

Homeowner Project Guidelines – Laurel Park

Approval Process: This is a guide to the general information needed and the required steps involved in obtaining approval for Home Repairs / Renovation / Construction Projects in Laurel Park (see grid below). Not all steps are required for every project. Some repairs and projects, such as those that do not require a building permit and do not involve common land outside a home's footprint, may not require approval from the Property Committee or the Executive Committee at all (see information on interior projects, etc., below). Questions or requests for information about required approval may be obtained from the Property Officer / Committee, and can be addressed to the propertycommitteelp@gmail.com email.

Homeowner / Unit Number / Phone / Email:	
Project Description / Drawing / Construction Application:	
Task:	Date or N/A:
Estimated Date to Begin Work	
Estimated Date to Complete Work	
Plans Reviewed / Approved by the Property Committee	
Copy of Building Permit	
Copy of Contractor Liability Insurance Binder / Certificate	
Property Committee Approval for Dumpster / Placement	
Neighbors Informed About Project Plans	
Executive Committee Review / Final Approval of Project	
Property Committee Follow-Up / Inspection (as needed)	
Completed within 6 months of EC Approval	

- 1. First - Determine if Your Work Project Requires a Building Permit:** Review the Building Permit Guidelines below, contact the Northampton Building Inspector, or contact the Property Committee for guidance or consultation at propertycommitteelp@gmail.com .

According to Massachusetts Building Regulations: “A permit is required to construct, reconstruct, alter, repair, remove or demolish a building or structure; or to change the use or occupancy of a building or structure, or to install or alter any equipment which is regulated by 780 CMR, *Massachusetts State Building Code* (780 CMR 105.1). The permit must be granted by the building official (City Northampton) prior to performing any work. Where replacement and repairs must be performed in an emergency situation, the permit application must be submitted within the next business day to the building official (780 CMR 105.2.1)

Some examples of Homeowner Projects that might require a Building Permit include the Installation, removal, or reconfiguration of a wall, partition, door, or window; Installation, removal, or modification of any structural column, beam, or other load-bearing supports; Replacing a roof, or major roof repairs; Rearrangement or change in occupancy that affects egress, mechanical systems, or other requirements affecting public health; etc.

Note that significant work on, or changes in electrical, plumbing, fire, or other systems may require additional permits in accordance with State Fire Code, State Plumbing Code, and State Electrical Code.

2. Interior Projects in Laurel Park Exempt from a Building Permit: These Projects typically do not require a Building Permit, or specific permission from the Executive Committee, unless a Dumpster is required (which must be approved by the Property Officer). All projects are subject to Laurel Park By-Laws regarding limits on noise and use of power tools, etc. (See *Courtesy Rules*)

- **Interior Finish Work:** “Painting, Wall Papering, Tiling, Carpeting, Cabinets, Countertops and similar Finish Work.” (780 CMR)
- **Interior Repairs:** As defined by 780 CMR such repairs may include “the reconstruction or renewal of any part of an existing building for the purpose of its maintenance or to correct damage. Ordinary repairs do not affect the structure, egress, fire protection systems, fire rating, energy conservation, plumbing, sanitary, gas, electrical or other utilities.”
- **Fire Systems:** Replacement or repair of any component or components of an existing fire protection system, where such does not affect system performance and compatibility.

3. Rules for When a Building Permit is Required in Laurel Park:

- No construction work may be done that changes the footprint of your Unit. Unit Footprints can be found on the HALP Website.
- Fences are not permitted in Laurel Park per the By-Laws.
- Prior to beginning a project that requires a building permit, you must inform the Property Officer / Committee about the nature and scope of the Project, and you may need to submit a written proposal and/or diagram and/or attend the Property Committee Meeting, and/or fill out a ***Construction Application Form***.
- Use of and Placement of a *Dumpster* or any other *Large Construction Equipment* requires review and approval by the Property Officer / Committee.
- You must provide a copy of the *Building Permit* to the Property Officer / Committee.

- If you are using a Contractor, you must provide a copy of your *Contractor's Liability Insurance Certificate / Binder* to the Property Officer / Committee.
- The Property Committee is responsible for reviewing the project and giving conditional approval.
- All relevant documents / plans will be reviewed at an Executive Committee meeting, which the Homeowner is invited to attend, and a formal decision to approve the Project must be made by the Executive Committee prior to any work being done.
- Homeowners must notify neighbors about any significant construction work or use of a dumpster, large equipment, or large vehicles, and follow all the *Park Courtesy Rules*.
- The Property Officer / Committee may review or inspect the project periodically, or upon completion, to ensure that all construction is in compliance with HALP By-Laws.
- The Project must be completed within 6 months of approval by the Executive Committee, or the Homeowner may need to attend the Executive Committee again to extend the project approval.

4. Temporary Storage Structures:

- All storage structures which are external to a Unit (outside the Footprint of the Unit) must be Temporary (they cannot be permanently attached to the building).
- Temporary Storage Structure Projects do not require a Building Permit, but do require review by the Property Committee and the formal permission of the Executive Committee, prior to the start of the project.
- Temporary Storage Structures are *limited to a maximum of 16 square feet in footprint per Unit, and may not infringe on the space of any adjoining unit*.
- Requests for Storage Structures may require a diagram / description of the structure; diagram of the location relative to the unit footprint; structural dimensions; and must be submitted for review and approval from the Property Officer / Committee.
- Temporary Storage Structures must meet the ***Temporary Storage Structure Guidelines*** for Laurel Park (see document on HALP Website). Such storage structures may be purchased and assembled (e.g. a Rubbermaid storage cabinet) or built in such a way that they can be easily taken apart and removed within 2 hours.

5. Patios, Decks, Walkways and Driveways:

- "Walkways and driveways not more than 30 inches above adjacent grade and not over any basement or story below and are not part of an accessible route" (780 CMR) may be completed without a building permit.
- These Projects require review by the Property Committee and the formal permission of the Executive Committee (the Homeowner will be invited to attend the EC meeting to discuss the project), and notice will be given to Neighbors, prior to the start of the project.
- Patios, Walkways and Driveways must be constructed of temporary and removable materials such as gravel, stones, etc., in such a way that they can be removed within two hours, and constructed without the use of cement or other permanent fixtures.
- *Permanent Decks are Prohibited in Laurel Park* – and construction for any kind of temporary removable Deck must be reviewed by the Property Committee and receive the formal permission of the Executive Committee.

6. Roof Work / Solar Panels: See the HALP Website for the Guide on *Roof-Working the Laurel Park Way* for information on roof repair and replacement.

- **Minor Roof Repairs or Replacement:** Homeowners may make repairs or minor replacement to their roof as needed, without informing the Executive Committee or obtaining a Building Permit. *This minor work is defined as limited to an area no larger than a 5-foot x 5-foot section of Roof.* In this case unit owners should abide by the courtesy rules governing noise and informing immediate neighbors.
- **Significant Roof Repair or Replacement or Addition of Solar Panels:**
 - You must inform the Property Officer / Committee about the nature and scope of the Roofing Project and/or request for Solar Panels.
 - Use of a *Dumpster* or other *Large Construction Equipment* will require review and approval by the Property Officer / Committee.
 - You must provide a copy of the *Building Permit* to the Property Officer / Committee.
 - If you are using a Contractor you must provide a copy of your *Contractor's Liability Insurance Certificate / Binder* to the Property Officer / Committee.
 - All relevant documents / plans will be reviewed at an Executive Committee meeting, which the Homeowner is invited to attend, and a formal decision to approve the Project must be made prior to any work being done.
 - Homeowners must notify neighbors about any significant construction work or use of a dumpster, large equipment, or large vehicles.

7. Septic System Work:

- **Septic Maintenance:** Unit Owners can and should conduct Normal Maintenance and Cleaning activities for their existing septic system.
- **Septic System Addition, Construction or Repair:**
 - Any significant construction to an existing septic system, or the addition of a new septic system, requires approval from the Property Officer / Committee, and the formal permission of the Executive Committee.
 - Unit owners should review the *Laurel Park Rules – Septic System Guidelines* document on the HALP website or contact the Property Officer / Committee for consultation and assistance. This document spells out in detail the specific steps involved in Septic System Work Within Laurel Park.

8. Tree Work:

- *"In general, the cutting or planting of trees in Laurel Park, are prohibited, except with the written permission of the Executive Committee" (see By-Laws and Laurel Park Tree Policy).*
- Unit Owners may independently trim trees away from their Units (up to three feet) and trim or remove tree saplings where the thickest trunk diameter is no more than 1 inch.
- Unit owners may petition the Executive Committee for professional assessment, trimming, or removal of trees, by filling out a **Tree Request Form** (available from the HALP Website) and submitting it to the Property Committee for Review.
- All other decisions regarding tree work require the review and formal permission of the Property Committee and Executive Committee.