



AGENCY: City Council
MEETING DATE: December 9, 2019
DEPARTMENT: City Manager
PRESENTED BY: Tabatha Miller
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AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

TITLE:

Receive Report and Consider Adoption of City Council Resolution Adopting Legislative Findings Supporting Amendments and Changes to the California State Building Standards Code as Contained in the Fort Bragg International Fire Code and California Fire Code, Chapter 15.05 of the Fort Bragg Municipal Code; and Consider Introducing by Title Only and Waiving the First Reading of Ordinance No. 957-2019 Repealing and Replacing Chapter 15.06 (Automatic Fire Sprinkler and Alarm Systems) of Title 15 (Buildings and Construction) of the Fort Bragg Municipal Code

ISSUE:

On September 9, 2019, the City Council adopted Resolution 4197-2019 which set forth the findings that allowed the Council to depart from the California Fire Code, California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Part 9, 2016 Edition, as adopted by reference in the City's Municipal Code as Chapter 15.05 (California Fire Code) and introduced Ordinance No. 951-2019, which amended the requirements for automatic Fire Sprinkler and Alarm Systems in the City of Fort Bragg.

The State of California updates the California Building Standards Code (Building Code) every three years. The California Building Standards Commission adopted the 2019 edition of the Building Code on July 1, 2019. This includes the California Fire Code, California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Part 9, 2019 Edition. The new edition becomes effective at the local level on January 1, 2020 and replaces the 2016 edition.

Local jurisdictions may amend the Building Code, under certain circumstances. Sections 17958.5, 17958.7 and 13143.5 of the California Health and Safety Code allow amendments when an express finding and determination is made that the amendments are reasonably necessary because of local climatic, geological, or topographical conditions in the local jurisdiction. Every three years when the Building Code is updated a local jurisdiction must readopt any local amendments that it desires to continue to apply to the Building Code.

The proposed Resolution and Ordinance maintain the updates to the Sprinkler Ordinance adopted by City Council on September 23, 2019 and effective October 23, 2019, with the exception of reference to the 2019 Edition of the California Fire Code instead of the 2016 Edition.

ANALYSIS:

The issue of fire suppression is important for the City of Fort Bragg and the Fort Bragg Fire Department. The Fort Bragg Fire Department is a volunteer organization whose members risk their lives to fight fires and as a result the Fire Department has consistently pushed to reduce risk both to their volunteers and to our community. Fire suppression and prevention

is extremely important, as a volunteer department response time to a fire may be delayed, as volunteers commute from work, family and personal activities to the site of a fire.

The Central Business District is especially vulnerable to fire as these structures are generally older, constructed from wood and positioned very close together. The use and design of a commercial structure also plays a role in how vulnerable the building is to fire and the risk of life and financial loss.

The City of Fort Bragg first adopted an ordinance regulating fire sprinklers in 1985, which was later amended in 1997, 1999, 2003, 2007, 2014 and 2019. The purpose of the Ordinance is to ensure that new construction (now a State requirement) and significant remodels require the installation of automatic fire sprinklers.

Proposed Ordinance

With each new edition of the Building Code, a local government must satisfy all the requirements of state law applying to local Building Code amendments. This means that the City must readopt the amendments to the California Fire Code that provide for the more stringent requirements for Automatic Fire Sprinkler and Alarm Systems. The proposed Ordinance readopts the Fire Sprinkler requirements approved by City Council in September. The only modification is reference to the 2019 edition of the Fire Code instead of the 2016 edition.

Proposed Resolution

The City's fire sprinkler and alarm system requirements deviate from the California Fire Code as adopted by reference in Chapter 15.05 of the City's Municipal Code. In order for a jurisdiction to depart from the California Fire Code, the amendments or changes must be more restrictive and reasonably necessary because of local climatic, geologic and/or topographic conditions (California Health and Safety Code § 17958.7). The governing body of a city or county must make express findings as to each amendment for need, prior to adopting the amendments or changes. To clearly establish that those findings occurred prior to adopting the ordinance, the attached Resolution and Exhibit A set forth the findings and justifications for each amendment to the California Fire Code regarding fire sprinkler and fire alarm systems. The justifications and amendments must also be filed with the California Building Standards Commission to be valid.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

1. Adopt a resolution adopting legislative findings supporting amendments and changes to the California State Building Standards Code as contained in the Fort Bragg International Fire Code and California Fire Code, Chapter 15.05 of the Fort Bragg Municipal Code.
2. Introduce by title only and waive the first reading of Ordinance No. 957-2019, repealing and replacing Chapter 15.06 (Automatic Fire Sprinkler and Alarm Systems).

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

1. Provide staff alternative direction on the text of the proposed Resolution or Ordinance.
2. Do not adopt the Resolution or Ordinance and retain only the requirements of the California Fire Code, California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Part 9, 2019 Edition.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The revisions to the sprinkler requirements should have a nominal impact on the City's financial state. The changes may reduce the number of commercial remodels in which automatic sprinkler systems are required but any reduction in building permit fees will be offset by a reduction in staff time reviewing, processing and approving the building permit and application.

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACT:

Adoption of the Resolution by itself does not impact greenhouse gas emissions.

CONSISTENCY:

The changes in the sprinkler requirements are consistent with the City Council Priority:

Jobs/Industry

Goal 1 – Become more business and customer service friendly

Goal 3 – Foster and help sustain local businesses

IMPLEMENTATION/TIMEFRAMES:

The Resolution will be effective the same date as the corresponding Ordinance. Assuming the Ordinance is introduced on December 9, 2019 and adopted on January 13, 2020, it will become effective February 12, 2020.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Proposed Resolution
2. Exhibit A
3. Proposed Ordinance

NOTIFICATION:

N/A