



WILDWOOD

September 20, 2022

MEMORANDUM

To: Planning and Parks Committee Members

From: Department of Planning and Parks

Re: **Review of Building and Similarly-Related Codes that are Applied within the City (Wards – All)**

Cc: The Honorable James R. Bowlin, Mayor
Steve Cross, City Administrator
John A. Young, City Attorney
Rick Brown, P.E. and P.T.O.E., Director of Public Works
Melanie Rippetoe, Assistant Director of Planning and Parks
Travis Newberry, Senior Planner

BACKGROUND >>> In May 2022, this Committee provided a detailed update to the City Council on this matter. As part of this update, the Committee noted that its members had directed the Department of Planning to have conversations with different code officials on their opinions in this regard, principally the three (3) fire marshals of the three (3) fire districts that serve the City and a representatives of the St. Louis County Department of Public Works (in this case, the Assistant Division Manager of Code Enforcement with the St. Louis County Department of Public Works - Bill Walterscheid). The intent of these conversations was to determine the process the fire districts and St. Louis County utilizes when updating codes or making interpretations of the codes, along with any considerations and items they believe could be improved and changed.

The Department's conversations were held with two (2) of the fire marshals and the representative from St. Louis County. The fire marshals generally referenced the fire code, while also noting a level of deference to St. Louis County relative to codes and their applications. The conversations revealed an adoption process for codes and their interpretation that is time consuming, thorough, and focused of public safety by all of these parties. It was emphasized by St. Louis County that decisions that are made regarding code adoptions and interpretations are not made without a great deal of forethought and input from experts across the United States, including the code authors themselves. This process was described as follows:

1. The participation of the St. Louis County Building Commission/Board of Appeals occurs with all code adoptions and interpretations, along with hearing requests for modifications to established standards.
2. The adoption of the new codes for buildings and all trades is a lengthy process and includes the International Code Council's (ICC) participation as well.
3. The implementation of interpretations to the national codes to local needs includes seeking input from the International Code Council (ICC) itself, the actual authors of the code language that is contained in the regulations, and meetings with the representatives of the trades impacted by such.
4. The enactment of new codes, such as from the 2009 version to the 2015 version, is a significant undertaking and does take a number of years to complete, given all the participating parties and sheer number of code items that are discussed and acted upon.
5. The application of the new codes does allow for a grace period for builders and others that have Mastered Plans on file with St. Louis County to accommodate the change. In the case of the 2015 code adoptions (the latest), which occurred in April 2020, with the implementation date on July 1, 2020.
6. The intent of all of these adoptions, interpretations, appeals, and other steps is to ensure the adopted codes address life/safety considerations first and reflect new trends, better materials and practices, and accommodate different approaches to building techniques, particularly relative to Green Construction Code, Electrical Vehicle Charging Code, and International Energy Conservation Code.
7. The submittal of alternatives in terms of construction techniques/practices and substitutions of materials is accepted, but does require additional scrutiny to ensure they are comparable/compatible to adopted code standards and will not be a detriment to the public's health, safety, and welfare.

The Department would also emphasize this careful approach is in place to protect all residents of St. Louis County from shoddy construction and ensure the codes do address needs that arise as time and circumstances dictate for a changing society in terms of expectations regarding accessibility, energy conservation, material substitutions, and cost considerations.

NEXT STEPS >>> The Department would summarize that, to date, after contacts to these other providers, none of them have identified a particular code situation or concern at this time. With such, the Department of Planning has considered common concerns it receives or suggestions it receives from residents and other the contracting communities relative to the residential codes and others and offer the following considerations/inclusions for the Committee's discussion:

1. The application of drywall to all interior wall areas of an attached garage, with insulation (new dwellings or complete reconstructions).
2. The use of fire-rated drywall on all subfloor areas located within the dwellings' basements, at a specification greater than required by current code (to be determined).
3. The painting or the placement of siding on all exposed, exterior foundation walls to match or complement the selected color of the dwelling.

4. The discharge of sump pump waters to a piping system to be discharged no closer than ten (10) feet from any property line.
5. The requirement that stacks, vents, and penetrations be painted/coated to match the shingle color.
6. The consideration of increasing the residential water line diameters inside any dwelling.
7. The inclusion of green building materials, methods, and alternative energy sources, as part of code considerations and applications.

The Department offers these items as discussion points and, if agreeable to the Committee, would forward to City Council for endorsement, then institute the needed process with the applicable agencies to thoroughly review and consider them for implementation. City Council would ultimately identify those items that are most appropriate, necessary, and/or defensible in terms of the public's health, safety, and general welfare for inclusion.

CONTACT INFORMATION >>> If any of the Committee Members have questions or comments regarding this process before tonight's meeting, please feel free to contact the Department of Planning at (636) 458-0440. A presentation is planned at tonight's meeting in this regard. Thank you for your consideration of this information.