

MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE

CHUGIAK-EAGLE RIVER ADVISORY BOARD RESOLUTION 2020 - 02
Second Resolution Regarding AO 2020-85, Revisions to Title 23,
Building Codes

October 17, 2020

WHEREAS, the Chugiak Eagle River Advisory Board (Board) is established in Title 21 by Section 21.10.030.B and is constituted in order to review and make recommendations on actions regarding potential changes in land use law that impact multiple Community Council areas in the Chugiak Eagle River (CER) area; and

WHEREAS, the Board, with local representation present from the Eklutna Valley, South Fork, Chugiak, Birchwood, and Eagle River Valley Community Councils, met on October 17, 2020 to discuss AO 2020-85 with particular reference to Section 23.45.507.1 Required Water Supply; and

WHEREAS, the Anchorage Assembly (Assembly) has continued consideration of AO 2020-85 to October 27, 2020 in order to allow further public comment and consideration; and

WHEREAS, the Board is informed that the International Fire Code has for many years imposed Water Supply Requirements on new construction and the Fire Code section of Title 23 has for many years exempted one and two family residential structures from these requirements; and

WHEREAS, the Board is informed that the exemption of one and two family residential structures from the Water Supply requirements was omitted from the 2012 revision of Title 23, but that the requirements have not been enforced, at least in the CER area; and

WHEREAS, the Board is unaware that any local residential contractors are aware of the Water Supply requirements for one and two family residential construction, lending credence to the proposition that they have not been enforced; and

WHEREAS, the Proposed amendments to ANC 23.45.507.1 in AO 2020-85 are more permissive than the existing code in that they exempt one and two family residential structures that incorporate fire suppression sprinkler systems from the Water Supply requirements: however, this depends entirely on how the current code is currently being enforced, and how that enforcement may change in the future; and

WHEREAS, the Board is concerned that unenforced building codes expose home owners to insurance risk related to non-compliance with unenforced codes; and

WHEREAS, the IFC committee has represented wildland fire hazard as its primary motivation for discontinuing the exemption of one and two family residential structures from the requirements of section 507.1 for Available Water Supply; and

WHEREAS, the Board finds the possible connection between sprinkler systems and wildland fire hazard to be tenuous, at best; and

WHEREAS, there may be actions that the Municipality of Anchorage (MOA) could and should take pursuant to NFPA 1142 and/or the IWUIC, or possibly through some other local amendment, that would be more effective, or more cost effective, at reducing wildland fire hazard than adding sprinkler systems to new one and two family residential structures; and

WHEREAS, the Board is unaware of what consideration was given to such actions by the IFC committee and by the Anchorage Assembly prior to the 2012 Title 23 revision, but believes that such consideration should have been an important part of the original decision not to exempt one and two family residential structures from section 507.1 in the 2012 revision, and if it cannot be demonstrated to have already been done, should be an important part of the current decision regarding one and two family structures going forward; and

WHEREAS, the Board takes no position at this time on the ultimate merits of building sprinklers or other risk mitigation measures relating to building occupant safety, total cost, or wildland fire hazard mitigation; and

WHEREAS, the Board is concerned about the long term cost of residential building sprinkler systems, including, but not limited to, cost of maintenance and risk of damage due to accidental deployment of the system; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, (by unanimous vote) that the Anchorage Assembly should restore the previous exemption of one and two family residential structures from the water supply requirements of section 507.1 until such time as it has been able to identify and evaluate all of the available options for mitigating wildland fire hazard in the Anchorage wildland-urban interface.

Robert R Reagan, acting for

Debbie Ossiander, chair