

Home Elevation Grant Deadline Sept. 15

VILLAS- Lower Township hosted an informational meeting Sept. 9 presented by the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Department of Community Affairs on the topic of raising the height of homes in flood zones throughout the county.

The standing-room-only crowd had many questions about the Hazard Mitigation Grant program which can reimburse homeowners up to \$30,000 to raise the height of their homes.

Athena Sarafides, of the DEP Sustainability Team, made clear the grants were only for primary, single-family homes and not secondary vacation homes. She urged anyone who believes they may wish to undertake raising the height of their primary home to apply before a Sept. 15 deadline.

“You can always say no later,” said Sarafides.

DEP and FEMA staffers assisted homeowners to find the base flood elevation of their home on a series of maps and also online. Sarafides said there were no income restrictions to obtain the grant. There is no requirement that home must have sustained damage from Hurricane Sandy, she said.

To eligible for the grant, homes must be structurally sound. She said the homeowner selects the contractor to raise the level of the house.

“You must demonstrate a need to elevate,” said Sarafides.

If your home is deemed eligible for the program, flood insurance must be purchased, maintained and noted on the property’s deed for the lifetime of the structure, she said.

Homes with a risk of future storm damage have a greater chance of the receiving the grant. The grant covers engineering services including design, elevating the house and attaching the structure to a new foundation. The grant also covers documented living expenses.

“Obviously you can’t be in the house when it’s being elevated,” said Sarafides.

The program is available only for those living in an “A” or “V” flood zone.

Applications are available by phone: 1-855-726-3946, and in person at 3860 Bayshore Road, Suite 5, North Cape May, Monday-Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The office will close Fri. Sept. 13.

Applicants may also register online at www.renewjerseystronger.org/hmgrp