

Our Understanding of West Goshen Permitting

We have received questions about West Goshen Township permitting. Complying with West Goshen Township rules is the responsibility of the homeowner and any contractor they employ. We thought it might be helpful if we gave a brief overview of our understanding of the permit system. Please understand this is our current understanding. You need to confirm directly with the Township for any project you undertake.

There are three types of permits that may apply to your situation. They are:

- Zoning Permit
- Building Permit
- Grading, drainage, erosion control permit

Zoning Permit: Verifies that the proposed construction adheres to the Township's zoning ordinance. In practice this means whenever a patio or deck is installed a zoning permit is required. It is not required for landscaping projects such as a mulch bed with shrubs or a tree in your Limited Common Element.

Building Permit: Verifies that the construction plan meets safety standards and building codes. A deck project requires a building permit. Any deck higher than 30" from the ground also requires a structural plan. Structural plans are typically provided by an architect to verify the project will be structurally sound. A railing on a patio may also require a building permit if there is a steep slope off the patio and if failure of the railing could then create a hazard.

Grading, drainage, erosion control permit: These permits are required when there is a potential change to the natural flow of stormwater. Any patio project requires a grading permit. Decks typically do not need a grading permit.

The recent issue that has come up is in regard to retaining and seating walls on a patio.

A patio that does not require a retaining wall can have walls up to the 48" allowed by the HOA with a zoning permit only. No building permit required.

The Township is now not approving any retaining walls without a homeowner going through the variance process. Their concern is stormwater flow. The onus is on the homeowner to show to the Township Zoning Hearing Board that their project will not negatively impact stormwater flow. There is an \$800 fee and a formal meeting as part of the variance process. We are looking into getting Horizon Engineering, who did the development plans for the community, to provide this analysis for homeowners. The chance of getting approval from the Zoning Hearing Board will be greatly enhanced if you have a positive report from Horizon Engineering.

The following link will take you to the West Goshen Township code enforcement page. This page provides access to the various codes, permit forms and fees associated with obtaining a permit from the Township.

[West Goshen Township Code Enforcement](#)