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Wednesday, May 26, 2010 12:00 AM - Last Updated Thursday, May 30, 2013 11:36 AM

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Installing pipes at any project without a license is about to cost a whole lot more.

Cracking down on unlicensed plumbers and fire prevention workers, the City Council unanimously approved legislation on Tuesday to more than double fines for contractors working on projects without a license.

Plumbing Fines

The bill (Intro 68) would increase the fine for the first violation from $1,000 to $2,500 and a second violation from $2,500 to $5,000.

When asked how often plumbing or fire suppression work is installed at a project by an unlicensed contractor, Council Speaker Christine Quinn said she did not have statistics. She said the council often has heard anecdotal complaints.

"This is too much of an important issue not to leave to experts," said Quinn.

City officials said increasing fines for unlicensed plumbing and fire preventions work would deter shoddy construction in new and renovated buildings.

The law, which the administration testified in support of in April, will go into effect 90 days after it is signed. The Mechanical Contractors Association of New York and the New York Fire Sprinklers Contractors Association also support the bill.

Astoria Rezoning

The neighborhood best known for spanakopita and airy, European-esque cafes received what some residents called a lifeline from the council yesterday in the form of a rezoning.

The rezoning , one of more than 100 approved during the Bloomberg administration, would preserve the character of the neighborhood and prevent out-of-scale luxury development prevalent during the building boom, said city officials.

"I've lived in Astoria my whole life," said Councilmember Peter Vallone Jr., who represents the area. "Today is a great day for Astoria."

According to Vallone, the neighborhood has not been rezoned since 1961.

The rezoning will allow for larger buildings along the neighborhood's major thoroughfares, like Steinway Street, and require smaller buildings along its residential side streets.

Both the Queens borough president and the local community board supported the rezoning.

Child Care Reporting

The council approved legislation (Intro 226) requiring the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to report to the council quarterly on its child care programs. Similar legislation was approved by the council in 2005, but expired in 2008.

The new bill will require the department report on the number of child care programs, their inspections, complaints of programs operating without a license and programs that have lost licenses.

Health Permits

The council also unanimously approved legislation (Intro 206) that rescinds a requirement for medical record storage facilities to receive permits from the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. It also revises the information needed to obtain a permit to transport milk or milk products.