



Legislation Text

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TO: Mayor Bien-Willner and Town Council Members

FROM: Jill Keimach, Town Manager
Jeremy Knapp, Community Development Director
Paul Mood, Town Engineer

DATE: May 14, 2020

DEPARTMENT: Engineering

AGENDA TITLE:
Discussion of Building Pad Height

SUMMARY STATEMENT:
Background

At the January 23, 2020 Town Council Work Study staff presented material in regards to building pad heights which is one of the more frequent development related questions associated with new construction. When vacant lots are developed, or existing properties redeveloped building pad heights and overall allowable structure heights are often questioned.

Town Code Section 5-10-5, B,2, a states that *"The building pad shall not exceed two (2) feet in height except where required to protect the building against flooding, in which case the pad shall be one (1) foot above the water surface elevation of the 100-year event"*.

This section of the Town Code does not state where the height of the building pad shall be measured from and is open to interpretation. Historically, staff has interpreted the height of the building pad to be taken from the "natural grade" of the lot. This can create a situation where the building pad is not level. In order to get a level building pad, developers may add non-earthen material such as slurry, a thickened concrete pad or use stem walls and a framed floor to create a level building area. In the event that these construction methods are used to create a level building surface it does not change the elevation of the "lowest natural grade" from which the overall height of the structure is measured from.

As a follow up to the January, 23, 2020 Town Council Work Study the attached presentation provides information on surrounding municipal codes related to building pads and residential structure heights, visual impacts to properties and potential code amendments to require residential properties more closely follow the contour of the lot for non-hillside properties. An example of additional fill being added to a landscaped area is also included as the Town Code currently does not limit the amount of fill in landscaped areas.

Staff worked with a local architect and civil engineer that have completed numerous residential projects in Paradise Valley and surrounding municipalities to research fill material and building height requirements. No other municipalities were found to have limitations on the amount of fill that can be added under a building pad. Paradise Valley was found to have the most restrictive height requirements while Phoenix, Glendale and Scottsdale were the least restrictive. Home Owners Associations may impose their own restrictions.

BUDGETARY IMPACT:

No anticipated impact at this time.

ATTACHMENT(S):

Attachment A - PowerPoint Presentation