

VENTURA COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

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October 4, 2016

Board of Directors
Ventura County Fire Protection District
800 S. Victoria Avenue
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SUBJECT:

Adoption of Ventura County Fire Protection District (Fire District) Ordinance No. 30, Adopting by Reference the 2016 California Fire Code (CFC) and the 2015 Edition of the International Fire Code (IFC), with Amendments; and Repealing Fire District Ordinance No. 28. (Copies of the CFC and IFC Are on File with the Clerk of the Board.)

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Introduce and read in title only the attached, proposed Fire District Ordinance No. 30, which would adopt by reference the 2016 California Fire Code (CFC), with amendments thereto, and the 2015 edition of the International Fire Code (IFC), together with portions of the Appendix Chapters thereof, along with amendments thereto, and repeal Fire District Ordinance No. 28 in its entirety; and continue the matter for final adoption of Ordinance No. 30 on October 25, 2016.
2. Schedule a public hearing for October 25, 2016, at 7 p.m. in the main council chambers at the City of Camarillo for the purpose of adopting Ordinance No. 30.
3. Direct the Clerk of the Board to publish notices of such public hearing and a Summary of proposed Ordinance No. 30, to be prepared by the Fire Chief or his designee and approved by County Counsel, pursuant to subdivision (b) of Government Code Section 25124, and place copies of the CFC and IFC on file for public examination.
4. Direct the Fire District to transmit Chapter 9 of Ordinance No. 30, when adopted, to the legislative bodies of the County of Ventura and each city within the Fire District for ratification in accordance with the provisions of California Health and Safety Code Section 13869.7.

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FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no additional fiscal impact associated with this Board letter.

DISCUSSION:

The fire code currently in effect within the Fire District, pursuant to Fire District Ordinance No. 28, is the 2013 edition of the CFC and the 2012 edition of the IFC, as amended by your Board. The IFC was created in the late 1990s when the three national regional “legacy” codes (National Building Code, Uniform Building Code, and Standard Building Code) were merged into a single model code. This task took several years, and the first edition of the IFC was published in 2000. Since that time, a growing number of jurisdictions across the country have adopted it, modified it, and called it their own.

The state of California recently adopted and published the 2016 CFC, which is based on the 2015 IFC, and becomes effective on January 1, 2017. All provisions of the 2016 CFC will be automatically applicable throughout the state on January 1, 2017, unless local jurisdictions amend one or more sections of the CFC.

The ordinance before your Board adopts an amended version of the 2016 CFC, as adopted by the California Building Standards Commission, and the 2015 edition of the IFC, as published by the International Code Council.

The CFC and IFC provide regulations necessary for the maintenance of fire prevention and life safety provisions for buildings and premises. The California Building Code regulates the fire, life, and structural safety aspects of all buildings and related structures. Neither code covers all issues, but together they provide a complete and comprehensive program of regulations that are compatible in terms and requirements.

The 2015 edition of the IFC updates previous editions and incorporates changes approved by the International Code Council. The code change process that led to the publication of this edition involved open public hearings and approvals by code officials representing jurisdictions throughout the country.

The concept of a single set of codes for the nation is grounded in the economic efficiency gained by unified design and building criteria. It is less expensive to create, maintain, design, build to, and enforce a single set of building standards. While uniformity is a worthy concept, it is a goal and not an absolute. No responsible city or state adopts a model code without thoroughly analyzing its geographic, climactic, and topographic characteristics, as well as its public expectation of acceptable risk, demographics, economic conditions, public safety infrastructure, and loss history.

This year, as in the past, the Fire District has exercised due diligence in the analysis of the CFC and model code and has found it desirable to propose amendments to meet conditions encountered in Ventura County. Significant amendments that have been retained from Fire District Ordinance No. 28 concern local requirements for such things as fire flow, fire hazard abatement, and fire protection systems, with minor editorial changes related to location within the code and numbering sections. There are some proposed modifications to existing amendments and to the 2015 IFC that are described in the attached Analysis of Amendments. The amendments are presented for your review. A preliminary draft of the proposed amendments and findings was presented to building officials and several interested local contractors, architects, and engineers, pursuant to Health and Safety Code Section 13869.7. (Because the IFC is a copyrighted work, it cannot be made available to the public electronically without payment to the International Code Council, Inc., of substantial license fees, including regular maintenance fees. As an alternative, the Fire District has placed a copy of the IFC on file with the Clerk of the Board for your review and public examination. If adopted, copies of the IFC will be made available at Fire District headquarters in accordance with Government Code Section 50022.1, et seq.)

Chapter 9, which regulates automatic fire sprinkler systems, contains amendments that are defined as building standards. The amendments included in Chapter 9 are more restrictive than the building standards contained within the California Building Code. The Fire District has maintained such building standards containing requirements for automatic fire extinguishing systems since June 3, 1982, when Fire District Ordinance No. 14 was adopted.

The fire protection requirements of the proposed Ordinance 30 were formulated pursuant to California Health and Safety Code Section 13869.7, which authorizes the Fire District to adopt building standards relating to fire and public safety that are more stringent than those standards contained in the California Building Standards Code; however, such standards must be ratified by the legislative bodies of the cities and the County before they become effective therein. Therefore, an additional agenda item will be presented after the public hearing on October 25, 2016, so that the Board of Supervisors for the County of Ventura can ratify Chapter 9 to allow enforcement within the unincorporated areas of the county.

If this proposed ordinance is not approved, existing Fire District Ordinance No. 28 will remain in effect, which would result in conflicts between the California Building Code (which is expected to be adopted by the County and each city), the California Fire Code, and the current 2012 International Fire Code, adopted by reference in Fire District Ordinance No. 28. Without approval by your Board of Recommendation No. 4 and the subsequent ratification by the County and the cities, the Fire District will lose the ability

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to enforce the fire protection building standards that have essentially been in effect continuously since June 3, 1982.

The County Executive Office, the Auditor-Controller's Office, and County Counsel have reviewed this letter and proposed ordinance.

If you have any questions regarding this item, please contact me at 389-9704 or Fire Marshal Massoud Araghi at 389-9729.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Lorenzen', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mark Lorenzen
Fire Chief

ML/MA:II

Attachments: Exhibit 1 – Clean Version of Ordinance No. 30
Exhibit 2 – Legislative (Strikeout) Version of Ordinance No. 30
Exhibit 3 – Analysis of Amendments
Exhibit 4 – Summary of Changes