

PZO 2016-05

Introduced by Larry Cochran, Parish President

To eliminate the requirement for skirting or foundation planting around mobile homes in the R-1A(M) zoning district.

Background:

The permit database shows an average of 44 mobile homes permitted annually in St. Charles Parish (five year average); approximately half of the annual numbers are replacement mobile homes. The complaint database shows an average of 2.6 complaints per year over five years regarding unskirted mobile homes. In the same five years, the Planning and Zoning Commission has considered nine (9) ordinances to revise the requirements for skirting or foundations plantings around mobile homes. Ordinance 15-7-5, the first part of a comprehensive modernization of the Zoning Ordinance revised the requirement for foundations plantings for mobile homes in R-1A(M) zoning districts.

Research on the subject shows that while the building codes or zoning ordinances of many jurisdictions in southeast Louisiana require skirting or foundation plantings around mobile homes, the requirement is an aesthetic standard that is not required by building codes, or indicated as necessary by mobile home manufacturers. Currently in St. Charles Parish, skirting or foundation plantings are required *only* for mobile homes (and not other types of elevated structures like office trailers or raised houses) and only within the R-1A(M) zoning district (although mobile homes are permitted by right in the OL, R-1A(M) and R-1M zoning districts).

The cost of skirting a mobile home can be between \$400 and \$2000 depending on factors such as:

- the type of skirting material
- the perimeter of the mobile home
- the base flood elevation requirement
- whether the skirting requires professional installation

The cost of maintaining skirting is difficult to estimate, but many factors can cause skirting to degrade, such as:

- animals
- weather conditions
- quality of installation
- quality of skirting materials

The proposed ordinance changes will:

- Regulate all elevated structures through the same building and locational requirements
- Remove a substantial burden on residents permitting older mobile homes where the manufacturer's skirting requirements can no longer be identified.
- Eliminate the requirement for skirting to complete a building permit and obtain occupancy.

Planning and Zoning context:

Zoning and permitted uses: Skirting requirements apply exclusively to mobile homes which are permitted in the OL, R-1A(M), and R-1M zoning districts. Other raised structures such as raised site-built houses, sheds, office trailers, and commercial trailers are unaffected.

Permit process: The permit database suggests that code enforcement officers often have to re-inspect mobile homes to address issues related to this site requirement.

Potential outcomes:

For people who obtain permits for mobile homes, removing the requirement to skirt the mobile home will mean that they may choose to skirt the mobile home and/or plant foundation plantings of their choosing or not.

For people who live in areas where mobile homes can be permitted, they will not benefit from the aesthetic standard that code-required skirting and/or foundation plantings upheld.

The Zoning Regulatory Administrator will not have to approve skirting or foundation plantings...*to ensure aesthetic compatibility with the residential character of the neighborhood in the R-1A(M) Zoning District* nor to follow up in six (6) months if a Certificate of Occupancy is issued without the required skirting or foundation plantings being installed provided that the property owner signs an affidavit to install skirting or foundation planting within six (6) months of permit issuance

Code enforcement staff and permit staff will not have to inspect permitted mobile homes for skirting or foundation plantings.