

Property Line FAQ

1. WILL THE TOWN LOCATE MY PROPERTY LINES?

The Town of Suffield does not locate private property lines. However if a resident is proposing work in an area that abuts Town property then upon request to the Planning & Zoning Department will stake the Town property line in order to prevent improvements from being constructed on Town property.

2. HOW CAN I DETERMINE THE LOCATION OF MY PROPERTY LINES?

Only a licensed land surveyor can legally determine the location of a property boundary. It is possible that as part of the original subdivision process a surveyor set iron pins (typically rebar) at all of the parcel corners, especially in more recent subdivisions within the past 30 years. These pins would have been set slightly below the ground surface to limit the chance of them being disturbed, therefore a metal detector is needed to locate the pins. If found, the location of the pins would need to be corroborated with other records maps from Town Hall to verify that the pins are representative of the property corners. If you are planning to install a new fence, or have a concern about a tree, or see that a neighbor is making improvements on what seems to be your property, hiring a land surveyor is the only solution. They can make a legal determination of the boundary and mark it on the ground for future reference.

3. HOW DOES A SURVEYOR DETERMINE WHERE A PROPERTY BOUNDARY IS?

A surveyor will research the Town Land records to locate all relevant maps and deeds of record for the subject property as well as the abutting properties. The geometric information for these properties is then input into a CAD program to accurately reflect the relative locations of the various property boundaries per these records. Field recovery work is then performed to identify property boundary evidence such as buried iron pins and monuments that would have been installed as part of the original subdivision survey or as part of subsequent property surveys in the vicinity. All boundary evidence including iron pins, monuments, stone walls, fence lines, etc. are then located using high-accuracy survey-grade measuring equipment and the actual location of these features is then compared with the geometric information from the maps and deeds. The surveyor reviews all of this information and then can make a judgement about the location of the boundary of the subject parcel and will set new iron pins or install wooden stakes at the relevant property corners per the owner's request.

4. WHAT MAPS ARE AVAILABLE THAT WOULD SHOW MY PROPERTY LINES?

GIS: The Town GIS (<http://suffield.mapxpress.net/>) system displays approximate property lines for use in general town-wide planning and assessment of property values. This information does not represent a field survey and is not intended as a boundary determination. The actual location of a property boundary can vary significantly from how this boundary is depicted in the GIS and therefore this information should not be used for the purpose of new construction, most building permits, or any other purpose where the actual location of the property line is important.

As-Built Plot Plan (Building Department): As part of the building permit process for new construction each building in town has the foundation located by a licensed land surveyor to verify that the foundation was set on the property within the setbacks required by zoning. This plan is referred to as a "Zoning Location Survey" or "As-Built Survey" by licensed land surveyors and will include

dimensions from the foundation to the property lines in each direction. This plan is generally available from the Town Building Department depending on the era in which the construction took place. While this map will give you dimensions to a point on your property line it won't allow you to completely establish your property line on the ground.

Subdivision Plan (Land Records -Town Clerk's Office): The approved subdivision plans show the dimensions of each lot with bearing and distances of each lot line depicted. This map does not show the relationship of these lines to any existing features, and therefore will be of limited use to a resident. This map, along with record maps and deeds of this property and abutting properties, would be used by a surveyor to reestablish the property lines on the ground.

5. HOW CAN I DETERMINE IF A TREE IS LOCATED ON TOWN-OWNED PROPERTY?

You can use the Town's GIS to help determine if a tree is located on Town-owned property. Please note, however, the Town GIS displays approximate property lines but does NOT represent a field survey and is not intended for use in making an official boundary determination. If you are looking to confirm tree ownership before taking any action to remove/prune a tree, the services of a land surveyor may be required.