

realtyreport®

Compliments of Donna Reilly

Weichert, Realtors



DONNA REILLY
Sales Representative

Weichert, Realtors

350 Nassau Street
Princeton, NJ 08540

Office: 609-921-1900
Cell: 609-462-3737
DonnaReilly@weichert.com
www.West-Windsor-Homes-NJ.com

Greetings! You're receiving this newsletter with hopes that you find it informative and entertaining.

If you're thinking of making a move, or are just curious as to real estate trends in your area, please feel free to call me at any time on my cell at 609-462-3737. And remember, up to the minute West Windsor real estate information is always available at West-Windsor-Homes-NJ.com or [Facebook.com/West.Windsor.Homes.NJ](https://www.facebook.com/West.Windsor.Homes.NJ).

All the best,

Donna Reilly



Cell: (609) 462.3737 • Home: (609) 860.8498
DonnaReilly@weichert.com • www.DonnaReilly.com

HO, HO, HOLD THE DECORATIONS!

If you've just moved to a new suburban community or planned unit development, you may now be a member of a homeowner's association, or HOA. Since HOAs create and enforce the community rules and regulations, you'll want to find out if they have any restrictions surrounding the display of holiday decorations before going to the effort of putting them up.

Check your HOA's covenants, conditions and restrictions (CC&Rs) to see if they spell out what is acceptable when it comes to seasonal decorations. You may want to confirm if you can hang holiday lights, for example, and if there are any rules about the type or amount of lighting allowed, where the lights can be displayed and for how long they may be displayed. For example, the documents may specify that you are allowed to hang up to 100 feet of lighting in an acceptable display area, for example along the roof line

and on one tree in the front yard, and that decorations must go up no earlier than two weeks before the holiday and be removed no later than 30 days after.

Enjoy the spirit of the holiday season, and remember that if you have any plans on celebrating next year's holidays in a different house, please call today so we can start the buying and selling process first thing in the new year.

Best wishes to you and yours for a happy and safe holiday season!



PAINT & PAPER PREP

You've finally found the perfect print or paint color and are itching to give that room a facelift! Not so fast, though – surface preparation is key to being happy with your results; as such, problems like the following need to be addressed before you go applying that wallpaper or fresh coat of paint.

- **Popped nails, holes, and cracks.** Wallpaper might disguise these problems, but painting over them can actually make them more noticeable. Small imperfections like popped nails can be hard to see, though; to make them more apparent, hold a bright light up to your walls and mark them with painter's tape or pencil so you can find and fix them later. How you make the repairs will depend on the size and nature of the hole or crack, as well as on the material the wall is made from.

- **Textured walls.** A technique often used to hide imperfections like those mentioned above, texturing is achieved by manipulating joint compound with patterning tools like sponges or brushes, or by applying textured paint (like that used for popcorn ceilings). Smoothing textured walls is a laborious process, but it can be done. Either you remove the texturing by softening and loosening it with water then scraping or sanding it off, or you fill in the surface by applying thin layers of joint compound in a process known as skim coating.

- **Stuck-on wallpaper.** Today's wallpapers are much easier to remove, but if you're up against the old stuff, you have messy work ahead. What can't be scraped off may need to be steamed off or chemically removed. You'll want to score the problem paper so the steam or chemical remover can better penetrate the paper and break down its adhesive. You can use a utility knife, but there is also a tool made just for this purpose, called a wallpaper perforator, that can help move the job along.

- **Boldly colored walls.** Bright or dark colors can show through lighter paint layers and even some wallpapers. The good news is you won't need to limit your choices to what will effectively mask what's underneath or apply multiple coats of new paint – if you apply primer first. A coat of

high-hiding primer goes a long way towards achieving results that are more true to color with fewer coats. You can even have your primer tinted to match your new color, making it even easier to cover up the old color.

- **Dirt.** Even if they aren't newly covered in drywall dust as a result of your hole-repairing or texture-removing, your walls still hold dirt from everyday wear-and-tear – grease, cigarette smoke, pet dander, and particulate are some examples. If you skip cleaning, you'll seal the dirt in, making for walls that aren't as smooth and that have a harder time holding onto paint or wallpaper. Available at your local home improvement store, trisodium phosphate (TSP) is a powerful cleaner that also etches your walls so your paint or wallpaper will better adhere to them. Just mix with water, scrub onto walls, and rinse.



IF I'D ONLY KNOWN...

Buying a home can seem a complex and often confusing business. These are four aspects of the process buyers wish they had better understood before they purchased their homes.

- **Home-financing options.** Unfortunately for many buyers, it's not until after they've purchased that they realize how little they knew about financing; from conventional fixed- and adjustable-rate mortgages, to government programs, to alternatives like seller financing, there are more options than you might think. Before you commit to anything, work with your mortgage representative to discuss the options that fit best with your financial situation and long-term plans.
- **Applying for a mortgage loan.** A lack of knowledge about the difference between pre-approval and pre-qualification, what information and documentation they needed to provide for their lender, what conditions they needed to satisfy, and what they shouldn't have done when applying for a loan (e.g., change jobs) has unnecessarily slowed down the home-buying process for many an inadequately informed buyer.
- **Closing costs.** There's a lot to pay for in addition to a property's purchase price, including legal fees, inspection fees, appraisal fees, survey fees, property taxes, title insurance and homeowner's insurance. Buyers often find themselves caught by surprise at the last minute, scrambling to come up with the required funds or even unable to complete the transaction.
- **How long it can take.** A lot of buyers believed it would take them less time to navigate their way through the home-buying process than it actually did. Finding just the right home takes time; once the hunt is over, buyers still need to be patient as they go from having their offer accepted to sealing the deal by signing those closing documents.



STAGING SERVICES

If you're a seller who's written off the idea of hiring a professional home stager due to price, think twice! Stagers offer a variety of services, so you can spend as much or as little as you like.

Will your home be vacant before you list? If so, consider full staging to help overcome the challenges of selling an empty home: the stager can bring in and set up furniture and accessories that effectively showcase your property, then remove everything once your home sells. As full staging often involves renting furniture, it's usually the most costly option. To save money staging a vacant home, opt for partial staging, in which only key rooms (e.g., kitchen, family room, master bedroom) are staged.

Staging an occupied property is typically less expensive than staging a vacant one, as the stager works with what you've got, moving (and often removing) furniture and accessories, providing a few props (like area rugs), and clearing out the clutter so your home shows at its best. Occupied properties can be partially staged, too – reduce your costs by staging only those rooms that need the most help or that are most crucial to buyers.

If you have a tighter budget, consider a simple staging consultation. Either the stager can tour your home then provide you with a written staging plan based on their observations, or, for less money still, opt for a 'walk and talk', wherein you and your stager do a room-by-room walkthrough while you take notes of their recommendations. Either way, you'll be the one doing all the work in implementing their advice, which makes consultations the most economical option.

SURVEY SAYS...

Property surveys aren't just for when disputes between neighbors arise. Below are a few other occasions when having a survey performed is well worth the (modest) expense.

- **You're seriously considering buying that house.** How big is the lot? Where does it begin and end? Are there any registered easements on the property? Or any encroachments? All these questions are crucial for buyers, and the answers are provided in a property survey. Surveys lend buyers peace of mind by illustrating exactly what buyers would – and wouldn't – be getting for their money.
- **You've decided to sell your house.** By getting a property survey done before going on market, you and your representative will know exactly what you are – and aren't – selling, and be able to address any issues raised prior to listing. That means a smoother, shorter path to closing (especially for a buyer whose offer is contingent on a survey), making property surveys a helpful marketing tool.
- **You're thinking of making improvements to your property.** In addition to boundary lines, property surveys show the location of utility equipment like power cables and gas pipes. Knowing where these things are before you begin a project can save you a lot of heartache and expense; you don't want to put up that fence or shed only to find out that it's actually on your neighbor's property.



Terminology Tip

EXPIRED LISTING — All listings are contracts and have a start date and end date. If the listing does not sell within that period, and not extended, then it is an expired listing. Once a listing expires, the seller has the option of re-listing with the same or a different brokerage. Note that price or terms may be changed anytime with an amendment and not only on renewal.

The information and opinions contained in this newsletter are obtained from sources believed to be reliable, but their accuracy cannot be guaranteed. The publishers assume no responsibility for errors and omissions or for any damages resulting from the use of the published information. This newsletter is provided with the understanding that it does not render legal, accounting, or other professional advice. Not intended to solicit properties or businesses listed for sale and agency agreements in place with other real estate brokers. Whole or partial reproduction of this newsletter is forbidden without the written permission of the publisher. © Market Connections Inc.® 2014, Phone: (800) 387-6058.

Compliments of Donna Reilly

Weichert, Realtors



DONNA REILLY
Sales Representative

Please don't forget to visit West-Windsor-Homes-NJ.com or Facebook.com/West.Windsor.Homes.NJ where you will find valuable and timely real estate information, including up-to-the minute West Windsor closed sales. I hope you find these sites helpful, and would welcome any suggestions or comments you may have. Please feel free to call me any time at 609-462-3737, or send me an email at DonnaReilly@weichert.com. It will be my pleasure to be of service to you.

Office:
609-921-1900

Cell:
609-462-3737

West-Windsor-Homes-NJ.com
Facebook.com/West.Windsor.Homes.NJ