

REVISED



20 N. Wacker Drive, Ste 1660

15010 S. Ravinia Avenue, Ste 10

Chicago, Illinois 60606-2903

Orland Park, Illinois 60462-5353

T 312 984 6400 F 312 984 6444 T 708 349 3888 F 708 349 1506

DD 312 984 6420

TO: The Historic Preservation Committee
FROM: Everette M. Hill, Jr.
DATE: August 13, 2009
RE: FAR Bonus for Landmark Homes

MEMORANDUM

Before discussing the three positions that have been taken relative to this issue; it is advisable to discuss how the FAR bonus currently works under the Park Ridge zoning ordinance.

There is currently a singular implication to the FAR bonus in Park Ridge. If a homeowner wishes to add to a home that was constructed prior to 1960, that home is entitled to an additional 3% of allowable habitable square footage. The maximum FAR permitted by our zoning ordinance is 45%. Roughly speaking, this means that a 7200 square foot lot could accommodate a home of about 3,000 square feet. If the home were built prior to 1960, the FAR could be 48% or 216 square feet larger. The idea was to give homeowners an incentive to build onto rather than tear down an older home. If a person has a 2800 square foot home on a 7200 square foot lot, being able to put on a 416 square foot addition (200 allowable plus 216 bonus) for a kitchen/family room remodel rather than 200 square feet may become important when deciding to preserve the current home rather than tearing it down and starting over.

This background information is important because currently every home in Park Ridge that is 50 years old or older and has retained its original foundation is entitled to this 3% bonus. Even if we don't adopt a preservation ordinance, every such house built prior to 1960 is entitled to the bonus as "a matter of right."

With this background in mind, the commission must address the question of whether homes designated as landmarks should be eligible for a floor area ratio (FAR) bonus. The following three positions have been put forward with respect to this question:

1. The 3% FAR bonus should remain available to all pre-1960 homes (with original foundation), including those achieving landmark status. But the bonus should be especially emphasized in the preservation ordinance. (The current draft of the Preservation Ordinance uses this alternative.)

- Reasoning: The original idea of incentivizing the preservation of all of our older housing stock remains valid. We should not sacrifice that incentive for the sake of the few homes that may achieve landmark status.

- Required change to zoning ordinance: None.

2. Make the FAR bonus available “as a matter of right” only to homes achieving landmark status:

- Reasoning: The mere fact of age should not entitle a home to the same FAR bonus as a home that has achieved landmark status. There should be additional encouragement to apply for landmark status. This does not necessarily mean that standards could not be established that would permit a bonus for non-landmark older homes. Every 50 year old home, however, should not be entitled to the bonus as a “matter of right.”
- Required change to zoning ordinance: In order to achieve this change, the City Council would have to amend the zoning ordinance to indicate that only landmark status homes are entitled to the 3% FAR bonus.

3. Landmark status homes should not be eligible for the 3% FAR bonus.

- Reasoning: The purpose of a preservation ordinance is to preserve an historic structure in its original state. The FAR bonus is an incentive only if a homeowner contemplates an addition to the home. To incentivize a change to the structure seems inconsistent with the whole point of a preservation ordinance.
- Required change to zoning ordinance: In order to achieve this change, the City Council would have to amend the zoning ordinance to indicate that landmark status homes would not be included in the pre-1960 FAR bonus program.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact me.

Sec. 23-1-1. Declaration.

D. The preservation of *significant* properties, buildings and historic *structures* will serve to:

1. Stabilize and improve the economic vitality and value of the City in general, and of *designated sites* and *improvements* in particular;
2. Preserve the City's existing housing stock;
3. Provide an opportunity for property owners to preserve the City's built environment;
4. Foster civic pride in the beauty and accomplishments of the past;
5. Enhance the City's appeal to visitors so as to support and stimulate commerce;
6. Promote and encourage the continued private ownership and use of designated sites and improvements to the maximum extent consistent with the above objectives.

Deleted: 3

Deleted: 4

Deleted: 5

Sec. 23-2-3.

D. Provide financial and technical assistance as may from time to time be available to the owners of a *landmark* or property within an *historic district*; including the providing of a plaque or other appropriate indicia of status,

Deleted: t

Deleted: 239990_1

Formatted: Font: 8 pt

Formatted: Font: 8 pt