



MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 5, 2019 PC Agenda Item **4.A**

TO: Planning Commission Chair and Commissioners

FROM: Mike Mrosla, Community Development Manager/City Planner

SUBJECT: Planning Case #19-006 – Public Hearing Required
Applicant: City of Arden Hills
Request: City Code Amendment – Chapter 13 – Zoning Ordinance Definitions

Requested Action

Consider approval of Planning Case 19-006 for proposed amendments to Chapter 13 – Zoning Code floor area definition of the City Code, as presented in the June 5, 2019 Report to the Planning Commission.

Background

The City has initiated proposed amendments to Chapter 13 – Zoning Code to revise the existing “Floor Area” definition of the City Code. The amendment would address the following:

1. The existing language below is not consistent with Minnesota State Building Code requirements.

Floor area. The sum of the gross horizontal area of all floors of a building as measured in square feet from the exterior sides of the exterior walls, or from the centerline of party walls separating attached buildings, but not including covered porches that meet the requirements in Section 1325.03 Subd 2.D; decks; any space where the average floor-to-ceiling height is less than six feet; attached or detached garages; and other detached accessory structures.

The definition for Floor Area was amended in 2007 to include an average height limit of less than six feet. The intent of adding a height limit was to clarify what is a non-habitable basement. However, in 2015 the Minnesota Building Code updated the section of the code regarding ceiling heights and habitable space. The updated code states various ceiling height requirements depending on what is constructed in the basement. For example, the minimum height for finished

ceilings in basements of new buildings containing laundry rooms, bathrooms, hallways shall be seven (7) feet and basements in existing buildings have a minimum finished ceiling height of six (6) feet four (4) inches. However, new building basements not containing any habitable spaces as identified above shall have a minimum finished ceiling height of six (6) feet (8) eight inches or six (6) feet four (4) inches when beams, ducts or other mechanical item project.

After speaking with city staff and the city attorney, it was determined to remove the height requirement and reference the Minnesota Building Code instead. This way, if minimum ceiling height is modified again in the future, staff doesn't need to revise the zoning code. The definition was also reworded for clarification and consistency with the building code and other municipalities. The definition for floor area is utilized when calculating floor area ratio (FAR). The floor area ratio (FAR) is one of the primary tools used to limit the bulk of a principle building on a property. The other tools include minimum landscaping requirements, impervious coverage limits, setback requirements, and building height limits.

The proposed amendments have been provided in Attachment A. The City Attorney has reviewed and approved of the proposed changes.

Options and Motion Language

Staff has provided the following options and motion language for this case.

1. **Recommend Approval:** Motion to recommend *approval* of Planning Case 19-006 for proposed amendments to Chapter 13 – Zoning Code, floor area definition of the City Code, as presented in the June 5, 2019 Report to the Planning Commission.
2. **Recommend Approval with Amendments:** Motion to recommend *approval* of Planning Case 19-006 for proposed amendments to Chapter 13 – Zoning Code, floor area definition of the City Code, as presented in the June 5, 2019 Report to the Planning Commission with amendments: *a specific reason should be included with amendments.*
3. **Recommend Denial:** Motion to recommend *denial* of Planning Case 19-006 for proposed amendments to Chapter 13 – Zoning Code, floor area definition of the City Code: *findings to deny should specifically reference the reasons for denial.*
4. **Table:** Motion to *table* Planning 19-006 for proposed amendments to Chapter 13 – Zoning Code, floor area definition of the City Code: *a specific reason and/or information request should be included with a motion to table.*

Public Notice and Comments

Notice on this planning case was published in the *Arden Hills/Shoreview Bulletin* on May 22, 2019. The City has not received any public comments regarding this case.

Attachments

- A. Chapter 13 – Zoning Code, Floor Area Definition Red-line Amendments (Section 1305.04)
- B. 2015 Minnesota IRC – Section R305 - Ceiling Height

Attachment A

Existing definition:

Floor area. The sum of the gross horizontal area of all floors of a building as measured in square feet from the exterior sides of the exterior walls, or from the centerline of party walls separating attached buildings, but not including covered porches that meet the requirements in Section 1325.03 Subd 2.D; decks; any space where the average floor-to-ceiling height is less than six feet; attached or detached garages; and other detached accessory structures.

Relined definition:

Floor area. Means ~~the~~ the sum of the ~~gross~~ horizontal area of all floors of a building ~~as~~ measured ~~in square feet~~ from the exterior ~~sides~~ faces of the exterior walls, or from the centerline of ~~party~~ walls separating ~~attached two~~ buildings, ~~but not including covered porches that meet the requirements in Section 1325.03 Subd 2.D; decks; any space where the average floor to ceiling height is less than six feet; attached or detached garages; and other detached accessory structures.~~ excluding decks, garages, covered porches conforming with Section 1325.03 Subd 2.D; attics, crawl spaces and basements that do not meet the minimum ceiling height per Minnesota State Building Code requirements.

Final definition:

Floor area. Means the sum of the horizontal area of all floors of a building measured from the exterior faces of the exterior walls, or from the centerline of walls separating two buildings, excluding decks, garages, covered porches conforming with Section 1325.03 Subd 2.D; attics, crawl spaces, and basements that do not meet the minimum ceiling height per Minnesota State Building Code requirements.

**SECTION R305
CEILING HEIGHT**

R305.1 Minimum height, new buildings. Habitable space, hallways, bathrooms, toilet rooms, laundry rooms, and portions of basements containing these spaces shall have a ceiling height of not less than 7 feet (2134 mm). The required height shall be measured from the finish floor to the lowest projection from the ceiling.

Exceptions:

1. For rooms with sloped ceilings, at least 50 percent of the required floor area of the room shall have a ceiling height of at least 7 feet (2134 mm) and no portion of the required floor area may have a ceiling height of less than 5 feet (1524 mm).
2. Bathrooms shall have a minimum ceiling height of 6 feet 8 inches (2032 mm) at the center of the front clearance area for water closets, bidets, or sinks. The ceiling height above fixtures shall be such that the fixture is capable of being used for its intended purpose. A shower or tub equipped with a showerhead shall have a minimum ceiling height of 6 feet 8 inches (2032 mm) above a minimum area 30 inches (762 mm) by 30 inches (762 mm) at the showerhead.

R305.1.1 Basements, new buildings. Portions of basements that do not contain habitable space, hallways, bathrooms, toilet rooms, and laundry rooms shall have a ceiling height of not less than 6 feet 8 inches (2032 mm).

Exception: Beams, girders, ducts, or other obstructions may project to within 6 feet 4 inches (1931 mm) of the finished floor.

R305.2 Alterations to existing building basements. Alterations to portions of existing basements shall comply with the provisions of this section.

R305.2.1 Minimum ceiling height, existing buildings. Alterations to existing basements or portions thereof shall have a ceiling height of not less than 6 feet 4 inches (1931 mm), including beams, girders, ducts, or other obstructions.