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## Local

Montgomery Co. investigating projects by unlicensed engineer

Dena Levitz, The Examiner

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Current rank: *Not ranked*

### Montgomery County -

Montgomery County's Department of Permitting Services is re-evaluating every project involving a man who has claimed involvement in a host of regional developments yet is unlicensed as a professional engineer. Some county residents, though, are still blaming the department for its role in allowing Lee Sutherland's work to go forward.

Permitting Services Director Carla Joyner said her department is pulling all plans in which Sutherland might have been the expert in charge as well as doing an assessment of "every single process and function."

"So far we haven't found anything that is alarming. But we have many, many archives to go through," she told The Examiner, adding that she's still carrying on normal permitting functions in the meantime. "We have much more pressing issues to stop every single normal business practice just to do this."

The Examiner reported last month that Sutherland has been portraying himself as an engineer on jobs such as the Silver Spring residential community of Leisure World despite the fact that he holds no professional credentials in Maryland. So far, the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, which has a hand in development applications, has admitted that he should not be signing off on projects and pledged not to allow him to do so in the future. The county's inspector general and the state's attorney general also have stated that they're investigating the agency. But Steve Kanstoroom, who has battled with the commission over the Sutherland issue as well as allegations that his property was illegally cleared, said others outside Park and Planning are also to blame. The permits had to pass through Permitting Services.

Kanstoroom said he wants to know how that department let Sutherland's work through unchallenged. So far, though, he has been rebuffed at every turn, he told The Examiner. Edward Lattner of the county's attorney's office has referred Kanstoroom to the county's Ethics Commission, saying that if he wishes to pose questions, "[his committee] may do so following certain procedures."

Calls to Lattner last week were unreturned. The question of whether an application has been improperly produced is not as simple as Kanstoroom and others suggest, Joyner, the permitting services director, said.

"You can't go on an assumption that because someone brings in a different piece of information the original plan was wrong," she said. "We take steps to check."

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*Examiner*