



**LANDSCAPE SUBCOMMITTEE  
LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATION ADVISORY BOARD (LDRAB)**

**NOVEMBER 13, 2013 SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY**

**Prepared by Rodney Swonger**

On Wednesday, November 13, 2013, the Landscape Subcommittee held their seventh meeting at the Vista Center, Room VC-2E-12-Conference Room, at 2300 North Jog Road, West Palm Beach, Florida.

**A. CALL TO ORDER  
9:38 am**

**1. Introduction of Members, Staff and Interested Parties**

**Subcommittee Members:** None Present

**Industry/public:** Collene Walter, Leo Urban, Drew Martin, Michelle Duchene, Chuck Mucciolo, Gladys Digirolamo, and Dan Siemsen

**County Staff:** Maryann Kwok, Barbara Pinkston, Rodney Swonger, Laurie Albrecht, William Cross, George Galle, Jon Powers, Michael Rawls, and Carl Bengtson

**2. Additions, Substitutions and Deletions to Agenda**

There were no additions, substitutions or deletions to the agenda.

**3. Motion to Adopt Agenda**

Agenda could not be adopted without Subcommittee members present.

**B. Review Summary From 8-21-2013 Subcommittee Meeting (Exhibit A)**

There were no comments on the summary.

**C. Review Proposed ULDC Wall Height (Exhibit B)**

Barbara explained that there was an incident where a single-family homeowner installed a wall that was in excess of code requirements. She stated that we need to take a more comprehensive look at how walls are measured in reference to Articles 1, 5, and 7, of the Unified Land Development Code (ULDC). Barbara said the focus is to review those sections of the ULDC, and see whether there are any possible Building Code changes in relation to elevation.

Barbara discussed what changes were made to Article 5 Fences, Walls, and Hedges height. She stated that the graphic in Article 1 Figure 1.C.4.C. will need to be modified to be consistent with the proposed changes in the code language. She said that Article 1 references the Building Code for finished grade, and that the Building Code no longer has a definition for finished grade.

**1. Discussion**

- Maryann discussed how the Zoning Division applies the code in terms of wall measurements..

- Collene drew diagrams on the board showing two properties side by side with no elevation change and two with two feet or more elevation change. She asked if a retaining wall could be permitted with or without a wall or fence on top and how tall the wall should be limited to. All agreed that we want to avoid solid walls being 10 feet high.
- There was further discussion on separating residential sites next to non-residential site.
- Bill wanted to make sure the Building Division addressed historical drainage and how to apply when retaining and standard walls were installed.
- Dan questioned Article 7 Figure 7.D.14.B, does it not address grade issues and can it be modified to address concerns.
- Bill clarified that the text applied to perimeter buffers and would need to be revised to apply to other scenario's, as written the figure shows one thing and the text says something else. This will need to be fixed.
- There was discussion on defining average grade or elevation.
- The group said there should be some options for on top of the retaining wall that would not be so intrusive.
- Maryann drew a diagram of a wall located in a fifteen (15) foot incompatibility, which is normally set 7 1/2 feet in from the property line and located on top on berm. This allows room on both sides of the wall for landscaping.
- Leo was concerned with not letting walls go higher than six (6) feet, when residents are parking boats or trailers.
- The group agreed that making hedges and walls the same height was a good solution. Eight (8) feet was the recommended height requirement.
- There was some concern with visibility in the back yard for sight issues, next to golf courses, waterways and preserves. They mentioned privacy walls in the back yards of Zero Lot Line Homes. This really did not meet the same issues. Leo mentioned that Ft. Lauderdale had some restrictions concerning the sight limitations.
- When wall permits applications are submitted to Building/Zoning for review, it is not known if a retaining wall exists or what the elevations are for the adjacent lots. George, mentioned not using a diagram, but limiting the wall height to eight (8) feet max. and if they do not want to meet this requirement the wall must meet the same setback as the structure.
- There was suggestions with treating larger lots and rural lots differently from small lots, if the fence is transparent.

## **2. Residential Wall Issues Recap**

- Retaining walls should be treated differently.
- Grades changes; cleaning up and adding language to make more clear.
- Allowing walls and fences to be eight (8) feet instead of six (6) feet.
- Allow non-opaque fence or structure on top of opaque fence or wall where necessary to address need for safety barrier on high side.
- Should line of sight or visibility be considered on water fronts, golf courses or preserves.
- Allowing non-opaque fences up to six (6) feet in the front setback.

### **3. New Language**

- Walls should be measured from the highest grade on commercial adjacent to residential and lowest grade on residential adjacent to residential. There may be some changes to Article 18. The new language will go to the 2014-001, and will go to LDRAB in April or May of 2014.
- Zoning will review diagrams in Article #1 and #7.
- Zoning will come up with some language of opaque vs. non-opaque.

### **D. Perimeter walls**

1. Perimeter buffer walls or non residential walls should be allowed to be eight (8) feet in height. Gladys, said this would help with security in their communities.

### **E. Next Meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for January 29, 2014, 1:00 – 2:30 p..m.  
The meeting adjourned at 10:40 a.m.

