



Township of Belleville  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Virtual Home Inspections Allow Home Sales to Safely Continue in Belleville**

*Mayor Michael Melham Pleased the Township is Not Jeopardizing Employee Safety*

**BELLEVILLE, NJ – April 3, 2020** – Construction officials are employing video conferencing technology to safely conduct virtual home inspections in yet another example of the Township's ongoing effort to offer essential services to residents during this health crisis.

Township Construction Official Frank DeLorenzo said members of his department have been using Zoom – a free, popular program typically used to remotely hold group meetings – to view the insides and outsides of homes.

The technology is important because it has allowed for the sales of homes in the Township to proceed during the pandemic in which stringent social distancing measures have been enacted by state officials.

To date, township officials have conducted 12 home inspections using the remote technology.

At a typical home inspection, the inspection official would have to walk through the inside and outside of the home. He or she could expect to be joined by the sellers, the sellers' real estate agent and the buyers' real estate agent.

With the new process, a real estate agent launches Zoom on his or her phone and begins to transmit video back to the construction offices. From the safety of their desktop computers, officials can see the home as the real estate agent walks along the inside and outside of the home. From the gutters to the basement, they get a bird's-eye view.

"We found that it really works well because not only can we see the home clearly," DeLorenzo said, "but we can communicate with the agent. We can tell him or her to move in a certain direction or to zoom in closer if there's something that requires a closer look."

“We’ll have the agent get close to the boiler so we can inspect that, for example,” he added. “We’ll have the agent test the smoke detectors. We will walk the agent through every step of the inspection process.”

DeLorenzo said the Township began receiving calls from real estate agents soon after the social distancing measures were enacted. They understood the need to adhere to mandates, but needed a way to continue to serve those looking to buy and sell real estate in Belleville.

“We’re pleased with the success of these virtual inspections,” Mayor Michael Melham said. “Home sales can continue in Belleville and we don’t have to sacrifice safety – either by possibly exposing Township workers to COVID-19 or by conducting substandard inspections. We are intent on doing whatever we can under the circumstances to continue to provide essential services to our residents.”

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