops and similar finishing work.
 - ? Prefabricated swimming pools that are less than 24 inches deep.
 - ? Window awnings supported by and exterior wall which do not project more than 54 inches from the exterior wall and do not require additional support.
 - ? Replacement glass in any window or door.
 - ? Installation of a replacement window, door, garage door, storm window or storm door in the same opening, if the framing dimensions of the original opening are not altered.
 - ? Replacement of existing roofing material, not to exceed 25 percent of the total roof area, performed within any 12-month period.
 - ? Replacement of existing siding.
 - ? Repair or replacement of any part of a porch or stoop which does not structurally support an overhead roof.
 - ? Installation of additional roll or batt insulation.
 - ? Installation of an uncovered deck where the floor of the deck is no more than 30 inches above grade.
 - ? A host of minor electrical work, including but not limited to: replacement of lamps, replacement of a receptacle, switch or lighting fixture rated at 20 amps or less and operating at less than 150 volts to ground with a like or similar item; replacement of electronically operated items such as doorbells, communications systems and any motor-operated device; replacement of dishwashers or kitchen range hoods; and installation of battery-powered smoke detectors.

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? The following gas work: portable heating, cooking or clothes drying appliances; replacement of a minor part that does not alter approval of equipment or make it unsafe; a portable fuel cell appliance that is not connected to a fixed piping system and is not interconnected to a power grid.

? The following plumbing work: replacement of bib valves, with some qualifications; refinishing of existing fixtures; replacement of ball cocks; repair of leaks; clearance of stoppages. Also exempted are the replacements of faucets and their working parts; valves other than shower or combination shower/bath valves; traps, water closets, lavatories or kitchen sinks; and domestic clothes washers and dishwashers.

? The following heating, ventilation and air conditioning work: replacement of motors, pumps and fans of the same capacity; repair and replacement of heating, supply and return piping and radiation elements which do not require rearrangement of the piping system; repair and replacement of duct work, air conditioning equipment and systems, and of control devices for heating and air conditioning equipment; replacement of kitchen range hoods; replacement of clothes dryers, stoves and ovens, if there is no change in fuel type, location or electrical requirements or characteristics.

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Added: Friday May 28, 2004 at 05:25 PM EST

If the county commissioners approve these communistic regulations. All they have done is put more taxes on us. And the wealthiest commissioner did not pay his fair share of school taxes in the Uniontown district. All three of them should be tarred, feathered and run out of the county.

james clark

Added: Thursday May 27, 2004 at 08:02 AM EST

Welcome to the fascist Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

This code, if anything like the model code put out by the Building and Occupied Structures Code Administrators (B.O.C.A.), that has been adopted by many municipalities in Fayette and other counties, will allow the government bureaucrats to further micro-manage the lives of those that pay their salaries. When I worked as a police officer in Dawson Borough I was instructed to go out and enforce the Dawson Borough Property Maintenance Code, which was actually the BOCA code. In becoming familiar with the BOCA I found that it regulates everything from the size of the address numbers on the outside of houses to dictating that anyone who opens a window in their home must have a screen in place, and if you don't you can be cited because an open window with no screen promotes unsanitary conditions. Among other things, the BOCA also dictates that if you place a can that contained vegetable matter, such as a can of green beans, in your trash, the can must be rinsed free of all vegetable matter as it may

