

**Building Commission Meeting**  
Wednesday, October 29, 2014 at 6:30 PM  
Village Hall

1. **Call to Order**, Chairman Heaney opened the meeting

2. **Roll call and declaration of a quorum – 7:05 pm**

Present: Jeff Heaney, Chair; Kent Brown; Eric Means; Greg Wozniak; Tom Lindsay

Absent: None

Also present: Joe Footlik, Jeff Rogers; Helen Wiseman

3. **Minutes: Pending**

4. **General Communications: Miscellaneous Fire Item**

Business Process Manager Jeff Rogers gave an overview of a potential amendment to be presented to the Building Commission at a later date regarding Joint Dispatch and emergency communication radio equipment, particularly related to large commercial buildings. For example, when police or fire personnel are dispatched to Glenbrook Hospital or transport patients to the hospital, their radio equipment doesn't always function inside the building. This is due to interference from density of building walls, length of corridors, etc. Police and Fire Department staff will work with Joint Dispatch to pursue grant funding to retrofit such existing buildings as Glenbrook Hospital to address the loss of radio communications on site. The proposed ordinance would apply to new construction of a similar nature. General types of construction and various building qualifiers were summarized in Mr. Rogers' memorandum. Under the scenarios outlined in the meeting material for commercial buildings, there would be a requirement to install additional signal repeaters or amplifiers to ensure that emergency personnel can maintain radio communication with the Joint Dispatch Center. After a summary is reviewed by the Building Commission Chair, a detailed summary of building parameters would go to the full Commission for feedback.

Mr. Rogers responded to general questions. The new equipment would only be needed in the portions of large commercial buildings where radio communication does not function. Existing buildings are exempt and outside funding would be pursued for affected structures. The ordinance to be considered would apply only to new construction that occurs after the ordinance is adopted. Allstate, which is in Glenview's Fire Protection District, volunteered its building for the pilot program; it is not subject to the ordinance. Allstate is satisfied with the results of the equipment that has been installed. The ordinance relates only to emergencies involving police and fire radio communications. Mr. Rogers is working on this project with the Deputy Fire Chief and Director of Public Safety Support Services. The equipment would be included as part of the regular inspection process. Grants will be pursued for existing structures but the equipment is not federally required. Two ordinances have been drafted but they are not yet ready for Building Commission review.

At this point Mr. Rogers left the meeting room.

5. **Pending business: None**

6. **Old Business**

a. **Egress Window Opening vs. Height off floor**

Commissioner Lindsay moved to strike the amendment approved two meetings ago related to Item 53. The motion was seconded and passed by unanimous voice vote. He requested a new amendment to cover two sections of the code to indicate two exceptions.

Mr. Lindsay made a motion to approve the following:

(1) Code section R310.1.1 related to Minimum Opening Height - All emergency escape and rescue openings shall have a minimum net clear opening of 5.7 SF. Exception grade floor opening shall have a minimum net clear opening of 5 SF." Add second exception - *Additions and remodeling projects with an 8 foot or less ceiling height shall be permitted to have a net clear opening of 5 SF on any floor.*

(2) Code section R310.1.2 related to Minimum Opening Height – The current code states the minimum net clear opening height shall be 24 inches. Add exception - *Additions and remodeling projects with an 8 foot or less ceiling height shall be permitted to have a minimum net clear opening and height of 22 inches.*

Mr. Lindsay suggested that allowing a window opening to go down an additional two inches, or four inches for double hung windows, a smaller window could be installed without triggering the rule to limit opening size. The combination of the proposed exceptions allows for a shorter window. The 5 SF opening would result in a width requirement without spelling it out in the code. The bigger opening higher up in the air was meant to accommodate a ladder against the window. A 5 SF width is adequate on a first floor for a fireman to access the window wearing full gear and for occupants to escape out the window. The 5.7 SF requirement on a second floor is meant to accommodate the ladder that would be in the way of the opening. However the Fire Chief stated at the previous meeting that ladders are placed either underneath or to the side of a window, so he was concerned with a window's width rather than its height. Mr. Lindsay was confident that a person could escape from a window two inches shorter than what is currently required. He felt more families and kids occupy bedrooms than there are fires, and having windows too low creates a greater danger across the community.

The motion to approve items (1) and (2) was seconded and passed by a unanimous voice vote.

#### **b. Sprinkler code**

Chairman Heaney suggested four ways to consider related to the sprinkler code (1) sprinkler system with no code modifications (2) sprinkler system with modifications (3) no sprinkler system (4) no sprinkler system with modification to the code, i.e. more fire protection to walls and floors.

Ms. Wiseman clarified that the sprinkler system in the code applies to new construction only, and it only applies to additions if the building has existing sprinklers.

Chairman Heaney said the term "modification" referred to any modification to the code. The Commission discussed the four options and after consideration, and a straw poll, the consensus was to pursue item (4) no sprinkler system with modifications to the code, that is, a sprinkler system would not be required if certain alternatives to provide extra fire protection were in place.

#### **Discussion:**

There was comprehensive discussion related to alternatives to installing a sprinkler system. Mr. Heaney felt buildings should require floor trusses with one hour protection and an accepted design. This could apply to roof trusses and floor trusses similar to apartment buildings. Currently trusses have no fire rating at all, so two layers of 5/8" gypsum board would be significant in providing firefighters with time to enter the building and safely walk on the floor system if needed, and it would give the residents time to exit the home.

There was discussion and varying opinions about where to use one layer of 5/8" gypsum board compared to two layers in certain areas of the home, garage and basement and whether the framing should be protected or unprotected and if it should be one hour rated. The Commissioners agreed with using a minimum 5/8" gypsum board and there were no objections to using a listed agency other than UL. TGI for example has other agencies besides UL.

It was noted that in Winnetka, two layers of 5/8" gypsum is not considered adequate so clips are required. Putting down a 3/4" subfloor is also not enough unless 3/4" wood is installed on top. 1 1/4" plywood is possible with carpeting. For hardwood the plywood would be doubled up. Some villages require all walls be 5/8" fire code instead of 1/2" since the cost differential is minimal. Many home builders choose 5/8" drywall since it is a better material. When using 5/8" on all walls, the jam liner locations and door thicknesses would be clear.

Consideration was given to using various types of engineered lumber in construction of floor and ceiling joists and so forth. There was no issue with using 5/8" gypsum board as well as other options, for example TGIs and flak jackets (more costly). One option is to not use a UL assembly and find another acceptable assembly that would be satisfactory to all the Commissioners.

The impact of the cost of sprinkler systems on the construction of large houses was discussed. It was important to make homes safer. There was discussion about imposing a \$500 fee to get educated in fire prevention. Fire Chief Globerger had previously remarked that education is the No. 1 way to prevent fires. The Village Attorney was consulted on the phone about the fee. He indicated that essentially imposing a tax earmarked for something in particular was not under the Building Commission's jurisdiction. However a recommendation could be made to the Village Board.

There was discussion about construction safety requirements related to large homes versus smaller homes. The value of a person's life in a small home is just as important as one in a bigger home. The objective of the Commission was to keep homes safe. There shouldn't be a distinction of what "safer" means based on house size. All homes should be well-built regardless of size. The other view was that a bigger home has more rooms and more furniture which usually means more fire load. A smaller house is more compartmentalized due to smaller areas. Rolling Meadows is only local town that applies requirements according to square footage.

Consideration was given to whether a fire is above or below, and where the sprinklers are located. There was in-depth dialogue about materials used to fire protect a home and the cost of doing so, including adding a sprinkler system or using fire protection alternatives. Materials that stand up to the heat of a fire were considered. There was discussion to identify the reasons why the Building Commission is not in favor of recommending sprinkler systems. He (the Fire Chief) wants new homes protected and requirements for new additions to existing homes. This would benefit the firefighters and provide residents with time to escape the home fire. Mr. Lindsay asked for examples of a structural system collapse in a single family home over a five year period where a fireman was injured and/or people are not able to get out of the house due to the collapse of the structural system. There was no purpose to addressing problems that are not an issue in Glenview. Mr. Heaney concurred and said it was one reason for not supporting required sprinklers but felt that not doing so was a common sense approach. After satisfying any concerns by the Fire Chief, the final approval comes from the Village trustees. The Commissioners vigorously and thoroughly discussed every facet of the following motion.

Mr. Heaney made a motion to recommend the following to the Village Board for approval:

To amend any portion in the code related to drywall for single family and duplexes to 5/8" gypsum board minimum; to amend the under stair section of the code for all conditions for enclosed spaces under the stair including unfinished to 5/8" gypsum board minimum; to amend the fire sprinkler section of the code for new construction only to an exception for (1) A solid dimensional lumber for floor systems throughout; or (2) One layer of Type X gypsum board on non-dimensional engineered floor systems; or (3)

Approved intumescent paint product on all floor systems or other products as approved by Village officials for alternate design materials.

Mr. Lindsay seconded the motion. The motion carried by a unanimous voice vote.

Mr. Heaney noted that the Building Commission is interested in life safety. Given the facts received over the last few weeks, the recommended motion is a sensible solution to sprinkler systems. Putting a financial burden on residents is just as strong an issue as life safety. The Commission did due diligence by requiring the protection of floor and wall systems in Glenview homes so firefighters have adequate time to enter a home and residents have time to escape. The Commission can recommend to the Board charging residents \$500 for education to help prevent fires instead of \$15,000 for a sprinkler system.

Mr. Lindsay suggested that there could be public outreach in various ways to promote fire prevention. It would help to bring the whole community up to a standard rather than only the owners of new homes.

The minutes will be sent by email to the Commission for review. The Commissioners will be notified of the next meeting date to approve the minutes. This would also allow time to cross check the codes.

## **7. New Business: None**

## **8. Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn was made by Chairman Heaney and seconded by Commissioner Means at 9:33 PM