



## **Department of Planning & Zoning Staff Report – Text Amendment Case No. 2025-4-ORD**

**Introduced by Matthew Jewell  
Parish President**

An ordinance to amend the St. Charles Parish Code of Ordinances, Appendix A. Section XX. Flood Damage Prevention E. Provisions for Flood Hazard Reduction 2. Specific Standards. a. Residential construction to allow wet floodproofing residential accessory buildings up to 600 sq. ft.

### **BACKGROUND**

Currently, the St. Charles Parish Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance requires that in Flood Zones AE, AH, and A99 any building over 144 sq. ft. must be elevated to or above the base flood elevation.

However, the National Flood Insurance Program provides for wet floodproofing in lieu of elevation above the base flood for residential accessory buildings that are 1) small and that 2) represent a minimal investment of the property owner or resident. FEMA considers an accessory building in these A zones to be small if it is "less than or equal to the size of a one-story, two-car garage" which is generally 600 sq. ft.

In order to obtain a permit in St. Charles Parish, FEMA's provisions also require that the building plans show:

1. The building will be anchored to resist flotation, collapse, and lateral movement.
2. The building will be constructed of flood-resistant materials below the BFE.
3. Mechanical and utility equipment will be elevated or dry floodproofed to or above the BFE.
4. The building will be wet floodproofed to protect it from hydrostatic pressure. The design must meet the NFIP design and performance standards for openings per 44 C.F.R 60.3(c)(5) and must allow for the automatic entry and exit of floodwaters without manual operation or the presence of a person (this is generally flood vents).

Over the last 5 years, the department processed an average of 70 permits for residential accessory buildings per year. Of the 65 residential accessory buildings permitted since January 1, 2024, 44 were in an A flood zone, and of the 44, 17 were under 600 sq. ft. and could have benefited from the wet-floodproofing option. 20 other accessory buildings were between 601 and 850 sq. ft. and might have reduced the building size to take advantage of the wet floodproofing option.

### **POTENTIAL OUTCOMES**

The change will allow residents to install larger detached accessory buildings using inexpensive wet floodproofing in lieu of elevating the top of the lowest floor above the base flood elevation.

### **DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION**

**Approval**