

TOWN OF GRISWOLD

BLIGHT ORDINANCE

Section 1.1 **Purpose.** The purpose of this ordinance, adopted pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes § 7-148(c)(7)(H)(xv), is to define, prohibit and provide for the abatement of blight on certain properties and to preserve and protect property values in the Town of Griswold.

Section 1.2 **Scope.** This ordinance applies to all parcels of land upon which a residence exists or that are located in a residential district, with the exception of: (i) agricultural lands as defined in Connecticut General Statutes § 22-3(b), as amended; (ii) land dedicated as public or semipublic open space or preserved in its natural state through conservation easements; or (iii) areas designated as inland wetlands and watercourses.

Section 1.3 **Definitions.** The following definitions apply in the interpretation and enforcement of this ordinance:

- A. **BLIGHT or BLIGHTED.** Includes any of the following:
- i. A structure that is dilapidated or decayed or that is unable to provide shelter or serve the purpose for which it was constructed due to dilapidation or decay;
 - ii. Premises with any combination of three or more pieces of nonoperational mechanical equipment in public view;
 - iii. Premises containing accumulated debris; or
 - iv. Premises containing landscaping (including but not limited to trees, shrubs, hedges, grass and plants) that physically hinders, blocks or interferes with the use of any public sidewalk, road or right-of-way, or that interferes with the sight line of any road, right-of-way or road sign.
- B. **DEBRIS.** Anything that for a period of 15 days or longer remains in public view on premises and that is incapable of immediately performing the function for which it was designed. Debris includes, but is not limited to: (i) abandoned, discarded, or unused objects; (ii) furniture, equipment or appliances that are missing parts, not complete in appearance, and in an obvious state of disrepair; and (iii) cans, boxes, scrap metal, tires, batteries, containers, garbage, parts of furniture or equipment, and similar objects.
- C. **DECAY or DECAYED.** A wasting or wearing away; a gradual decline in strength, soundness or quality; decomposed or rotten, except as to a contained compost pile.

- D. DILAPIDATED. Decayed beyond reasonable repair.
- E. MECHANICAL EQUIPMENT. Any apparatus other than motor vehicles, including but not limited to electric and pneumatic equipment, that is designed to be operated by an engine or to be towed by any apparatus propelled by an engine.
- F. OWNER. Any natural or legal person having an ownership interest in premises or structures that are subject to this ordinance. "Owner" includes a "registrant" as defined in Connecticut General Statutes § 7-148hh(1).
- G. PREMISES. Any parcel of land upon which a residence exists or that is located in a residential district.
- H. PUBLIC VIEW. Visible at ground level from any public right-of-way or adjacent premises.
- I. STRUCTURE. Any building, dwelling, shed or similar structure that is enclosed in whole or in part.

Section 1.4 Prohibition against Creation or Maintenance of Blight. Each owner of premises or structures subject to this ordinance shall comply with its provisions and shall not cause or allow such premises or structures to become blighted or to remain in a blighted condition. These obligations exist jointly and severally on affected owners.

Section 1.5 Minimum Standards.

- A. This ordinance shall not be construed to prevent the enforcement of other statutes, codes, ordinances or regulations that prescribe standards other than are provided herein.
- B. In any case where a provision of this ordinance is found to be in conflict with a provision of any zoning, building, fire, safety or health ordinance, regulation or other code of the Town or the State, the provision that establishes the higher standard for the protection, preservation and promotion of public health, safety and welfare and the preservation and protection of property values shall prevail.

Section 1.6 Designation and Authority of Blight Enforcement Officer. The Town's Zoning Enforcement Officer shall be the Blight Enforcement Officer, responsible for interpreting and enforcing this ordinance. The Blight Enforcement Officer is granted the authority necessary to enforce the provisions of this ordinance.

Section 1.7 Complaints. Notice of Violation(s).

- A. Signed, written complaints on forms provided by the Town may be submitted to the Blight Enforcement Officer. The Blight Enforcement Officer may enforce the provisions of this ordinance without having received a signed, written complaint.

- B. If the Blight Enforcement Officer determines that there has been a violation of this ordinance, the officer shall cause notice of the violation to be given to the owner or owners of the premises upon which the violation exists, as provided below. Such notice shall be sent to the owner's last known address as listed in the Tax Collector's office or, as applicable, to the registration address provided under Conn. Gen. Stat. § 7-148ii. Such notice shall:
 - i. Be in writing;
 - ii. Set forth the provision(s) of this ordinance that have been violated and the facts establishing such violation(s);
 - iii. Specify a final date for the correction of any violation;
 - iv. Be served upon the owner by both regular first class mail and certified mail, return receipt requested; and
 - v. State that the fines and enforcement provisions of this ordinance will become effective on the final date for correction of any violation, including any extension(s) thereof.

- C. The Blight Enforcement Officer is required to issue only one notice of violation, even though there are multiple violations and even though the same violation may exist for multiple days.

Section 1.8 Extension(s) of Correction Period. Prior to the expiration of the correction period specified in the notice of violation, the owner of the premises receiving a notice may apply in writing to the Blight Enforcement Officer for an extension of the correction period. The Blight Enforcement Officer may in writing grant one extension of the correction period of no more than 15 days if the officer determines that the owner is diligently working to remedy the blighted condition and that under the facts and circumstances an extension is reasonable. The Blight Enforcement Officer may provide one or more subsequent extensions only upon the approval of the First Selectman.

Section 1.9 Citation. Fines. Hearing.

- A. If the blight condition is not corrected to the Blight Enforcement Officer's satisfaction by the conclusion of the final correction date, including any extension(s) thereof, the Blight Enforcement Officer shall issue a citation, which shall include the fines set forth in this ordinance. The Blight

Enforcement Officer is required to issue only one citation, even though there may be multiple violations that exist for multiple days.

- B. Each violation of this ordinance shall be considered a separate municipal offense, and each separate offense shall be subject to a fine of \$50 per day, payable to the Town of Griswold.
- C. The Town hereby adopts the hearing procedures set forth in Connecticut General Statutes § 7-152c, as amended, as its hearing procedure for citations issued under this ordinance.

Section 1.10 Appointment of Citation Hearing Officer. The First Selectman of the Town shall appoint one or more citation hearing officers to conduct the hearing provided by Section 1.9.C. of this ordinance. Neither the Blight Enforcement Officer nor any Town employee shall be appointed as a citation hearing officer under this ordinance.

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