

City of Beaufort Department of Planning and Development Services

MEMORANDUM

TO: Scott Dadson, City Manager
FROM: Libby Anderson, Planning Director
DATE: October 8, 2014
SUBJECT: Minimum Finished First Floor Height for New Residential Construction

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New residential construction is currently required to be elevated in the Bladen and Boundary Street Design Districts. Townhomes in any district are required to be elevated above grade. All residential development in the flood zone is required to be elevated above the Base Flood Elevation. Residential construction in the Historic District is also usually required to be raised.

There are several reasons to require all new residential construction to be elevated above the existing grade, prevention from flooding being the most important. During the recent rains, there were numerous reports of flooding or near flooding of dwellings build at grade. Other reasons to elevate residential buildings include aesthetics, providing added privacy as buildings move closer to the street, and termite control.

Staff is proposing to require the minimum first floor of new residential construction to be raised 18” above grade. This is consistent with the requirements in the new Port Royal code and the proposed Beaufort County code. Staff is recommending that Section 6.5.K, “Measurement and Exceptions; Height,” be amended by adding a new paragraph 1 to read as follows:

- 1. First Floor Heights Above Grade**
The finished first floor of new residential construction (not including additions to existing structures) must be elevated a minimum of 18” above finished grade adjacent to the building exterior.

Planning Commission Recommendation

The Beaufort--Port Royal Metropolitan Planning Commission considered this ordinance amendment at their meeting on September 15. The Commission unanimously recommended approval.