

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MAY 1, 2018

TO: CHAIRWOMAN LYMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION

FROM: KARL MORITZ, DIRECTOR, PLANNING AND ZONING

SUBJECT: TEXT AMENDMENT #2018-0004, RESIDENTIAL OPEN PORCHES AND PORTICOS (DOCKET ITEM #5)

This memorandum provides an update to Text Amendment #2018-0004 regarding residential open porches and porticos. Based on feedback from the Planning Commission, staff proposes a revision to the porch definition relating to railing height.

In reference to the note in the staff report which states “Railings would continue to be permitted if they do not exceed the minimum height required by the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC),” Vice Chair Macek questioned the use of a building code minimum as a maximum. Noting that the building code minimum for residential railings is 36” but 42” for commercial construction, Mr. Macek suggested that a 42” railing height for residential construction should be allowed.

Staff proposes the following change:

Section 2-183.2 – Porch.

A covered, open structure that adjoins the exterior of a dwelling. A porch shall not be enclosed with walls, glass, screens, or similar. Railings shall be permitted no higher than **three-and-one-half feet or** the minimum height required by the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC), whichever is higher. ~~and with~~ Balusters **shall be** evenly spaced so as to leave at least 50 percent of the perimeter length of the railings open.