

Board of County Commissioners
Agenda Request

Date of Meeting: July 21, 2008

Date Submitted: July 7, 2008

To: Honorable Chairman and Members of the Board

From: Benjamin H. Pingree, County Administrator
Lindsay Stevens, Assistant County Administrator
Luther E. Council, Jr., Building Official

Subject: Board Consideration to Schedule a Public Hearing to Amend Ordinance 06-28, with Proposed Language to Provide for Basin Specific Flood Hazard Areas Within The County and Increase Floor Elevations for New Home Construction in Certain Specific Subdivisions

Statement of Issue:

This agenda item requests the Board consider scheduling a Public Hearing to amend Ordinance 6-28 with proposed language, which established basin specific flood hazard areas within the County and set forth standards for construction within these specific areas.

Background:

Over the years, the Wakulla County Board of County Commissioners has been faced with flooding issues within Wakulla Gardens, and other subdivisions within the County. These subdivisions were mostly platted during the late 1950's and 1960's and did not include comprehensive infrastructure improvements. In 2006, the Board established Ordinance 06-28, which attempted to help address some of the flooding issues within these subdivisions.

Since 2006, a comprehensive storm-water study, which would probably provide even more assistance in addressing some of the flooding issues in these subdivisions, has not been conducted for the County or for the Wakulla Gardens area. While these studies are needed in order to develop a meaningful storm-water plan, the County is faced with the fact that Wakulla Gardens is presently one of the fastest developing areas in our County, even during the overall decline in the real estate market.

In an effort to refine the existing Ordinance 06-28 to reflect the knowledge of local flooding issues within these subdivisions gained during the past couple of years, at the June 2, 2008 Board Meeting, staff was directed to draft language amending Wakulla County Ordinance 06-28 to require all new home construction in certain specific subdivisions; such as Wakulla Gardens, Magnolia Gardens, Greiner's Addition, Lake

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Ellen Terrace, Lake Ellen Proper, Lake Ellen Estates and Wakulla River Estates, to be 1) constructed with stem wall foundations, 2) require all finished floors to be located not less than 30 inches above the base flood elevation as defined by the Wakulla County Planning and Community Development Director or the Director's professional designee and 3) requiring all finished floors to be located no less than 24 inches above the average crown of the facing road.

Analysis:

The proposed amended Wakulla County Ordinance 06-28 contains changes to include a 24" floor elevation in lieu of the 30" directed by the Board. This change was determined by staff to be appropriate after consulting several contractors who work in this area. It is the conclusion of the Building Official and concerned contractors, who build in this area, a 24" floor elevation will protect the investments of both the contractors and proposed new home buyer by elevating new construction high enough to avoid potential flood waters and avoiding a "canyon-effect" of new homes constructed at high elevations on small lots. Additionally, staff included revisions providing for the possibility of constructing monolithic foundations in lieu of stem wall foundations in areas of high ground elevations which would meet the requirements of the most recent versions of the flood insurance rate maps promulgated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency in areas designated as "A" or "B" zones on such maps, with certain design criteria approved by the Building Official. This allowance for monolithic foundations in lieu of a stem wall foundation construction would be made on a case-by-case basis.

Options:

1. Vote to approve amended Ordinance 06-28 as drafted, and advertise for public hearing.
2. Vote to approve the amended Ordinance 06-28 with the 30", as initially directed by the Board, in lieu of the staff- recommended 24", and advertise for public hearing.
3. Do not approve amended Ordinance 06-28 as drafted and do not advertise for public hearing.
4. Board direction.

Recommendation:

Option #1

Attachments

1. Draft Amended Ordinance 06-28 -
<http://www.mywakulla.com/docs/agendas/July212008/Tab19Attachment1.pdf>
2. Final Amended Ordinance 06-28 -
<http://www.mywakulla.com/docs/agendas/July212008/Tab19Attachment2.pdf>