
**VILLAGE OF SUGAR GROVE
BOARD REPORT**

TO: VILLAGE PRESIDENT & BOARD OF TRUSTEES
FROM: WALTER MAGDZIARZ, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR
SUBJECT: DISCUSSION: BUILDING PERMIT APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS—SOIL TESTS
AGENDA: FEBRUARY 4, 2020 VILLAGE BOARD MEETING
DATE: JANUARY 31, 2020

ISSUE

Shall the Village Board discuss the requirement for a soil test with building permit applications for new construction.

DISCUSSION

At the January 7, 2020 meeting of the Village Board, Village staff reported to the Board that it was brought to our attention by one or more homebuilders that the Village's requirements for a building permit for new construction were excessive, particularly with respect to a soil test with each permit.

Since that meeting, a number of Board members have weighed in with their opinions. Village staff also has surveyed the plan review community to determine whether the Village is an outlier in its requirements. Additionally, Village staff and consultants relied on more than 150 years of construction experience.

Why is a soil test required? The soil test identifies the composition of the soil and from that a structural engineer can determine the compression strength of the soil which, in turn, determines how the building footings and foundation and slab are designed. Soil composition is not uniform and can vary greatly within the boundaries of a lot, both horizontally and vertically. The soil you see at the surface often is not what is found at the bottom of an excavation. A competent soil test also will identify subsurface water level which also is important information for construction purposes.

While there are communities that do not require a soil test with every new construction permit, the Village is not an outlier in this respect. The Building Code requires a soil test for foundations. But it also allows the chief building official to waive the requirement if the official is qualified to do so. Our chief building official is not a licensed soil scientist or soil classifier.

Village staff and consultants do not recommend changing the current requirement.

COSTS

There is no cost to discuss this item.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Village Board provide direction to Village staff on how to proceed.