

My past two articles have focused on the duties of the Swanton Planning Commission and village ordinances in relationship to the construction of accessory buildings. This week I am speaking on the subject of fences.

The old adage that good fences make good neighbors may be true. However, bad fences not only are undesirable, but can be dangerous, unsightly, and detrimental to property values. The Village has a comprehensive fence ordinance that states guidelines, instructions, and regulations for the installation of a safe, attractive, and compliant fence. Below are some highlights for residential fences. It is recommended that the property owner read the ordinance to obtain a full understanding of the code before proceeding with installation. The full Codified Ordinances are available for download on the Village website, www.villageofswantonohio.us.

Property owners should have a document or drawing that locates the lot lines of their property. This should be with your deed, but may be obtained from the Lucas or Fulton County Auditor's office. You should locate the fence on a copy of these documents and bring it to the Village office for review and permit.

1. Fences are to be located on or near the rear and/or side property lines.
2. Maximum height is 6'.
3. For corner lots, fences must be set back such that they do not infringe on the street right of way. The code outlines other setback requirements.
4. Ornamental fences are defined in the code, are the only fences allowed in the front yard, and must comply with defined set back requirements.
5. Property owners are advised to review their deed and property survey documents for the presence of any easements. Owners may place fences within easements at their own risk.
6. Fences must be structurally sound, properly maintained, and attractively finished. Supporting structures of the fences are to be located to face the owners property, with the finished side facing out.
7. Fence types are defined in the code and do include those consisting of shrubs or bushes. Barbed wire and electric fences are not permitted. An open discussion with the Village Administrator will help in determining the acceptability of materials differing from those mentioned in the code.
8. **Installation permits are required and must be obtained before work starts.** Fees vary. See the Code and/or the Village Administrator for further details.

The Planning Commission will continue to review current codes and work to recommend future codes to the Village Council. Recently Council approved, upon three readings, passage of a code requiring address numerals on all residential and commercial properties. These numerals must be placed in an easily viewed location from the street and be a minimum of 4" in height. Numbers written out in words are not acceptable. Property owners have 60 days from notification from the village to become compliant.

Also, all collection bins within the village have been banned. Over the last year, Swanton has become inundated with these receptacles. They very quickly became dumping grounds for junk, and created a terribly unsightly presence throughout the town. There are other suitable solutions for donating used clothing and property. Two such sights in the area are The Open Door in Delta and Goodwill on Reynolds Road. Also, the village offers two weekends per year for junk drop off at the Public Works Dept. Council is considering adding another weekend event.

I hope you enjoy receiving this information, and I am open to your suggestions for future topics. Please share this information with friends and neighbors who may not read it here. You may contact me at 419.826.0335.