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Dave Windsor's 'Alaska Real Estate'

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Home Inspection On Vacant Lot ?

RE/MAX Dynamic Properties * 907-727-3300 * windsor@alaska.net * www.davewindsor.com

Dear Dave: Whenever we purchased a new home we always had a home inspection. We are now looking at a vacant lot in East Anchorage that we may build on, and wondering what inspections we need for that. What is your advice?

Answer: Good question. There are several things to look at here.

1) Check the zoning for your potential building plans. It will need to be an 'R' something for a single family home. Keep in mind you can build a single family home on a lot zoned for duplex or higher - but not the other way round. Zoning limits the uses of land and may include or exclude what you want to build.

2) Check the CCR's for the subdivision. The Covenants may restrict or control your building plans.

3) Soils testing may be

appropriate unless you are very sure about the underlying material upon which you plan to build. If there is any appearance of previous 'fill' on the lot you can be very shocked later, when excavating for a foundation, what may have been buried in the past. Even buried branches or tree limbs are problematic, but old drums, appliances or motor vehicles are a serious issue.

4) In East Anchorage many of the homes may pre-date installation of utilities so, if existing homes in the neighborhood are 1960's or earlier, you may need to verify there are no underground fuel storage tanks from a previous resident, or even an old crib sewer.

5) Speaking of utilities be sure to check that water and sewer, electric and gas are immediately adjacent in the street for hookup.

6) Check the plat and any surveys you can obtain to

verify utility easements across the property upon which you cannot build and also have the corners of the lot and property lines accurately identified. Do not depend on neighboring fences.

Dave

Windsor

