



Historic Preservation Committee of Mountain Lakes

May 25, 2017

Contributing Dwelling Owners
Mountain Lakes, New Jersey

Re: Mountain Lakes Historic Preservation Incentives Ordinance

This letter is being sent to owners of over 500 Mountain Lakes homes that are living links to the early years of our town's history. We want to inform you of recent changes to the local ordinance providing valuable special benefits to these historic homes.

Updates to Ordinance

In 2012, the Mountain Lakes Borough Council approved an ordinance (the "HP Incentives Ordinance") designed to encourage preservation, and discourage demolition, of Mountain Lakes' original historic homes. Unlike traditional historic preservation ordinances in New Jersey, which grant broad powers to a commission to regulate alterations and demolitions of structures within a historic district, the HP Incentives Ordinance operates purely on an incentive basis by allowing owners of historic homes to make their homes significantly larger than permitted under the Borough's existing zoning ordinance without the need for a zoning variance.

The HP Incentives Ordinance is unique in offering broad zoning incentives to owners of historic homes who preserve their homes. While there are certain limitations on the types of alterations that can be made to a historic home and still retain eligibility for the zoning incentives, the limitations are intended to be the minimum necessary to maintain the historic "streetscape" of the community, and are primarily left to the property owner's architect to evaluate and confirm. Even if you do not intend to expand your home, you can benefit from the increased market value your home may have to future prospective buyers if you maintain the home's eligibility for the benefits of the ordinance.

On March 27, 2017, the Borough Council adopted changes to the HP Incentives Ordinance to make it even more attractive for owners of historic homes to preserve and invest in maintaining their homes. Among the principal changes, the modified ordinance:

- Ensures the enhanced zoning regulations (referred to as "bulk incentives") are available for any proposed improvement to the property for which standard zoning regulations would otherwise apply, including changes unrelated to the main dwelling.

- Limits the restrictions on changes that can be made to street-facing facades (without losing eligibility for the incentives) to a single “primary” street-facing facade only, in cases where the home has two or more street-facing facades.
- Eliminates height restrictions on expansions that are at least one story lower than the adjoining portion of the pre-existing structure.
- Extends the benefits of the HP Incentives Ordinance to additional historic homes within the Mountain Lakes Historic District.
- In cases where the homeowner decides to demolish a historic home, requires payment of an additional, nonrefundable \$500 fee prior to giving the 90-day notice of intent to demolish a historic home to cover documentation costs.

Historic Preservation Incentives Website

The Mountain Lakes Historic Preservation Committee (“HPC”) maintains a website to provide information about the HP Incentives Ordinance at <http://mtnlakes.org/hpc-incentives/>, which can also be reached by a link from the HPC website (found under “Committees” on the Borough home page). It includes: an overview of the HP Incentives Ordinance; detailed information on the 2017 changes; Frequently Asked Questions; a list of the historic homes that are presumptively eligible for the incentives under the ordinance (referred to as “Contributing Dwellings”); photos of each of the Contributing Dwellings taken by HPC members after the ordinance was adopted (with links to historic photos of these homes, where available); the language of the ordinance as adopted by the Borough Council; sections from the 2005 Historic District Application for the Mountain Lakes Historic District containing descriptions of buildings within the Historic District; documents and forms; and other information.

Information Forum on June 8

The HPC will hold an Information Forum on the HP Incentives Ordinance at the Mountain Lakes Public Library Meeting Room on Thursday, June 8, 2017, at 7:30 p.m. Owners of historic homes and other interested members of the public are encouraged to attend to learn more about the ordinance. Please see the flier included with this mailing for more information.

Making Changes to Your Historic Home

Owners of historic homes, and their architects, are encouraged to consult with the HPC on proposed alternations, additions or other improvements to ensure they will be consistent with the requirements of the HP Incentives Ordinance, and for assistance in working through the Borough’s approval and permitting processes. We are eager to help ensure the maximum benefits of the ordinance are available to owners who are willing to invest in their homes and preserve Mountain Lakes’ unique historic streetscape.

Historic Photographs

As a fundraiser, the HPC offers 8 x 10 sepia prints of historic photographs for \$29 per picture. If you are interested in purchasing prints of any of the historic photos you see on the website, please contact Rob Infante at robinfante@gmail.com. If you have historic photos of your home that are not included on the website, the HPC would be very pleased to obtain copies so we can supplement the historical photographic record. Please contact Rob Infante if you would like to provide copies of additional historic photos.

House Plaques

Special commemorative house plaques are available from the HPC for historic Hapgood and Belhall homes. The HPC is eager to see these plaques on all historic Hapgood and Belhall homes in Mountain Lakes, signifying the owners' pride for their homes and the special significance they have for the community. If you are interested in ordering a plaque, please contact Margaret Dewitt at msdewitt@alexcommgrp.com or tel. (973) 794-3630.

Architectural Salvage

The HPC runs an architectural salvage program, storing and making available to owners of historic houses in Mountain Lakes many irreplaceable details of Hapgood or Belhall homes that are removed from homes that are to be demolished or undergoing renovation. These pieces may include: doors and windows; door and window hardware and trim; chestnut moulding (including box beams, paneling, and base moulding); flooring (parquet and strip); and stair risers, treads and handrails. Individual homeowners who are renovating their home and find an extra door or two can call to have the HPC pick up the items and bring them to the Preservation Shed that is located on Tower Hill Road. Access to the Preservation Shed, either to donate or pick up material, needs to be arranged through Alex Gotthelf at (973) 794-6677.

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If you have any questions about the HP Incentives Ordinance or any of these matters, please feel free to email or call either of the undersigned.

Very truly yours,

Lesley Karczewski
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Vice Chair
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Historic Preservation Committee of Mountain Lakes

Information Forum on Mountain Lakes Historic Preservation Incentives Ordinance

Where: Mountain Lakes Public Library Meeting Room

When: Thursday, June 8, 2017, 7:30 p.m.

Who should attend?

Owners of historic homes in Mountain Lakes
Other interested members of the public
Architects
Builders
Realtors

Program: The HPC will provide an overview of how the ordinance works and answer questions about the ordinance, including:

What benefits are available under the ordinance?
What homes are eligible for the incentives and how can I find out if my home is included?
What do I need to do to ensure my home remains eligible for the incentives?
What are the requirements if I want to demolish my historic home?
How was the ordinance changed in 2017?

For information, contact:
Lesley Karczewski at
hpc@mtnlakes.org

(Seating may be limited.)

