



Internal Memo

October 2, 2019

TO: Planning Commission Members

FROM: Ted Woodcock, Planning and Zoning Administrator *TSW*

SUBJECT: Detached accessory structures

OVERVIEW

The Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) has seen an increase in variance requests for the size of detached accessory structures. Current City ordinance is the same for every lot in the City of Norton Shores, however, there are larger lots (especially in the southern part of the City) where the parcels can accommodate larger accessory structures. Commissioner Otto, who is also a ZBA member, requested that the accessory structure ordinance be reviewed and potentially amended.

CURRENT ORDINANCE

Currently, City ordinance – Section 48-1081 through 48-1083 – says that each parcel is allowed two (2) accessory structures. One of those structures cannot exceed the size of the main dwelling, or 1,000 square feet, and the second structure cannot exceed 200 square feet. These restrictions are the same for every parcel in the City, as long as the applicant can meet all other dimensional zoning requirements (setbacks, lot coverage, etc.)

MUNICIPAL CONSISTENCY

After a look at five (5) area communities (City of Grand Haven, Fruitport Township, Georgetown Township, Spring Lake Township, and the City of Roosevelt Park) it is evident that these municipalities and many others use a “sliding scale” approach to the size of accessory structure. While each has their own methodology to determine the appropriate size for accessory structures, the overlying theme is that the larger the parcel, the larger and taller the accessory structures are permitted to be.

There are some variables as well, in that certain zoning districts within the above municipalities can have larger accessory structures, while others go solely based on parcel size without regard for the zoning district as long as the principal use is residential and the structure is accessory to the principal structure.

Tables are provided below of each municipality’s size and height allowance for accessory structures.

City of Grand Haven	
Principal building height	Accessory building height
Less than 18 ft.	Not to exceed principal structure
Between 18 ft. and 23 ft.	May not exceed 18 ft.
Greater than 23 ft.	May not exceed 80% of height of principal structure
Square footage: An accessory structure may not exceed 1,000 sq. ft. in SFR, MDR, DR, NS, S, E, OT, B, OR NMU districts	
Lot coverage: No accessory structure may exceed more than 25% of rear yard in SFR, MDR, DR, NS, S, E, OT, B, or NMU districts	
Fruitport Township	
Land size	Accessory building height
Less than 5 acres	24 ft. from avg. grade to top of roof
5 acres or more	35 ft. from avg. grade to top of roof
Square footage: dependent on lot size; total floor area of all buildings on a lot shall comply with the maximum percentage of building coverage allowed in the relevant district.	
Georgetown Township	
Zoning Districts LDR, LMR, MDR, MHR	
Accessory building height	Mean height not to exceed 14 ft.
Square footage	Door height not to exceed 12 ft.
	No greater than 600 sq. ft.
Zoning Districts HDR & MHP	
Accessory building height	Mean height not to exceed 14 ft.
Square footage	Door height not to exceed 12 ft.
	No greater than 960 sq. ft.
Zoning Districts RR & AG	
Accessory building height	Mean height not to exceed 16 ft.
	Door height not to exceed 14 ft.
Land Size	Accessory building size allowance
Less than 2 acres	960 sq. ft.
2 to 5 acres	1,200 sq. ft.
More than 5 acres	1,500 sq. ft.

City of Roosevelt Park	
Land Size	Accessory building height and size allowance
10,000 sq. ft. or less	16 ft. to highest point; 720 sq. ft.
Greater than 10,000 sq. ft. up to 1 acre.	18 ft. to highest point; 960 sq. ft.
Greater than 1 acre	20 ft. to highest point; 1,500 sq. ft.
<i>Note: Only 1 accessory structure allowed on residential parcels in the City.</i>	

Spring Lake Township	
Zoning Districts Agricultural & Rural Residential	
Land Size	Accessory building height
Number of buildings; size allowance	Accessory building height
4; 2,400 sq. ft. with no single building exceeding 1,600 sq. ft.	Supporting walls shall not exceed 18 ft. Unless regulated elsewhere, height shall not exceed 25 ft.
Greater than 1 acre and less than or equal to 5 acres	3; 1,600 sq. ft.
Greater than 1/2 acre and less than or equal to 1 acre	2; 960 sq. ft.
Less than or equal to 1/2 acre	2; 768 sq. ft.
Zoning Districts R-1, R-2, R-3, and R-4	
Land Size	Accessory building height
Number of buildings; size allowance	Accessory building height
Greater than 1 acre	Supporting walls shall exceed 10 ft. Height shall not exceed 20 ft and shall not be greater than one (1) story.
Greater than 1/2 acre and less than or equal to 1 acre	2; 768 sq. ft.
Less than or equal to 1/2 acre	2; 576 sq. ft.

ted woodcock

From: merilee otto <k-m-otto@comcast.net>
Sent: Wednesday, September 25, 2019 6:59 PM
To: ted woodcock
Subject: agenda item for October 8 planning commission meeting

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Hi Ted,

As a follow up of our conversation at the ZBA today, I would like to ask you to include the following item on the agenda for the October 8th planning commission meeting. You may reword it and present it in a more formal way, or whatever way is appropriate 😊

Thanks so much,
Merilee

Recently, we have had several requests to the ZBA for variances to accessory building sizes. These have been for properties around Mt. Garfield, and in the R5 district in town. Most of the requests make sense because the size of the property is large, and a larger accessory building won't affect neighbors, etc. 1000 square feet, which is the current ordinance, is too small for what these residents wish to house in their buildings.

As a member of the ZBA, I would like to suggest that the Planning Commission consider amending the zoning ordinance(s) covering the size of accessory buildings, particularly for R5 districts. We could look at other neighboring communities, and what they have. We could have the size of the building correlate to the size of the property it will be located on.

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