

STATE OF GEORGIA  
COUNTY OF FULTON

Ordinance No. 16-11-289

**AN ORDINANCE TO CREATE RETAINING WALL STANDARDS IN CHAPTER 64, ARTICLE XVII,  
DIVISION 3, SITE IMPROVEMENT STANDARDS.**

**BE IT ORDAINED** by the City Council of the City of Milton, GA while in a regularly called council meeting on November 21, 2016 6:00 p.m. as follows:

**SECTION 1.** That the amendment of the Site Improvement Standards, Article XVII, Division 3 of the City of Milton Zoning Ordinance is hereby adopted and approved; and is attached hereto as if fully set forth herein, and;

**SECTION 2.** All ordinances, parts of ordinances, or regulations in conflict herewith are repealed.

**SECTION 3.** That this Ordinance shall become effective upon its adoption.

**ORDAINED** this the 21<sup>st</sup> day of November, 2016.

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Joe Lockwood, Mayor

Attest:

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Sudie AM Gordon, City Clerk

Chapter 64, Article XVII, Division 3. Site Improvement Standards

Sec. 64-2403 - RETAINING WALLS

Definitions:

*Retaining wall* means a wall or terraced combination of walls used at a grade change to hold soil and other earth material at a higher position. Retaining walls may be attached to or independent from other structures. The exposed side of a retaining wall shall be known as a "face". The area between a lower wall and a successive higher wall shall be known as a "terrace."

a. Retaining Walls

1. Purpose and Intent

The City of Milton adopts this section to accomplish and ensure the following:

- i. To allow for the review of retaining walls of a size that may impact surrounding buildings, land and uses;
- ii. To require the construction of retaining walls in a manner consistent with engineering and construction best practices; and
- iii. To lessen the impact of large retaining walls on abutting properties and the public by encouraging the use of landscaping and aesthetically pleasing design elements.

b. Applicability and Exemptions

The regulations and requirement contained herein shall apply to all retaining walls erected in the City of Milton, except the following:

- i. Retaining walls measuring a height of less than four feet, which shall be exempt from requiring a permit.
- ii. A terraced combination of walls, in which each separate wall retains less than four feet of unbalanced fill and in which each successive wall is separated by a distance of at least one times (1x) the height of the highest wall.

c. General Provisions

1. Determining retaining wall height—The height of a retaining wall shall be the distance from the grade at the base of the face of the wall to the top of the finished wall. Terraced walls shall be measured in the same manner

2. Walls within yard setbacks—A retaining wall is allowed up to the property line in side and rear yards. Retaining walls four feet or greater shall not be located within ten feet of the front yard property line, with the exception that portions of

such walls which measure less than four feet in height shall not be subject to this requirement. On lots subject to the rural viewshed, retaining walls are prohibited within 60 feet of the right of way.

3. Foundations - No part of the retaining wall foundation shall extend beyond the property line or into the rural viewshed.

4. Fall protection—All retaining walls four feet or greater in height shall be required to provide fall protection. Fall protection systems may include, but shall not be limited to, permanent landscaping or fencing.

5. Terracing— There shall be a maximum of two walls, regardless of height for purposes of terracing.

6. Height limitation—No single retaining wall shall exceed six feet in height at any point.

This is addressed in Sec. 64-74(4).

Commented [RM1]:

7. Design review--All retaining walls requiring a permit shall be reviewed and approved by the City of Milton Design Review Board, prior to the issuance of the building permit.

8. Permitting—A permit shall be required for all retaining walls that retain four or more feet of unbalanced fill. Any retaining wall greater than six feet tall allowed by variance shall require engineered drawings:

- i. Walls above six feet in height shall require engineered drawings;
- ii. Walls four to six feet in height shall require engineered drawings or meet city standards.

#### d. Design Guidelines

1. Timber retaining walls over four feet are prohibited.

2. Poured concrete walls and block walls must be clad in brick or natural stone. Facing of such walls shall be approved by the City Architect.

3. Modular block walls shall be constructed of a beveled face, three piece system similar to the Anchor™ Diamond Pro™ Stone Cut™ system.

4. Retaining walls shall be landscaped to mitigate any adverse visual impacts. Plant species shall be selected to preserve the structural integrity of the wall. A planting plan shall be submitted to and approved by the City Arborist.

#### e. Appeals

Notwithstanding, anything in the zoning ordinance to the contrary, no primary variance maybe granted except for:

- i. Retaining walls not meeting the setback requirements indicated in Section Sec.64-2403(c)(2); and
- ii. Retaining walls greater than six feet in height at any point, or a tiered system of more than two walls provided that engineered drawings are submitted with the variance application