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To: Planning and Zoning Commission Members
From: Kenneth Garrett, Zoning Administrator
Date: March 20, 2024
RE: Shipping Container Ordinance Text Amendment
Hearing Date: March 27, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.

On January 24, the Planning and Zoning Commission considered a text amendment to allow shipping containers within the village in certain zoning districts via a special use. The P&Z unanimously voted to approve the text amendment.

On February 14, the Village Board considered the Village initiated (text Amendment) to allow shipping containers in certain zoning districts.

The Village Board has sent the proposed ordinance back to the P&Z committee to look at other possibilities to place the shipping containers on a surface other than asphalt or concrete. Included in your packet is the ordinance the board considered. See section 8-7-13 A 5 on page two of the ordinance that references the surface requirement of asphalt or concrete. The Village Board felt the cost to install shipping containers on an asphalt or concrete surface was very costly and wanted the P&Z to re-consider this section of the ordinance. There were no other discussions regarding the proposed ordinance.

There are two scenarios in my opinion. The first scenario is when a shipping container is used for storage. Below you will find different options to consider. The second scenario is when a shipping container is used for commercial habitable uses, such as; a small retail store, office, restaurant or other similar spaces. In that scenario, I recommend, the container be required to be installed on an asphalt or concrete surface.

There are a few options to consider when establishing a suitable surface to rest the shipping container on. Below are options for you to deliberate on and discuss.

1. The shipping container shall rest on piers (postholes) at each corner. This is based on the bottom of the pier to be supported on a proper material of clay, sand or other suitable soil. The piers shall be a minimum of 24 inches round. When placing the shipping container on piers, the shipping container will rest a couple of inches above the ground. This area below the container shall be equipped with weed control to avoid weed growth. The bottom of the container shall be skirted

Shipping Container

to avoid rodents from harboring under the shipping container. The skirting should be a durable material to be able to withstand the weather elements.

2. The shipping container shall rest on a bed of compacted gravel. The gravel shall be no less than 12 (twelve) inches thick. It is critical the gravel base be level to avoid unnecessary settlement. The area adjacent to the shipping container shall be graded as to ensure water will runoff away from the shipping container. It is best that the excavation for the gravel base be removed to a clay, sand or similar substrate for a suitable surface.
3. The shipping container shall rest on a minimum of 8 inch x 16 inch grade beam. This will be costly and I believe more costly than an asphalt or concrete base. This is only being provided to show an alternative. This is a costly alternate and is not in the context of the village boards direction. I do not recommend this solution.
4. The shipping container shall rest on an asphalt or concrete base. This is the current language and as stated above, the board is requesting another choice to be less impactful (costly) to the business owner.

Recommendation:

Option 1 (one) recommended installing piers at the corners of the shipping container. This method is infinitely more stable, but will be at a higher cost. In this scenario, the shipping container industry recommends for more active use of the shipping container where access to the shipping container is more frequent than on a monthly basis.

Option 2 recommends a gravel base. This option is less costly, but it is relying on the ground and gravel to provide the strength to support the container. This will require a solid surface below.

It is my recommendation that either method will serve the purpose of supporting the structure. From a cost basis, the gravel base is sufficient to support the shipping container.

Habitable shipping containers shall continue to be placed on an asphalt or concrete surface.

Should you have any questions regarding this report feel free to contact me at your convenience.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kenneth Garrett
Zoning Administrator – Village of Poplar Grove