Steps in a Good Survey

Description

The Land Survey is usually represented at the settlement table in the form of a Map or Plat. The plat is the final work product of the Land Surveyor and many do not know of the process and effort required. The purpose of the article is to provide some basic, minimum information about what we in our office call the four phases of map making. They are Research, field work/data collection, computations/decision making and finally producing a Map or Plat. Virginia regulates House Location Surveys on parcels of 2 acres or less in 18VAC 10-20-380 et seq.

All good projects start with a strong foundation. Research about a property is fundamental to every other phase of the process. House Location requests come to us over the internet, by fax, phone and walk ins. We always pull the most recent tax map and real estate assessment for our property and all adjoiners. We then obtain the current description of record for the same. Typically, properties are described in deeds as a lot, or parts of lots, in a subdivision or they can also be described by metes and bounds or a combination. We are all familiar with the description that starts â??Beginning at an Oak treeâ?• or how about â??Beginning at the stump where we all met yesterdayâ?•! It is the Land Surveyors responsibility to obtain descriptions of record for the subject property and all adjoiners. Discrepancies in the recorded information should be noted on the final work product. A good Land Surveyor will seek any information to assist with the survey including but certainly not limited to, VDOT plans, research at municipal offices and their own companies and even other land surveyors if warranted.

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Once research is completed the project is ready for the field. 18VAC 10-20-380 contains the law for minimum field and office procedure. Field surveyors identify monumentation in the field such as iron pipe, stones, chisel marks, nails, trees, water bodies or even buildings that are called for in the descriptions of record. Proper collection and description of this evidence is critical. All evidence is collected electronically and documented. All visible manmade physical improvements are measured, identified and field located. Field crews are responsible to leave the property in the same manner found.

The third phase of the process is computations and decision making. Evidence located in the field is compared to the descriptions of record that have been plotted and mapped. The surveyor must evaluate the evidence found relative to the descriptions of record. There is an order of importance in the evidence evaluated. Natural monuments are superior to artificial monuments which are superior to calls for adjoiners or bearings and distances and finally land area. Always the manifest intent of the deed governs. Discrepancies in the evidence found in the field should also be noted on the plat. When in the opinion of the surveyor discrepancies of such a magnitude exist that a land boundary survey is warranted, the surveyor is required to notify the client.

The map or plat representing the surveyors work and opinion is the final phase of the process. 18VAC 10-20-380(c) identifies the minimum information that must be shown on the House Location Survey. The surveyors certification sets forth the standards used in the, provides the basis for the professionals opinion and limits the liability of the surveyor. The surveyors seal and signature indicate the work

product was done under the direct supervision and control of a Licensed Virginia Land Surveyor.

George Oâ??Quinn



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Dominion Surveyors, Inc. (DSI) was established in the summer of 2002, by George M. Oâ??Quinn, a Licensed Land Surveyor with 24 years experience in the profession and Michael A. Clarke who has worked in the surveying field for 30 years. The principals, along with a talented group of field and office professionals form a team that is ready to assist you in your local land surveying and civil engineering needs. The firmâ??s focus is on House Location Surveys, Boundaries, Lot stakeouts, ALTA/ACSM surveys, topographic surveys and small infill development plans.

Mr. Oâ??Quinnâ??s local experience serving as President of the Mount Vernon Chapter of the Virginia Association of Land Surveyors, teaching land surveying through the Fairfax County Adult Education Program and Virginia Department of Labor, and his vast experience surveying thousands of properties throughout Northern Virginia, affords this company a high standard of professional service, allowing our clients to profit.

Category

1. Underwriting

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