

2026-4-ORD requested by Matthew Jewell, Parish President / Dept. of Planning & Zoning to amend the St. Charles Parish Zoning Ordinance of 1981, Section XX. Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance, to reestablish the effective “Flood Insurance Study for the Parish of St. Charles” and accompanying Flood Insurance Rate Maps all revised June 16, 1992, for the purpose of determining minimum building elevations for development within Sunset Drainage District.

Ms. Stein – thank you Mr. Chair, we are asking for your support to correct a problem that has plagued Sunset Drainage District since 2013 when the parish adopted FEMA’s latest and greatest flood insurance rate maps as the minimum building standard parish wide. So, when we adopted that map, we required that buildings be built either to the elevation of the flood zones that the 1992 map identified or the elevations of the 2012 map that are higher in some places but not necessarily higher everywhere, you have to go whichever is higher. In the Sunset Drainage District, the result is often 8, 9, 10, 11 feet above the existing ground. The result is the map on the last page of your agenda that shows over 207 variances from these regulations which when we adopted them were a higher standard than FEMA requires. FEMA requires us to require people to build to the elevation shown on the 1992 map, we hit that all the time. We have an additional standard that says no one can build less than 1 foot above the centerline of the street if you’re not in a special flood hazard area if you’re in an X zone. We’d like to also add a third standard, and this would be a standard that we would enforce parish wide actually it’s Section II of the ordinance that we are proposing and it would be that no one would be permitted to with the top of their lowest floor or the bottom of their eye beam for a mobile home any lower than 0 (zero) feet. The result is 207 variances that you see in the Sunset Drainage District id very often the top of the lowest floor at minus 2.5, at minus 3, at minus .8. Sunset Drainage District is low, especially in Bayou Gauche area. So, if we add the second requirement for no lower than zero that wouldn’t be a problem for any other location in the parish and the result will be that these folks wouldn’t be coming in for variances to build their houses and we would be getting top of floor that’s about 2 or 3 feet higher than what we been getting. So, we don’t think that there is absolutely zero flood risk in Bayou Gauche but we certainly don’t believe that the elevation of a flood of a 100-year flood is going to reach 9, 10, 11 feet. So we ask for your support with the ordinance and were talking about probably 150 sites that are ready for you know houses to be built and this would affect largely vacant lots that are already platted. So, if someone comes in for a new subdivision that’s going to have to meet elevation requirements that are new and more astringent.

Mr. Albert- just to add, if you look at the map on the last page of your agenda and you see 200 variances that’s a bell whether something is not working right or at least we’re not taking the correct approach at the time and something needs to change the regulations. Marny and I have been looking at this for a long time trying to come up with a reasonable solution, we’re operating off of two maps it’s a logistical challenge, practical challenge for residents, and their

being granted the variances anyway. So, we're pulling together all the regulatory ties and putting together something that makes sense going back to that 92 map and at the same time creating a better safety standard the cavoite at the end that we're not allowing construction below sea level is meant to keep up with the intent of what we're doing in 2013 while still being completely reasonable about this. If this is to pass the number of variances for new home construction will be zero going forward, that would be off, we will not entertain those request were they to come in just as we don't entertain anywhere else in the parish at this point. So, I think adopting this provides a better regulatory framework, practical framework for people living here.

Commissioner Petit – I guess for clarity you mentioned and increase to 2-3, 4 feet for some construction and that's to bring them up to zero? Or is that affected from going back to 92?

Ms. Stein – that would bring them up to zero. So, the ground elevations that we are talking about in Bayou Gauche are minus 2, minus 3 feet. The elevation requirement that we have is a foot above the centerline of the street even when we enforce that we still seeing negative elevations which we would like to stop and we think it's reasonable. We also have the exterior lot run off protection ordinance that you know it had been quite a problem to have people mounding up to meet a new requirement like this, they would displace water onto their neighbors this was always a problem that's not quite the problem that it was so with that ordinance in place and the success that we are seeing with that standard we're confident that it's time to end the reign of elevation terror in Sunset Drainage District.

Commissioner Keen- so if someone already got a permit approved for construction as is, that won't change. Correct?

Ms. Stein – um right there will certainly be a time that we will need to shift to make sure that we can start enforcing the ordinance. So, at present we have 4 pending variances for elevations we will work with those folks, um that's a good point. I'll get, we will make sure that we understand how many permits are outstanding because the zero feet would be a higher standard for them. We certainly have recommended to anybody who has gotten a variance in the last 5 years, 4 years to go to zero.

Commissioner Keen – if you already made plans and got designs and drawings.

Mr. Albert – they'll be honored period.

Commissioner Keen – they will be honored, correct?

Ms. Stein – if their permit has been granted.

Commissioner Keen – ok

Ms. Stein – if they draw out plans and just have plans (several people talking all at once)

Commissioner Keen – we don't want to retrograde anybody.

Mr. Albert – we're not pulling the rug out from anybody that has a proper vetted application in the system.

Commissioner Keen – as of now, and that kosher.

Mr. Albert – it would be effective if the council were to adopt this.

Commissioner Keen – thank you, ok that's what we were looking for. I just wanted to make sure in case someone had to go and redraw their plans.

Mr. Albert – the only caveat to any of that is that those variances are good for a year.

Inaudible (Commissioner Keen and Mr. Albert speaking at the same time)

Commissioner Keen – and that goes without saying to any design, for any change that we may do. If someone's already got something approved, and someone's already paid for drawings, their kosher at this point.

Ms. Stein – if their permitted, and I can send you a list of the buildings that are in the permit process right now, I can send that tomorrow.

Commissioner Keen – thank you.

The public hearing was open.

Walter Pile Ducayet Dr. -I'm in favor of what you have here. There is one concerned that I've had and I've had it for a long time it's the wording under C two, toward the end the last paragraph. It says, in addition for the purpose of determining minimum building elevations that preliminary digital flood insurance rate maps DFIRM refer to in the flood insurance study for the Parish of St. Charles, stamp, revised, preliminary November 9, 2012 shall take precedence over effective firms in all areas where they are more restricted. I would hope that would could possible replace that term with which "they" means its kind of ambiguous. I would say effective firms are more restrictive except within the area of the Sunset Drainage District and the reason I bring that up right now if you go get a building permit let's say Ormond where I live the DFIRM will be applied so let's make it clear where we talking about everywhere and the only restriction is in the Sunset Drainage District. That's the only comment I have.

Commissioner Petit – is that something Marny you will follow up with Mr. Pile on.

Ms. Stein – I can follow up the district councilman, on that.

Mr. Albert – if you want us to do that we do need like that to be part of your recommendations so that whatever we send cause if I if you were just to say you recommend on this, we would send this document forward if you said recommend with these minor changes, we can do that.

Commissioner Petit – so let's repeat what the minor change would be.

Mr. Albert – it would be clarification at the end of the part two basis for establishing areas of special flood hazard, particularly like the last statement in there. We can't hash it out.

(Mr. Pile and Ms. Stein are talking in the audience and the microphone is not picking it up)

Commissioner Petit – yea we can't hash it out in here.

Mr. Albert – so if you tell us to do it we will get it fixed.

Commissioner Petit – yea and the parish council rejects it and send it back with the changes we can make that.

The public hearing is closed.

Commissioner Keen made a motion, seconded by Frangella.

YEAS: FOLSE, PETIT, KEEN, FRANGELLA, ROSS, PRICE, DORAND

NAYS: NONE

ABSENT: NONE

PASSED
