

National Building Safety Month Recognized in May

Town of Amherst Supervisor Brian Kulpa's May Message

Every May, we recognize National Building Safety Month. If you think about it, that is actually quite a broad recognition as a large number of industries, job titles and professionals can be celebrated during National Building Safety Month for their role in ensuring safe structures throughout our community. Recently I had the honor of serving as a panelist at the Construction Exchange of Buffalo & WNY's annual Membership Luncheon to discuss opportunity in our region. The advocacy and work of these associations is critical to the advancement of local businesses, and ensuring safe, quality construction and development.

The Town always strives to be a strong partner and any new build, renovation, addition or residential work in Town starts here in town hall. Our Building Department is extremely professional and efficient under the guidance of our commissioner. It is a very busy department, with thousands of permits issued annually, from small to very large projects.

Before you start construction, consult with a town code official to answer any questions and ensure required permits have been obtained. In recent years, we have improved the permit process, drastically cutting the "wait" time to effectively review and issue permits and allow projects to start quicker. The Town has built a staff of professionals who are ready and willing to meet with you about your project to determine what permits are necessary. Do not avoid obtaining a permit, for whatever reason. It is an extremely important component of your project (where permits are required). In the end, the permit process is designed to look out for the safety of you and your family. We want your project to be a success, and within a successful project is a safe project. By pulling permits, a contractor's work is checked by inspection, and residents can know it was done correctly. Permitted work is safer work. It can also save you from unnecessary costs and time by avoiding problems from the beginning.

The Building Department also has a team of code enforcement officers who are committed to investigating reported violations and ensuring that everyone, residents and businesses, are being good neighbors. With a Town the size of Amherst, that is a huge task and we thank them for their hard work. To file an online property maintenance complaint, please use the online form found here: [Online Property Maintenance Complaint Form](#). If you have a property maintenance complaint that is not related to grass or sidewalks, please call the Amherst Building Department at (716) 631-7002.

The duties of our Town's Building Department are quite extensive. It includes a Fire Safety Division that operates an inspection program, handles complaints, assists fire chiefs with origin/cause of fires, reviews site plans and more. This is a critical division in keeping us all safe. They also maintain the Rental Unit Registration, which creates a point of contact for rental properties, creating a transparent relationship between the property owner and the Building Department ensuring that rental units are safe and that the surrounding neighborhood is minimally impacted by transient living and absentee owners.

The Town's Building Department is located on the bottom floor of Town Hall, 5583 Main Street, Williamsville. For information, visit www.amherst.ny.us and search keyword "Building." If you are ever unsure about the permit process or have a property maintenance question, don't hesitate to reach out.