

## If You Build It, We Will Come...

*Written by Richard Canuel, Asst. Building Inspector*

If you build it, we will come. If someone else builds it, we're there. If it's built somewhere else and delivered, we'll still come. It's true, everyone will want to come and see that beautiful new family-room addition to your home, or the bi-level deck you just constructed, or that newly installed swimming pool. Your friends, family, and neighbors will all want to visit your wondrous home improvement. Oh yes, and so will the Building Inspector. Anything that is built, constructed, assembled, erected or installed that constitutes a structure will prompt a visit from the Building Inspector. This is a commonly known fact nowadays for most property owners in the Town of Londonderry.

All of those home improvement projects so carefully planned in anticipation of the springtime construction season. Well, spring is finally here, or so it says on the calendar anyway. Do you have a project planned? You have dreamed of that special add-on to make your home more enjoyable. You've envisioned and planned the right location, the appropriate size. You have even selected just the right colors. Why you have even consulted with your building department in the process. You have, haven't you?

The building department is usually the farthest from your mind when considering all of the steps necessary to get your project going. Being thought of by many as a regulatory agency, the building department is usually the last step in the process. Most people are aware that a building permit is required prior to starting construction, and usually wait until they are ready to begin their project to visit the building department.

With all the planning completed, builder contract signed, materials purchased, and everything in place to begin, the proud and happy homeowner approaches the building department in anticipation of receiving the go-ahead approval. This is usually when their dreams are dashed on the building department counter, and the momentum of the project comes to a screeching halt.

"Why can't I build it like this?", "What structural plans?", "I didn't realize that the building code required that", "I wasn't aware of those zoning restrictions", "I already have a contractor scheduled to start", are just some of the more common responses from a homeowner who has just learned that his project must be postponed. The building department has just become an adversarial barrier to the fulfillment of his dream.

As a regulatory authority, the Building Inspector is bound by the requirements of the rules and regulations in affect, and must apply each of them when reviewing every construction project. But the role of the Building Inspector is much more than an enforcement authority. The primary responsibility of this position is to provide for the safety of the public. In much the same way as automobile regulations require that certain safety features be built into the vehicles that we drive, building regulations help to protect us in the structures that we occupy. The building department should be thought of as a resource of information that can be used in the planning process of your project.

So, before you begin your next project, the building department should be near the top of your To-Do List in the planning stages of your home improvement dream. Then you can be confident that the safety features are there to make your next deck or pool party a safe one for your family and friends.