

**INDIAN RIVER COUNTY, FLORIDA
M E M O R A N D U M**

TO: Jason E. Brown, County Administrator

THROUGH: Stan Boling, AICP; Community Development Director

THROUGH: John W. McCoy, AICP; Chief, Current Development

FROM: Ryan Sweeney; Senior Planner, Current Development

DATE: May 30, 2019

SUBJECT: Consideration of a Request by Gary Middleton to Amend Land Development Regulation (LDR) Chapter 971 (Regulations for Specific Land Uses) by Changing the Maximum Building Height for Self-Service Storage Facilities in the CG, General Commercial Zoning District [LDRA-19-07-02 / 2019020125-83919]

It is requested that the data herein presented be given formal consideration by the Board of County Commissioners at its regular meeting of June 11, 2019.

BACKGROUND

Bruce Barkett, Esq., on behalf of Gary Middleton, is requesting consideration of a Land Development Regulation (LDR) amendment to increase the maximum allowable building height for self-service storage (a.k.a. self-storage) facilities within the CG, General Commercial zoning district. The subject LDR amendment application is on file with the Planning Division. Self-storage facilities currently require Administrative Permit Use approval in the CG district, and are subject to the specific land use criteria listed in LDR Section 971.12(3). One of the specific land use criteria listed in Section 971.12(3) limits the overall building height for self-storage facilities to a maximum of 15 feet. Although the terminology used in the criterion is not abundantly clear, the 15 foot height limit has been applied to self-storage buildings within the CG district. Self-storage buildings in the heavy commercial (CH) and industrial districts (IL and IG) are not subject to a 15 foot criterion and are governed by the general County-wide 35 foot building height limit.

In October 2017, the applicant's agent, Mr. Barkett, attended a pre-application meeting for the proposed development of a 2 or 3 story self-storage facility within the CG district, and was notified of the special 15 foot building height limitation. That limitation essentially limits all self-storage facilities to single-story buildings within the CG district. Several months ago, Mr. Barkett met with Planning Division staff to revisit the special building height limitation, and to gauge staff's support of an LDR amendment that would allow an increased building height for self-storage facilities in the CG district. Staff recognizes that multi-story self-storage facilities are more common now than in the early 1990's when the current building height limitation for self-storage facilities was established, and that there is a demand for such facilities in some CG district locations. Ultimately, staff indicated support for a code change allowing a graduated increase in building height for CG district self-storage facilities as outlined in the analysis section of this report and the draft ordinance (see attachment 2).

The BCC is now to consider the proposed LDR amendment and is to adopt, adopt with modifications, or deny the proposed amendment.

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION (PZC) RECOMMENDATION:

At its meeting of April 25, 2019, the PZC voted 6-0 to recommend that the BCC adopt the proposed amendment (see attachment 1).

ANALYSIS

Self-storage facilities, as well as general warehousing and storage facilities, are a permitted use in the CH (Heavy Commercial), IL (Light Industrial), and IG (General Industrial) zoning districts. In almost all cases, those districts are separated from residentially-zoned properties by lower intensity districts, major roadways, or other physical features. In those districts, storage facilities are regulated by general site plan requirements as well as the general County-wide 35 foot building height limitation (with the exception of the West County Industrial Park height exception which has its own special criteria).

The CG district generally allows a broad range of retail and office uses, but not warehouse/storage uses, except under special conditions. Those conditions, contained in the specific land use criteria for administrative permit uses, are intended to limit storage buildings in the CG district to self-storage facilities of a size and scale that fit within a general retail district, especially where adjacent to residential properties. Under the current LDRs, the first specific land use criterion for self-storage facilities in the CG district states, "Storage unit areas shall not exceed fifteen (15) feet in height from storage buildings." Staff's interpretation and application of this provision has consistently been that the intent of this criterion is to limit the overall building height for self-storage facilities in the CG district to a maximum of 15 feet. However, some interested parties have questioned if the intent was to limit the floor-to-ceiling height of individual storage units to 15 feet, but allow an overall building height of 35 feet per the maximum building height identified in the CG district and generally applied throughout the unincorporated county.

The proposed LDR amendment would clarify that individual storage units shall have a maximum interior ceiling height of 15 feet, measured finished floor to finished ceiling. The proposed amendment would also allow a graduated increase in the overall building height for self-storage facilities in the CG district, based on a separation distance (or setback) from adjacent residential lot lines. The proposed amendment maintains a 15 foot height limitation for all portions of a self-storage building that are set back less than 150 feet from a residential lot line (property line); sets a 25 foot height limitation for all portions that are set back at least 150 feet, but less than 200 feet from a residential lot line; and sets a 35 foot height limitation for all self-storage facilities that are set back more than 200 feet from a residential lot line. The result is an allowance based on a graduated increase in building height in relation to any adjacent residential property.

It should be noted that the typical architectural design and aesthetic appeal of self-storage facilities has been enhanced in recent years, especially for multi-story facilities. Twenty or 30 years ago, most self-storage facilities consisted of rows of single-story "boxes" with a continuous mass of corrugated metal overhead doors. Today's designs, which are compliant with County corridor aesthetic requirements, include defined entry points with storefront glass systems, enhanced architectural

finishes and features, and building massing that is similar to a multi-story office building. Also, since the current building height criterion was established in the early 1990's, CG sites are subject to corridor requirements that address building appearance and basic architectural standards. Consequently, aesthetic concerns about a "tall, ugly warehouse building" are now addressed through corridor regulations. Furthermore, the proposed amendment clarifies that individual self-storage units are limited to a 15 foot floor-to-ceiling height which prohibits an overly massive or out-of-scale single-story self-storage facility and prevents "industrial warehouse designs" with high ceilings and tall overhead doors. Finally, it should be noted that the proposed amendment does not change the Administrative Permit Use approval process for self-storage facilities in the CG district (requires PZC review and approval), and the maximum (graduated) building height of 35 feet is consistent with all other permitted uses/building types in the CG district. Therefore, staff and the PZC support the proposed amendment.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Board of County Commissioners adopt the proposed self-storage ordinance.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Excerpt from April 25, 2019 PZC Minutes
2. Draft Ordinance