

SWATARA TOWNSHIP

BUILDING AND CODES DEPARTMENT

Approved by the Board of Commissioners on February 10, 2021

PURPOSE OF THE DEPARTMENT

The purpose of the Department is to advance and enhance the health, safety, and welfare of all residents, local businesses, and visitors through municipal code compliance and law enforcement. The Department is also serves as a local municipal planning agency that supports orderly land use planning, guides economic development, and promotes environmental protection.

MISSION STATEMENT

It is the mission of the Swatara Township Building and Codes Department to seek compliance with, and the enforcement of, local codes and ordinances assigned to the Department by the Township Board of Commissioners. Codes Officers work alongside staff of the Police Department and the Fire Department to protect life and enhance public safety. We partner with other local code officials to assure new structures are designed and built to state-wide building codes. We serve and help protect residents, properties, and neighborhoods by seeking compliance with property maintenance and zoning codes. We support state laws dealing with accessibility, environmental protection, and public health. We strive to increase the ability of Swatara Township to be the premier location for people to live and for business to thrive in the Harrisburg region through responsive land use planning. We serve all citizens in a consistent and equitable manner.

VISION

The Vision of the Department includes safe, comfortable housing for all citizens regardless of their social and economic status. There should be no barriers for people with physical disabilities to move around their community. Investors will want to make this municipality their choice to do business and provide jobs. There will be a safe and adequate transportation network for people and freight to travel around and through the township. A network of open spaces and recreation areas will be available for people to enjoy and to protect natural resources.

SPECIFIC ROLES

Building Codes

This unit of the Department works to protect life and enhance public safety by assuring all new structures are built to state-wide building codes. Staff works with a designated certified Building Code Official (BCO) to issue proper building and demolition permits as prescribed by the Pennsylvania Uniform Construction Code and township code Chapter 128. Projects approved for construction will be properly inspected by the BCO, and when properly completed issue Certificates of Occupancy or Certificates of Completion. Staff responds to investigate and secure situations that have resulted in damage to structures.

Property Maintenance

This unit strives to promote quality of life, abate nuisances, maintain property values, and fight blight in neighborhoods by responding to complaints regarding neglected and vacant properties and structures. Code Enforcement Officers work with owners, property managers and occupants to seek compliance with adopted codes so their properties are maintained in clean, safe, and sanitary conditions. When necessary, code officers will enforce the International Property Maintenance Code ordinance and other related township ordinances to protect public health and life safety. At times this means prosecuting offenders at the Magisterial District Courts, Court of Common Pleas, and even the Commonwealth Courts.

Planning and Zoning

This unit of the Department is responsible for the orderly processing of new subdivision and land development applications from initial application to formal project completion. Staff works with an appointed municipal engineer to obtain compliance with Chapter 253 "Subdivision and Land Development". This unit includes a Zoning Officer who reviews plans for compliance with the zoning ordinance, issues zoning permits, and enforces zoning regulations under Chapter 295 "Zoning". The Zoning Officer acts as a liaison to the Township Planning Commission and the Township Zoning Hearing Board (ZHB). The Zoning Officer may also prosecute offenders with the ZHB and Court of Common Pleas.

The Planning Director also assists the governing body with comprehensive land use planning, strategic community planning, and regional transportation planning efforts as authorized by the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code. Staff will also work on revising and updating related municipal ordinances to reflect current conditions and to implement new plans and policies adopted the Commissioners.

Stormwater

Staff helps to prevent pollution and maintain clean water conditions in local streams by issuing stormwater management permits related to new construction as specified by Chapter 247 “Stormwater Management”. Staff also assists in obtaining compliance with the regulations of this ordinance and enforcing its regulations.

Individual On-Lot Sewage Disposal Systems

This unit is assigned to maintain records and implement programs regarding individual on-lot sewage disposal systems (IOLDS). Staff works with an appointed certified Sewage Enforcement Officers to issue permits and enforce the provisions of Chapter 231 “Sewers and Sewage Disposal”, Article IV.

Floodplain Management

A Codes Officer is appointed as Floodplain Administrator and is assigned to maintain records, issue permits, and enforce the provisions of Chapter 156 “Floodplain Management” regarding activities in regulated floodplains.

GENERAL DUTIES

Customer Service

Staff of the department provide customer services to the general public and many other local, state, and federal agencies. These services range from basic information regarding permits and code compliance, to more specific information regarding health and safety, land development projects, and land record information.

General Code Compliance and Enforcement

The Code Officers of the Department responds to specific complaints and provides general code enforcement under the provisions of various township ordinances as determined by the Board of Commissioners. The Code Officers also respond to emergency situations in which structures and properties have been damaged by fire or natural disasters.

Land Records

The Department staff stores, maintains, and updates land records, parcel information and various township maps. Staff is also responsible for assigning street addresses to new structures and properties.

Municipal Solid Waste and Recycling

The Department staff act as a liaison to the contracted solid waste hauler and assist residents in this regard. Staff also act as a liaison to the Dauphin County Recycling and Resource center to obtain information about residential recycling performance.

Township Landfill Facility

Department staff observes flows from the leachate collection system, collects data from the electronic measuring device, arranges for water quality sampling, helps maintain the observation manhole, and acts as the liaison to Capital Region Water on the industrial discharge permit.

Paxtang Borough

Through an inter-municipals services arrangement the Department staff also provide services on as-needed basis for Zoning Officer and zoning ordinance enforcement, Building Code Official, Floodplain Administrator, and other Code Officer duties under the jurisdiction of the ordinances of the Borough of Paxtang.

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