



Town of Tiburon

STAFF REPORT

above grade. Other homes which do not cut into the slope, however, would be entitled to a full 30 feet of building height above the existing grade.

The difference between homes that bury portions of the structure below grade and others that simply sit upon a cut into the hillside is a matter of visual exposure. A home dug into the hillside in conformance with the Hillside Guidelines would have less visual mass than a home in which the grade has been lowered but all portions of the house are visible. A change in measuring the building height may be appropriate to exclude below grade building areas which are not visible. However, it is not recommended that homes with exposed surfaces below the natural grade of the lot be allowed additional building height.

Staff surveyed other cities within Marin County regarding their building height measurement methods. Each city has a different method of measuring building height, and none has requirements that measure from the outside surface of a building if that portion is below grade.

In order to address these issues, Section 5.06.07 would be amended to read as follows:

“Height is the plumb vertical distance, measured using a plane, established by the lower of the natural or finished grade at the perimeter of the **exposed** exterior surface of the building, structure, fence, or wall. No point of the roof edge, fence, wall, parapet, mansard, structure, or other building feature shall extend above the plane established by the maximum height line from grade, except as specifically excluded below.”

In addition, the Height Measurement Diagram illustrations would be modified, as shown on Exhibit 2, to reflect this change.

FUTURE ACTIONS REQUIRED

These proposed changes to the Zoning Ordinance are being presented to the Design Review Board for courtesy review. The amendments have been scheduled for a hearing before the Planning Commission on March 15, along with other potential amendments to the Zoning Ordinance. The Planning Commission will make a recommendation to the Town Council regarding the possible adoption of these amendments.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Design Review Board discuss the potential amendments to the Tiburon Zoning Ordinance and provide feedback that will be passed along for consideration by the Planning Commission and Town Council.

EXHIBITS

1. Existing Height Measurement Diagram included in Tiburon Zoning Ordinance
2. Proposed Height Measurement Diagram
3. Goal 1, Principles 1 & 2 of the Hillside Design Guidelines