

Article 19

NONCONFORMING USES of LAND and STRUCTURES

Section 19.01 Purpose

It is recognized that there exists lots, structures and uses of land and structures within the districts established by this Ordinance and subsequent amendments, which were lawful before this Ordinance was passed or amended, which would be prohibited, regulated or restricted under the terms of this Ordinance. It is the intent of this Article to permit legal nonconforming lots, structures or uses to continue until they are removed, but not to encourage their survival.

Section 19.02 Nonconforming Lots

In any district in which single family dwellings are permitted, notwithstanding limitations imposed by other provisions of this Ordinance, a single family dwelling and customary accessory buildings may be erected on any single lot of record recorded with the Register of Deeds at or before the effective date of adoption or amendment of this Ordinance. This provision shall apply even though such lot fails to meet the requirements for area or width, or both, that are generally applicable in the district; provided that yard dimensions, setbacks and other requirements not involving area or width, or both, of the lot, shall conform to the regulations for the district in which such lot is located, unless a yard requirement variance is obtained through approval of the Zoning Board of Appeals. However, if two or more lots or combinations of lots and portions of lots with continuous frontage in single ownership are of record at the time of passage or amendment of this Ordinance, and if all or part of the lots do not meet the requirements established for lot width and area, the lands involved shall be considered to be an undivided parcel for the purposes of this Ordinance, and no portion of said parcel shall be used or divided in a manner which diminishes compliance with lot width and area requirements established by this Ordinance.

Section 19.03 Nonconforming Uses of Land

Where, at the effective date of adoption or amendment of this Ordinance, a lawful use of land exists that is made no longer permissible under the terms of this Article as enacted or amended, such use may be continued, so long as it remains otherwise lawful, subject to the following provisions:

- A. No such nonconforming use shall be enlarged or increased, nor extended to occupy a greater area of land than was occupied at the effective date of adoption or amendment of this Ordinance.
- B. No such nonconforming use shall be moved in whole or in part to any other portion of the lot or parcel occupied by such use at the effective date of adoption or amendment of this Ordinance.
- C. If a nonconforming use of a parcel or lot ceases for any reason for a period of more than one (1) year, such nonconforming use shall not be renewed and the subsequent use of such parcel or lot shall conform to the regulations of the district in which such parcel or lot is located.
- D. See also Section 3.03(D).

Section 19.04 Nonconforming Structures

Where a lawful structure exists at the effective date of adoption or amendment of this Ordinance that could not be built under the terms of this Ordinance by reason of restrictions on area, lot coverage, height, yards or other characteristics of the structure or location on the lot, such structure may be continued so long as it remains otherwise lawful, subject to the following provisions:

- A. No such structure may be enlarged or altered in a way which increases its nonconformity, but the use of a structure and/or the structure itself may be changed or altered to a use permitted in the district in which it is located, provided that all such changes are also in conformance with the requirements of the district in which it is located. Furthermore, any nonconforming use may be extended throughout any parts of a building which were manifestly arranged or designed for such use, and which existed at the time for adoption or amendment of this Article, but no such use shall be extended to occupy any land outside such building.
- B. Should such structure be destroyed by any means to an extent of more than fifty (50) percent of its appraised replacement cost, exclusive of foundations, it shall not be reconstructed except in conformity with the provisions of this Ordinance, including the respective site development standards for the District in which it is located. The appraised replacement cost shall be determined by the Zoning Administrator according to an appraisal by an independent qualified licensed building contractor, at the expense of the applicant. The Zoning Administrator shall report the appraised replacement cost to the Zoning Board of Appeals. The appraisal may be appealed to the Zoning Board of Appeals according to Section 4.06.
- C. Should such structure be moved for any reason for any distance, it shall thereafter conform to the regulations for the district in which it is located after it is moved.
- D. Any structure, or structure and land in combination, in or on which a nonconforming use is superseded by a permitted use, shall thereafter conform to the regulations for the district in which such structure is located, and the nonconforming use may not thereafter be resumed.
- E. Where nonconforming status applies to a structure and use in combination, removal or destruction of the structure shall eliminate the nonconforming status of the land, and all subsequent uses and structures on the land shall conform to the applicable district regulations.

Section 19.05 Change In Nonconforming Uses

Irrespective of other requirements of this Article, if no structural alterations are made, any nonconforming use of a structure and premises may be changed to another nonconforming use of similar or less nonconformance, provided that the Board of Appeals, either by general rule or by making findings in the specific case, shall find that the proposed use is equally appropriate or more appropriate to the district than the existing nonconforming use. In permitting such change, the Board of Appeals may require appropriate conditions and safeguards in accord with the purpose and intent of this Article. Where a nonconforming use, structure, or use and structure in combination is hereafter changed to a less nonconforming character, it shall not thereafter be changed to a greater nonconforming character.

Section 19.06 Repairs and Maintenance

On any building devoted in whole or in part to any nonconforming use, work may be done in any period of twelve (12) consecutive months on ordinary repairs, or on repair or replacement of nonbearing walls, fixtures, wiring or plumbing to an extent not exceeding ten (10) percent of the building's replacement cost prior to the initiation of repairs, exclusive of foundations, provided that the cubic content of the building as it existed at the time of passage or amendment of this Article shall not be increased. Nothing in this Article shall be deemed to prevent the strengthening or restoring to a safe condition of any building or part thereof declared to be unsafe by any official charged with protecting the public safety, upon order of such official.

Section 19.07 Change of Tenancy or Ownership

A change of tenancy or ownership of a nonconforming use is allowed provided there is no increase in the degree of nonconformance of the nonconforming use.

Section 19.08 District Changes

Whenever the boundaries of a district shall be changed so as to transfer an area from one district to another district of another classification, the provisions of this Article shall also apply to any existing uses that become nonconforming as a result of the boundary changes.

Section 19.09 Hardship Cases

Nonconforming buildings or structures may be structurally changed, altered or enlarged with the approval of the Zoning Board of Appeals when the Zoning Board of Appeals finds that the request is a case of exceptional hardship in which failure to grant the relief requested would unreasonably restrict continued use of the property or would restrict valuable benefits that the public currently derives from the property as used in its nonconforming status, except that any approval for structural changes, alteration or enlargement may be granted only with a finding by the Zoning Board of Appeals that approval will not have an adverse affect on surrounding property and that it will be the minimum necessary to relieve the hardship.

Section 19.10 Illegal Nonconforming Uses

Nonconforming uses of structures or land existing at the effective date of this Ordinance that were established without approval of zoning compliance or without a valid building permit, or those nonconforming uses which cannot be proved conclusively as existing prior to the effective date of this Ordinance, shall be declared illegal nonconforming uses and are not entitled to the status and rights accorded legally established nonconforming uses.

Section 19.11 Permits

Permits for construction on, expansion of, or substitution of nonconforming lots, uses or structures require a Zoning Permit pursuant to Section 3.03(D). Other permits and approvals may also be required.

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