

CITY OF HOMEWOOD



BEZ Bulletin

Building, Engineering & Zoning Department

THIRD QUARTER 2026

For property owners, contractors, design professionals & community stakeholders

A quarterly update from Building Official Wyatt Pugh on permitting, code, and zoning matters affecting projects in Homewood.

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Director's Note

The past three months have been a good reminder of how broad the work of the Building, Engineering, and Zoning Department really is. On any given day, our staff may be reviewing plans for a new home or commercial project, inspecting active construction, responding to a drainage concern, investigating work in the public right-of-way, or helping an applicant understand what is needed to move a project forward.

We have also spent considerable time addressing unsafe and neglected properties. Several residential cases are moving through the City's formal abatement process, along with a much larger review involving the Park at Buckingham apartment complex. These cases require careful inspections, notice to property owners, coordination with the Fire Department and City Attorney, and a complete public record before any action is taken. The process can be lengthy, but it protects both public safety and the due-process rights of the people involved.

At the same time, construction activity throughout Homewood remains steady. Our staff continues to work through new homes, additions, major renovations, commercial tenant improvements, and site-development projects. Many of the questions we receive are not about whether a project can be built, but about what must be shown, verified, and inspected before it can move to the next stage.

We have continued refining our electronic permitting and plan-review processes as well. The goal is straightforward: give applicants clearer information, improve consistency between reviewers, and identify problems early enough that they can be corrected on paper rather than in the field.

"This edition addresses several issues that have recently generated questions: The new \$20 fee for new-home permits, the returning HVAC GFCI requirement, foundation surveys for monolithic slabs, right-of-way work, and accessible parking for small lots."

Each item has a practical effect on planning and construction. I hope these explanations help contractors, property owners, and design professionals avoid surprises and keep their projects moving. As always, if there is a permitting, inspection, zoning, engineering, stormwater, or code topic you would like us to address in a future edition, please let us know.

Wyatt Pugh

Building Official & Director of Building, Engineering & Zoning



New-home building permits: \$20 fee coming

Council has passed Ordinance 2976 establishing a \$20 fee on qualifying building permits for new detached single-family homes. The fee supports the **Alabama Construction Trade Academy**.

Alabama Act 2025-398, created a local funding mechanism to strengthen construction-trade education and help address the continuing shortage of skilled workers in the building industry. Homewood Ordinance 2976 implements that authority locally, directing the new permit fee to the Alabama Construction Trade Academy Fund to support training programs, tools, supplies, mobile facilities, and other workforce-development needs.

The fee applies to the building permit only. It does not apply to separate trade permits such as electrical, plumbing, mechanical, and other trade permits. They will not receive this additional charge.

BEZ will begin collection once the academy provides the necessary paperwork. The ordinance has already passed, and the fee will be added to qualifying permits when collection begins; a collection date has not yet been announced.



HVAC GFCI requirement returned September 1

Homewood has resumed enforcement of the outdoor-outlet GFCI requirement following the September 1, 2026 expiration specified in NFPA TIA (Temporary Interim Amendment) 20-19.

Under 2020 NEC Section 210.8(F), outdoor outlets at dwellings supplied by single-phase branch circuits rated 150 volts or less to ground and 50 amperes or less **require GFCI protection**. This includes many outdoor A/C condensers and heat pumps.

The temporary HVAC exception was issued to address equipment compatibility and **nuisance-tripping** concerns raised by the industry. Contractors who have a specific installation concern related to the use of GFCI protection may submit an alternative proposal for review under NEC Section 90.4, which allows written special-permission consent from the authority having jurisdiction.

Please note, an alternative proposal requires technical support, not simply a request for exemption or a claim of nuisance-tripping. Provide manufacturer information, listing or certification data, test data, or engineering analysis. The Building Official considers requests case by case. Do obtain **written** approval before installation.

REFERENCES: 2020 NEC §§210.8(F), 90.4 & Article 100; NFPA TIA 20-19



Monolithic slabs: understand the foundation survey risk

The zoning ordinance requires a boundary survey before approval of permits for new construction, additions, and other listed site changes; BEZ also requires a foundation survey for new construction and additions as part of its review process.

Under departmental practice, contractors using a monolithic slab with embedded plumbing may pour before obtaining the foundation survey at their own risk. Required permits and pre-pour inspections still apply.

Pouring first does not establish zoning compliance or eliminate the foundation survey. If the survey reveals a setback or other compliance problem, the contractor and owner remain responsible for resolving it, which can mean costly changes to completed work. Acceptance or a variance is not guaranteed.

REFERENCES: Zoning Ordinance, Art. III §D(2)(e); Art. IV §A(3)(e), NPD



Before you build near the street: Public right-of-way use

The area between a property and the street may look like part of the yard, but some or all of it may be public right-of-way. Homeowners do not have an automatic right to build, excavate, or install improvements there.

Longstanding Homewood regulations require written approval from the Engineering Department, and possibly City Council approval, before anything is planted or erected in the right-of-way. This may include retaining walls, steps, walkways, fences, irrigation, drainage improvements, landscaping, and portions of a driveway.

Property owners have a right to reasonable access to the street, but the City may regulate the location, width, slope, drainage, and construction of that access. Even if a deed extends into the right-of-way, the public's rights and the City's authority remain. Confirm the right-of-way boundary and contact BEZ before starting work near the street; unauthorized improvements may have to be changed or removed at the owner's expense.

REFERENCES: Homewood Subdivision Regulations, §§138(d) & 139



Accessible parking: small lots count, too

In the International Building Code Section 1106.2 and Table 1106.2, a parking facility with 1–25 spaces requires one accessible space, and that space must be van accessible. The 2010 ADA Standards Sections 208.2, 208.2.4, and Table 208.2 echo the same parking count and van-space requirements.

Sites with four or fewer spaces have an exception for identification **signage only**, not for providing the accessible space itself. Larger parking facilities and certain occupancies have additional requirements.



Questions about a specific project? Contact BEZ before proceeding so we can help clarify the applicable requirements.

REFERENCES: 2021 IBC §§1106.2, 1106.6–1106.7, 1112.1; 2010 ADA Standards §§208.2, 208.2.4, 208.3, 216.5 & 502

Staff News

Celebrating the people behind the permits

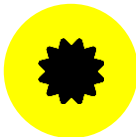


RETIREMENT

Bobby Bulloch Retiring

Building Inspector Bobby Bulloch will retire from the City of Homewood in October, with his final day in the field expected around the middle of the month. Bobby has served Homewood for 10 years following an earlier career with Jefferson County.

His experience, practical knowledge, and steady presence have made him a valuable part of our inspection team. We appreciate his service to the City and wish him the very best in retirement!



CERTIFICATION

Congratulations, Candace Cheek

Congratulations to Candace Cheek for passing the International Code Council examination and earning her Permit Technician certification! This reflects her knowledge of permit administration, code terminology, plan and document processing, and the role permit staff play in supporting applicants and inspectors.

Staff certifications like this also contribute to Homewood's rating under ISO's Building Code Effectiveness Grading Schedule (BCEGS), which evaluates staff qualifications, training, plan review, and inspection resources.

HAVE A TOPIC FOR A FUTURE EDITION?

Send permitting, zoning, stormwater, or code topics for a future edition to Wyatt Pugh.

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