

1612 W. 25th Street
Lawrence, KS 66046
May 31, 2004

Mr. and Mrs. Paul Graves
132 Sharon Drive
Lawrence, KS 66049

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Graves:

I was quite happy to see the article in Sunday's paper about your lobbying efforts for basements or safe rooms. I heartily agree with you. Since I do not care to attend city meetings, please feel free to present this letter to the City Commission in support of your efforts, if you so desire.

I have lived in Lawrence for many years and now at 68 years of age I have been looking either for a lot or a house already built that has the qualifications that I require, i.e. a fireplace (a backup in case the heat goes off, which it has done), and a basement (because one is a little safer on lower ground.) I had really thought that every house in Kansas had a basement or some sort of storm shelter, living as we do in "tornado alley", but I have found that this is not so. In fact, when I mention one, realtors look at me as if I'm asking for something very odd.

If the situation warrants having to make rules for people to use plain, common sense, then I definitely feel that there should be a rule requiring builders to build in either a partial basement or a safe room. In fact, there are other options besides a full basement. I looked at a newly built house in Baldwin recently, which was built with a crawl space. You open a door in the garage, go down about four steps to get to the crawl space, and there is ample room in that little area for storage or to wait out a storm. That surely would not raise the cost of a house up very much.

Although it is very seldom that tornados touch down here, they have and they probably will again. We are not immune. One reason for the oversight of basements, I believe, is money. Builders are putting up houses as fast as they can and as close together as they can, without any thought for safety, in order to make as much money as they can.

Sadly, though, I feel it may be too late to implement the new law as there are very few lots left. I am having trouble finding one for myself. I doubt if there will be much more building in Lawrence unless the city incorporates more land somewhere. The City Commission would be the authority on that subject.

You are to be commended for your efforts, and I am happy that the City is listening.

Very truly yours,



(Ms.) Pat Maas