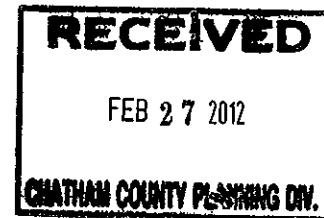


February 9, 2012

Mr. Jason Sullivan, Director  
Chatham County Planning Department  
PO Box 54  
80-A East Street-Dunlap Building  
Pittsboro, NC 27312



Re: Follow up response to October 19, 2011 meeting.

Dear Mr. Sullivan:

The purpose of this correspondence is to follow up our meeting of October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2011 regarding the width of roads in Chatham County.

To provide background, this office issued a formal interpretation on February 1, 2011 which stated the requirements in Sections 102.10 and 503 of the 2009 NC Fire Code defining the minimum width of roads as it applies to subdivisions. The primary issue discussed at the October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2011 meeting was the alternative design provisions addressed in Section 105.1 of the 2009 Administrative Code and Policies.

Your first question in my words is as follows; "Can the county building and fire inspectors approve a road that is less than 20-feet in width as identified in Section 503 of the 2009 NC Fire Code?"

The answer is yes.

It is the intent of Section 503 of the NC Fire Code to design fire apparatus access roads to a minimum width that is safe for fire apparatus to travel on and to perform emergency functions including laying fire hose from a water source and the movement of fire hoses from the fire apparatus to the fire or other emergency as needed.

The fire code official may accept road widths less than 20 feet as an alternate material, design or method provided that in his opinion the reduced road widths provide the same level of functionality and technical equivalency as intended by Section 503 of the NC Fire Code. In making this determination the fire code official should consider topography, the width of the fire apparatus responding to an emergency call on the street, placement of hoses for water supply and fire-fighting and the ability for other emergency vehicles to maneuver around the first responding fire apparatus on the street or road.

Your second question in my words is as follows: "Are existing subdivision roads that have been approved but are less than 20-foot wide required to be widened?"

The answer is no.

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Formal Interpretation

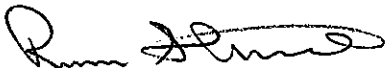
Subdivisions in existence prior to the adoption of the NC Fire Code are considered pre-existing and would not be subject to the requirements of the NC Fire Code unless new or phased site development occurs within the existing subdivision. In this scenario, only the new or phased development area would be subject to the provisions of Section 503 of the NC Fire Code.

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In addition, existing roads that have been accepted for maintenance by NC DOT or existing roads that are built to NC DOT design standards are not required to meet the Fire Code's 20-foot width standard.

Please feel free to call me at 919-661-5880, extension 255 if you wish to discuss this in further detail.

Sincerely,



Richard Strickland  
Chief Fire Code Consultant  
NC Department of Insurance  
Office of State Fire Marshal

c Chris Noles, Deputy Commissioner of Insurance