

**TOWN OF AMHERST
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS**

Notice is hereby given that public hearings will be held by the Town of Amherst Planning Commission at 7:00 PM on February 5, 2025, in the Council Chambers of the Town Hall at 174 South Main Street, Amherst, VA, on the following:

Proposed amendments to Town Code Chapter 24, Article 5, related to Floodplains to comply with updated FEMA requirements for floodplain regulation and management in order to remain eligible for the National Flood Insurance Program.

All interested persons may express their views by emailing sara.mcguffin@amherstva.gov prior to the meeting. Anyone having questions regarding the above may contact the Town Hall Office at 434-946-7885.

Supporting documentation is attached below and is available for inspection in the Town Hall during normal working hours.

ARTICLE V. FLOODPLAINS

DIVISION 1. GENERALLY

Sec. 24-294. Definitions.

The following words, terms and phrases, when used in this article, shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this section, except where the context clearly indicates a different meaning:

Accessory structure means a non-residential structure which is on the same parcel of property as the principal structure and the use of which is incidental to the use of the principal structure.

Base flood/100-year flood means a flood that, on the average, is likely to occur once every 100 years (i.e., that has a one percent chance of occurring each year, although the flood may occur in any year).

Base flood elevation means the water surface elevations of the base flood, that is, the flood level that has a one percent or greater chance of occurrence in any given year. The water surface elevation of the base flood in relation to the datum specified on the community's Flood Insurance Rate Map. For the purposes of this ordinance, the base flood is the 1% annual chance flood.

Basement means any area of the building having its floor sub-grade (below ground level) on all sides.

Board of zoning appeals means the board appointed to review appeals made by individuals with regard to decisions of the zoning administrator in the interpretation of this chapter.

Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR) means A formal review and comment as to whether a proposed flood protection project or other project complies with the minimum NFIP requirements for such projects with respect to delineation of special flood hazard areas. A CLOMR does not revise the effective Flood Insurance Rate Map or Flood Insurance Study.

Development means any manmade change to improved or unimproved real estate, including, but not limited to, buildings and other structures, the placement of manufactured homes, streets, and other paving, utilities, filling, grading, excavation, mining, dredging, drilling operation, or storage of equipment or materials.

Existing manufactured home park/subdivision means a manufactured home park or subdivision for which the construction of facilities for servicing the lots on which the manufactured homes are to be affixed (including, at a minimum, the installation of utilities, the construction of streets, and either final site grading or the pouring of concrete pads) is completed before the initial effective date of these regulations.

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Expansion to an existing manufactured home park or subdivision means the preparation of additional sites by the construction of facilities for servicing the lots on which the manufactured homes are to be affixed (including the installation of utilities, the construction of streets and either final site grading or the pouring of concrete pads).

1. Flood means a general and temporary inundation of normally dry land areas. A general or temporary condition of partial or complete inundation of normally dry land areas from:
 - a. The overflow of inland or tidal waters; or,
 - b. The unusual and rapid accumulation or runoff of surface waters from any source,
 - c. Mudflows which are proximately caused by flooding as defined in paragraph (1)(b) of this definition and are akin to a river of liquid and flowing mud on the surfaces of normally dry land areas, as when earth is carried by a current of water and deposited along the path of the current.
2. The collapse or subsidence of land along the shore of a lake or other body of water as a result of erosion or undermining caused by waves or currents of water exceeding anticipated cyclical levels or suddenly caused by an unusually high water level in a natural body of water, accompanied by a severe storm, or by an unanticipated force of nature such as flash flood or an abnormal tidal surge, or by some similarly unusual and unforeseeable event which results in flooding as defined in paragraph 1 (a) of this definition.

Floodplain means:

- (1) A relatively flat or low land area adjoining a river, stream or watercourse which is subject to partial or complete inundation;
- (2) An area subject to the usual and rapid accumulation or runoff of surface water from any source.

Floodprone area means any land area susceptible to being inundated by water from any source.

Floodway means the designated area of the floodplain required to carry and discharge floodwaters of a given magnitude. For the purposes of this chapter, the floodway shall be capable of accommodating a flood of the 100-year magnitude, the channel of a river or other watercourse and the adjacent land areas that must be reserved in order to discharge the base flood without cumulatively increasing the water surface elevation more than one foot at any point within the community.

Floodproofing means any combination of structural and non-structural additions, changes, or adjustments to structures which reduce or eliminate flood damage to real estate or improved real property, water and sanitary facilities, structures and their contents.

Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) means an official map of a community, on which the Federal Emergency Management Agency has delineated both the special hazard areas and the risk premium zones applicable to the community. A FIRM that has been made available digitally is called a Digital Flood Insurance Rate Map (DFIRM).

Flood Insurance Study (FIS) means a report by FEMA that examines, evaluates and determines flood hazards and, if appropriate, corresponding water surface elevations, or an examination, evaluation and determination of mudflow and/or flood-related erosion hazards.

Highest Adjacent Grade (HAG) means The highest natural elevation of the ground surface prior to construction next to the proposed walls of a structure.

Historic structure means any structure that is:

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- (1) Listed individually in the National Register of Historic Places (a listing maintained by the Department of Interior) or preliminarily determined by the Secretary of the Interior as meeting the requirements for individual listing on the National Register;
 - (2) Certified or preliminarily determined by the Secretary of the Interior as contributing to the historical significance of a registered historic district or a district preliminarily determined by the Secretary to qualify as a registered historical district;
 - (3) Individually listed on a state inventory of historic places in states with historic preservation programs which have been approved by the Secretary of the Interior; or
 - (4) Individually listed on a local inventory of historic places in communities with historic preservation programs that have been certified either:
 - a. By an approved state program as determined by the Secretary of the Interior; or
 - b. Directly by the Secretary of the Interior in states without approved programs.

Letters of Map Change (LOMC) means a Letter of Map Change is an official FEMA determination, by letter, that amends or revises an effective Flood Insurance Rate Map or Flood Insurance Study.

Letter of Map Amendment (LOMA) means an amendment based on technical data showing that a property was incorrectly included in a designated special flood hazard area. A LOMA amends the current effective Flood Insurance Rate Map and establishes that a land as defined by ~~met~~ets and bounds or structure is not located in a special flood hazard area.

Letter of Map Revision (LOMR) means A revision based on technical data that may show changes to flood zones, flood elevations, floodplain and floodway delineations, and planimetric features. A Letter of Map Revision Based on Fill (LOMR-F), is a determination that a structure or parcel of land has been elevated by fill above the base flood elevation and is, therefore, no longer exposed to flooding associated with the base flood. In order to qualify for this determination, the fill must have been permitted and placed in accordance with the community's floodplain management regulations.

Lowest Adjacent Grace (LAG) means the lowest natural elevation of the ground surface next to the walls of a structure.

Lowest Floor means The lowest floor of the lowest enclosed area (including basement). An unfinished or flood-resistant enclosure, usable solely for parking of vehicles, building access or storage in an area other than a basement area is not considered a building's lowest floor; provided, that such enclosure is not built so as to render the structure in violation of the applicable non-elevation design requirements of Federal Code 44CFR §60.3.

Manufactured home means ~~the same as the meaning described in the definitions section of this chapter,~~ a structure, transportable in one or more sections, which is built on a permanent chassis and is designed for use with or without a permanent foundation when connected to the required utilities. For floodplain management purposes the term "manufactured home" also includes park trailers, travel trailers, and other similar vehicles placed on a site for greater than 180 consecutive days.

Manufactured home park/subdivision means a parcel (or contiguous parcels) of land divided into two or more lots for rent or sale.

~~*New construction, for the purpose of determining insurance rates, means structures for which the start of construction commenced on or after the effective of an initial FIRM (flood insurance rate map) or after December 31, 1974, whichever is later, and includes any subsequent improvements to such structures. For floodplain management purposes, the term "new construction" means structures for which the start of construction commenced on or after the effective date of a floodplain management regulation adopted by a community and includes any subsequent improvements to such structures.*~~ *Structures for which the start of construction commenced on or after the effective start date of this floodplain management ordinance and includes any subsequent improvements to such structures. Any construction started after effective date of community's first floodplain management ordinance adopted by the community and before the effective start date of this floodplain management ordinance is subject to the ordinance in effect at the time the permit was issued, provided the start of construction was within 180 days of permit issuance.*

New manufactured home park/subdivision means a manufactured home park or subdivision for which the construction of facilities for servicing the lots on which the manufactured homes are to be affixed (including, at a minimum, the installation of utilities, the construction of streets, and either final site grading or the pouring of concrete pads) is completed on or after the initial effective date of the ordinance from which this chapter is derived.

Post-FIRM structures means for floodplain management purposes, a structure for which construction, or other development for which the "start of construction" occurred on or after the effective date of the initial Flood Insurance Rate Map.

Pre-FIRM structures means for floodplain management purposes, a structure for which construction or other development for which the "start of construction" occurred before the effective date of the initial Flood Insurance Rate Map.

Recreational vehicle means a vehicle which is:

- (1) Built on a single chassis;
- (2) Four hundred square feet or less when measured at the largest horizontal projection;
- (3) Designed to be self-propelled or permanently towable by a light-duty truck; and
- (4) Designed primarily not for use as a permanent dwelling but as temporary living quarters for recreational camping, travel, or seasonal use.

Repetitive Loss Structure means a building covered by a contract for flood insurance that has incurred flood-related damages on two occasions in a 10-year period, in which the cost of the repair, on the average, ~~equalled~~ exceeded 25 percent of the market value of the structure at the time of each such flood event; and at the time of the second incidence of flood-related damage, the contract for flood insurance contains increased cost of compliance coverage.

Severe Repetitive Loss Structure means a structure that: (a) Is covered under a contract for flood insurance made available under the NFIP; and (b) Has incurred flood related damage - (i) For which 4 or more separate claims payments have been made under flood insurance coverage with the amount of each such claim exceeding \$5,000, and with the cumulative amount of such claims payments exceeding \$20,000; or (ii) For which at least 2 separate claims payments have been made under such coverage, with the cumulative amount of such claims exceeding the market value of the insured structure.

Special Flood Hazard Area means the land in the floodplain subject to a one (1%) percent or greater chance of being flooded in any given year.

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Start of construction means the date the building permit was issued, provided the actual start of construction, repair, reconstruction, rehabilitation, addition, placement, or other improvement was within 180 days of the permit date. The actual start means either the first placement of permanent construction of a structure on a site, such as the pouring of a slab or footings, the installation of piles, the construction of columns, or any work beyond the stage of excavation; or the placement of a manufactured home on a foundation. Permanent construction does not include land preparation, such as clearing, grading and filling; nor does it include the installation of streets and/or walkways; nor does it include excavation for a basement, footings, piers, or foundations or the erection of temporary forms; nor does it include the installation on the property of accessory buildings, such as garages or sheds not occupied as dwelling units or not part of the main structure. For a substantial improvement, the actual start of construction means the first alteration on any wall, ceiling, floor, or other structural part of a building, whether or not the alteration affects the external dimensions of the building.

Structure means for floodplain management purposes, a walled and roofed building, including a gas or liquid storage tank, that is principally above ground, as well as a manufactured home.

Substantial damage means damage of any origin sustained by a structure whereby the cost of restoring the structure to its before-damaged condition would equal or exceed 50 percent of the market value of the structure before the damage occurred.

Substantial improvement means:

- (1) Any reconstruction, rehabilitation, addition, or other improvement of a structure, the cost of which equals or exceeds 50 percent of the market value of the structure before the start of construction of the improvement. The term "substantial improvement" includes structures which have incurred substantial damage regardless of the actual repair work performed.
- (2) The term "substantial improvement" does not, however, include either:
 - a. Any project for improvement of a structure to correct existing violations of state or local health, sanitary, or safety code specifications which have been identified by the local code enforcement official and which are the minimum necessary to ensure safe living conditions; or
 - b. Any alteration of an historic structure, provided that the alteration will not preclude the structures continued designation as an historic structure.

Violation means the failure of a structure or other development to be fully compliant with the community's floodplain management regulations. A structure or other development without the elevation certificate, other certifications, or other evidence of compliance required in this ordinance is presumed to be in

violation until such time as that documentation is provided.

(Zoning Ord. 2003, § 18.1-915.2)

Sec. 24-295. ~~Purpose.~~ – Statutory Authorization and Purpose [44 CFR 59.22(a)(2)]

Va. Code § 15.2-2283 specifies that zoning ordinances shall be for the general purpose of promoting the health, safety, or general welfare of the public and of further accomplishing the objectives of § 15.2-2200 which encourages localities to improve the public health, safety, convenience, and welfare of their citizens. To these ends, flood ordinances shall be designed to provide for safety from flood, to facilitate the provision of flood protection, and to protect against loss of life, health, or property from flood.

In accordance with these directed provisions, this ordinance is specifically adopted pursuant to the authority granted to localities by Va. Code § 15.2 - 2280.

The purpose of these provisions is to prevent: the loss of life, health, or property, the creation of health and safety hazards, the disruption of commerce and governmental services, the extraordinary and unnecessary expenditure of public funds for flood protection and relief, and the impairment of the tax base by:

- A. Regulating uses, activities, and development which, alone or in combination with other existing or future uses, activities, and development, will cause unacceptable increases in flood heights, velocities, and frequencies;
- B. Restricting or prohibiting certain uses, activities, and development from locating within districts subject to flooding;
- C. Requiring all those uses, activities, and developments that do occur in flood-prone districts to be protected and/or floodproofed against flooding and flood damage; and,
- D. Protecting individuals from ~~buying~~ buying land and structures which are unsuited for intended purposes because of flood hazards.

~~The purpose of these provisions is to prevent the loss of life and property, the creation of health and safety hazards, the disruption of commerce and governmental services, the extraordinary and unnecessary expenditure of public funds for flood protection and relief, and the impairment of the tax base by:~~

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~~(1) Regulating uses, activities, and development which, alone or in combination with other existing or future uses, activities, and development, will cause unacceptable increases in flood heights, velocities, and frequencies.~~

~~(2) Restricting or prohibiting certain uses, activities, and development from locating within districts subject to flooding.~~

~~(3) Requiring all those uses, activities, and developments that do occur in floodprone districts to be protected and/or floodproofed against flooding and flood damage.~~

~~(4) Protecting individuals from buying land and structures which are unsuited for intended purposes because of flood hazards.~~

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(Zoning Ord. 2003, § 18.1-915.1.1)

Sec. 24-296. Applicability.

These provisions shall apply to all lands within the jurisdiction of the town and identified as being in the 100-year floodplain by the Federal Insurance Administration.

(Zoning Ord. 2003, § 18.1-915.1.2)

Sec. 24-297. Compliance and liability.

- (a) No land shall hereafter be developed, and no structure shall be relocated, constructed, reconstructed, enlarged, or structurally altered except in full compliance with the terms and provisions of this chapter and any other applicable ordinances and regulations which apply to uses within the jurisdiction of this chapter.
- (b) The degree of flood protection sought by the provisions of this chapter is considered reasonable for regulatory purposes and is based on accepted engineering methods of study. Larger floods may occur on rare occasions. Flood heights may be increased by manmade or natural causes, such as ice jams and bridge openings restricted by debris. This chapter does not imply that districts outside the floodplain district, or that land uses permitted within such district will be free from flooding or flood damages.
- (c) This chapter shall not create liability on the part of the town or any officer or employee thereof for any flood damages that result from reliance on this chapter, or any administrative decision lawfully made thereunder.

(Zoning Ord. 2003, § 18.1-915.1.3)

Sec. 24-298. Abrogation and greater restrictions.

This chapter supersedes any ordinance currently in effect in floodprone districts. However, any underlying ordinance shall remain in full force and effect to the extent that its provisions are more restrictive than this chapter.

(Zoning Ord. 2003, § 18.1-915.1.4)

Sec. 24-299 Severability

If any section, subsection, paragraph, sentence, clause, or phrase of this ordinance shall be declared invalid for any reason whatever, such decision shall not affect the remaining portions of this ordinance. The remaining portions shall remain in full force and effect; and for this purpose, the provisions of this ordinance are hereby declared to be severable.

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Sec. 24-~~299~~300. Penalties.

- (a) Any person who fails to comply with any of the requirements or provisions of this chapter or directions of the zoning officer or any other authorized employee of the town shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor and subject to the penalties therefor.
- (b) In addition to the above penalties, all other actions are hereby reserved, including an action in equity for the proper enforcement of this chapter. The imposition of fine or penalty for any violation of, or noncompliance with, this chapter shall not excuse the violation or noncompliance to permit it to continue; and all such persons shall be required to correct or remedy such violations or noncompliance within a reasonable time. Any structure constructed, reconstructed, enlarged, altered, or relocated in noncompliance with this chapter may be declared by the town council to be a public nuisance and abatable as such. Flood insurance may be withheld from structures constructed in violation of this chapter.

(Zoning Ord. 2003, § 18.1-915.1.6)

Sec. 24-30~~0~~1. Variances; factors to be considered.

In passing upon applications for variances, the board of zoning appeals shall satisfy all relevant factors and procedures specified in other sections of the zoning ordinance and consider the following additional factors:

- (1) The danger to life and property due to increased flood heights or velocities caused by encroachments. No variance shall be granted for any proposed use, development, or activity within any floodway district that will cause any increase in the 100-year flood elevation.
- (2) The danger that materials may be swept on to other lands or downstream to the injury to others.
- (3) The proposed water supply and sanitation systems and the ability of these systems to prevent disease, contamination, and unsanitary conditions.
- (4) The susceptibility of the proposed facility and its contents to flood damage and the effect of such damage on the individual owners.
- (5) The importance of the services provided by the proposed facility to the community.
- (6) The requirements of the facility for a waterfront location.
- (7) The availability of alternative locations not subject to flooding for the proposed use.

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- (8) The compatibility of the proposed use with existing development and development anticipated in the foreseeable future.
 - (9) The relationship of the proposed use to the comprehensive plan and floodplain management program for the area.
 - (10) The safety of access by ordinary and emergency vehicles to the property in time of flood.
 - (11) The expected heights, velocity, duration, rate of rise, and sediment transport of the floodwaters expected at the site.
 - (12) The repair or rehabilitation of historic structures upon a determination that the proposed repair or rehabilitation will not preclude the structure's continued designation as a historic structure and variance is the minimum necessary to preserve the historic character and design of the structure.
 - (13) Such other factors which are relevant to the purposes of this chapter.
 - a. The board of zoning appeals may refer any application and accompanying documentation pertaining to any request for a variance to any engineer or other qualified person or agency for technical assistance in evaluating the proposed project in relation to flood heights and velocities, and the adequacy of the plans for flood protection and other related matters.
 - b. Variances shall be issued only after the board of zoning appeals has determined that the granting of such will not result in unacceptable or prohibited increases in flood heights, additional threats to public safety, extraordinary public expense, and will not create nuisances, cause fraud or victimization of the public, or conflict with local laws or ordinances.
 - c. Variances shall be issued only after the board of zoning appeals has determined that variance will be the minimum required to provide relief from any exceptional hardship to the applicant.
 - d. The board of zoning appeals shall notify the applicant for a variance, in writing, that the issuance of a variance to construct a structure below the 100-year flood elevation increases the risks to life and property and will result in increased premium rates for flood insurance.
 - e. A record shall be maintained of the above notification as well as all variance actions, including justification for the issuance of the variances. Any variances which are issued shall be noted in the annual or biennial report submitted to the Federal Insurance Administrator.

(Zoning Ord. 2003, § 18.1-915.5)

Sec. 24-30~~42~~. Existing structures in floodplain districts.

The substantial damage or improvement of any structure shall require full compliance with the provisions of this article.

(Zoning Ord. 2003, § 18.1-915.6)

Sec. 24-303 Designation of the Floodplain Administrator [44 CFR 59.22(b)]

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The Floodplain Administrator¹ is hereby appointed to administer and implement these regulations and is referred to herein as the Floodplain Administrator. The Floodplain Administrator may:

- A. Do the work themselves. In the absence of a designated Floodplain Administrator, the duties are conducted by the Town of Amherst chief executive officer.
- B. Delegate duties and responsibilities set forth in these regulations to qualified technical personnel, plan examiners, inspectors, and other employees.
- C. Enter into a written agreement or written contract with another community or private sector entity to administer specific provisions of these regulations. Administration of any part of these regulations by another entity shall not relieve the community of its responsibilities pursuant to the participation requirements of the National Flood Insurance Program as set forth in the Code of Federal Regulations at 44 C.F.R. Section 59.22.

Sect. 24-304 - Duties and Responsibilities of the Floodplain Administrator [44 CFR 60.3]

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The duties and responsibilities of the Floodplain Administrator shall include but are not limited to:

- A. Review applications for permits to determine whether proposed activities will be located in the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA).
- B. Interpret floodplain boundaries and provide available base flood elevation and flood hazard information.
- C. Review applications to determine whether proposed activities will be reasonably safe from flooding and require new construction and substantial improvements to meet the requirements of these regulations.
- D. Review applications to determine whether all necessary permits have been obtained from the Federal, State, or local agencies from which prior or concurrent approval is required; in particular, permits from state agencies for any construction, reconstruction, repair, or alteration of a dam, reservoir, or waterway obstruction (including bridges, culverts, structures), any alteration of a watercourse, or any change of the course, current, or cross section of a stream or body of water, including any change to the 100-year frequency floodplain of free-flowing non-tidal waters of the State.
- E. Verify that applicants proposing an alteration of a watercourse have notified adjacent communities, the Department of Conservation and Recreation (Division of Dam Safety and Floodplain Management), and other appropriate agencies (VADEQ, USACE), and have submitted copies of such notifications to FEMA.

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- F. Advise applicants for new construction or substantial improvement of structures that are located within an area of the Coastal Barrier Resources System established by the Coastal Barrier Resources Act that Federal flood insurance is not available on such structures; areas subject to this limitation are shown on Flood Insurance Rate Maps as Coastal Barrier Resource System Areas (CBRS) or Otherwise Protected Areas (OPA).
- G. Approve applications and issue permits to develop in flood hazard areas if the provisions of these regulations have been met, or disapprove applications if the provisions of these regulations have not been met.
- H. Inspect or cause to be inspected, buildings, structures, and other development for which permits have been issued to determine compliance with these regulations or to determine if non-compliance has occurred or violations have been committed.
- I. Review Elevation Certificates and require incomplete or deficient certificates to be corrected.
- J. Submit to FEMA, or require applicants to submit to FEMA, data and information necessary to maintain FIRMs, including hydrologic and hydraulic engineering analyses prepared by or for the {community}, within six months after such data and information becomes available if the analyses indicate changes in base flood elevations.
- K. Maintain and permanently keep records that are necessary for the administration of these regulations, including:
1. Flood Insurance Studies, Flood Insurance Rate Maps (including historic studies and maps and current effective studies and maps), and Letters of Map Change; and
 2. Documentation supporting issuance and denial of permits, Elevation Certificates, documentation of the elevation (in relation to the datum on the FIRM) to which structures have been floodproofed, inspection records, other required design certifications, variances, and records of enforcement actions taken to correct violations of these regulations.
- L. Enforce the provisions of these regulations, investigate violations, issue notices of violations or stop work orders, and require permit holders to take corrective action.
- M. Advise the Board of Zoning Appeals regarding the intent of these regulations and, for each application for a variance, prepare a staff report and recommendation.
- N. Administer the requirements related to proposed work on existing buildings:
1. Make determinations as to whether buildings and structures that are located in flood hazard areas and that are damaged by any cause have been substantially damaged.

2. Make reasonable efforts to notify owners of substantially damaged structures of the need to obtain a permit to repair, rehabilitate, or reconstruct. Prohibit the non-compliant repair of substantially damaged buildings except for temporary emergency protective measures necessary to secure a property or stabilize a building or structure to prevent additional damage.

O. Undertake, as determined appropriate by the Floodplain Administrator due to the circumstances, other actions which may include but are not limited to: issuing press releases, public service announcements, and other public information materials related to permit requests and repair of damaged structures; coordinating with other Federal, State, and local agencies to assist with substantial damage determinations; providing owners of damaged structures information related to the proper repair of damaged structures in special flood hazard areas; and assisting property owners with documentation necessary to file claims for Increased Cost of Compliance coverage under NFIP flood insurance policies.

P. Notify the Federal Emergency Management Agency when the corporate boundaries of the Town of Amherst have been modified and:

1. Provide a map that clearly delineates the new corporate boundaries or the new area for which the authority to regulate pursuant to these regulations has either been assumed or relinquished through annexation; and

2. If the FIRM for any annexed area includes special flood hazard areas that have flood zones that have regulatory requirements that are not set forth in these regulations, prepare amendments to these regulations to adopt the FIRM and appropriate requirements, and submit the amendments to the governing body for adoption; such adoption shall take place at the same time as or prior to the date of annexation and a copy of the amended regulations shall be provided to Department of Conservation and Recreation (Division of Dam Safety and Floodplain Management) and FEMA.

Q. Upon the request of FEMA, complete and submit a report concerning participation in the NFIP which may request information regarding the number of buildings in the SFHA, number of permits issued for development in the SFHA, and number of variances issued for development in the SFHA.

R. It is the duty of the Community Floodplain Administrator to take into account flood, mudslide and flood-related erosion hazards, to the extent that they are known, in all official actions relating to land management and use throughout the entire jurisdictional area of the Community, whether or not those hazards have been specifically delineated geographically (e.g. via mapping or surveying).

Secs. 24-30~~25~~—24-320. Reserved.

DIVISION 2. FLOODPLAIN DISTRICTS

Sec. 24-321. Description of floodplain districts.

(a) *Basis of districts.* The various floodplain districts shall include areas subject to inundation by waters of the 100-year flood. The basis for the delineation of these districts shall be the flood insurance study for the town

prepared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Federal Insurance Administration, ~~dated~~ dated February 14, 2025, and any subsequent revisions or amendments thereto. ~~Fe~~ September 19, 2007, as amended.

- (1) The floodway district is delineated, for purposes of this chapter, using the criterion that certain areas within the floodplain must be capable of carrying the waters of the 100-year flood without increasing the water surface elevation of that flood more than one foot at any point. The areas included in this district are specifically defined in table II of the above-referenced flood insurance study and shown on the accompanying flood boundary and floodway map or flood insurance rate map.
- (2) The flood-fringe district shall be that area of the 100-year floodplain not included in the floodway district. The basis for the outermost boundary of the district shall be the 100-year flood elevations contained in the flood profiles of the above-referenced flood insurance study and as shown on the accompanying flood boundary and floodway map or flood insurance rate map.
- (3) The special floodplain district shall be that floodplain area for which base flood elevations have been provided in the FIS and FIRM but for which no floodway has been delineated. Such areas are shown as Zone AE on the maps accompanying the FIS.
- (4) The approximated floodplain district shall be that floodplain area for which no delineated flood profiles or elevations are provided, but where the 100-year floodplain boundary has been approximated. Such areas are shown as Zone A on the maps accompanying the flood insurance study. For these areas, the 100-year flood elevations and floodway information from other federal, state, or other acceptable source shall be used, when available. When such other acceptable information is not available, the elevation shall be determined by using the elevation of a point on the boundary of the identified floodplain area which is nearest to the construction site.

(5) The various special flood hazard districts shall include the SFHAs. The basis for the delineation of these districts shall be the FIS and the FIRM for the Town of Amherst prepared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Federal Insurance Administration, dated February 14, 2025, and any subsequent revisions or amendments thereto.

(b) *Overlay concept.*

- (1) The floodplain districts described above shall be overlays to the existing underlying districts as shown on the official zoning ordinance map, and as such, the provisions for the floodplain districts shall serve as a supplement to the underlying district provisions.
- (2) Any conflict between the provisions or requirements of the floodplain districts and those of any underlying district, the more restrictive provisions and/or those pertaining to the floodplain districts shall apply.
- (3) In the event any provisions concerning a floodplain district is declared inapplicable as a result of any legislative or administrative actions or judicial decision, the basic underlying provisions shall remain applicable.

(Zoning Ord. 2003, § 18.1-915.3.1)

Sec. 24-322. Official zoning map.

The boundaries of the floodplain districts are established as shown on the flood insurance rate map which is declared to be part of this chapter, and which shall be kept on file at the town offices.

(Zoning Ord. 2003, § 18.1-915.3.2)

Sec. 24-323. District boundary changes.

The delineation of any of the floodplain districts may be revised by the town council where natural or manmade changes have occurred and/or where more detailed studies have been conducted or undertaken by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers or other qualified agency, or an individual documents the need for such change. However, prior to any such change, approval must be obtained from the Federal Insurance Administration.

(Zoning Ord. 2003, § 18.1-915.3.3)

Sec. 24-324. Interpretation of district boundaries.

Initial interpretation of the boundaries of the floodplain districts shall be made by the zoning officer. Should a dispute arise concerning the boundaries of any of the districts, the board of zoning appeals shall make the necessary determination. The person questioning or contesting the location of the district boundary shall be given a reasonable opportunity to present his case to the board and to submit his own technical evidence if he so desires.

(Zoning Ord. 2003, § 18.1-915.3.4)

Sec. 24-325 Submitting Model Backed Technical Data [44 CFR 65.3]

A community's base flood elevations may increase or decrease resulting from physical changes affecting flooding conditions. As soon as practicable, but not later than six months after the date such information becomes available, a community shall notify the Federal Emergency Management Agency of the changes by submitting technical or scientific data. The community may submit data via a LOMR. Such a submission is necessary so that upon confirmation of those physical changes affecting flooding conditions, risk premium rates and floodplain management requirements will be based upon current data.

Secs. 24-32~~6~~5—24-351. Reserved.

DIVISION 3. DISTRICT RESTRICTIONS

Sec. 24-352. General provisions.

- (a) *Permit requirement.* All uses, activities, and development occurring within any floodplain district shall be undertaken only upon the issuance of a zoning permit. Such development shall be undertaken only in strict compliance with the provisions of the ordinance and with all other applicable codes and ordinances, such as the uniform statewide building code and the town subdivision regulations. Prior to the issuance of any such permit, the zoning officer shall require all applications to include compliance with all applicable state and federal laws. Under no circumstances shall any use, activity, and/or development adversely affect the capacity of the channels or floodways of any watercourse, drainage ditch, or any other drainage facility or system.
- (b) *Alteration or relocation of watercourses.* Prior to any proposed alteration or relocation of any channels or of any watercourse, stream, etc., within this jurisdiction a permit shall be obtained from the U.S. Corps of Engineers, the state water control board, the state marine resources commission (a joint permit application

is available from any of these organizations). Furthermore, notification of the proposal shall be given by the applicant to all affected adjacent jurisdictions, the division of soil and water conservation (department of conservation and recreation), and the Federal Insurance Administration.

(c) *Site plans and permit applications.* All applications for development in the floodplain district and all building permits issued for the floodplain shall incorporate the following information:

- (1) For structures to be elevated, the elevation of the lowest floor (including basement).
- (2) For structures to be floodproofed (nonresidential only), the elevation to which the structure will be floodproofed.
- (3) The elevation of the 100-year flood.
- (4) Topographic information showing existing and proposed ground elevation.

(d) *Manufactured homes.*

(1) Manufactured homes that are placed or substantially improved on sites:

- a. Outside of a manufactured home park or subdivision;
- b. In a new manufactured home park or subdivision;
- c. In an expansion to an existing manufactured home park or subdivision; or
- d. In an existing manufactured home park or subdivision on which a manufactured home has incurred substantial damage as the result of a flood;

shall be elevated on a permanent foundation such that the lowest floor of the manufactured home is elevated to or above the base flood elevation plus one foot and be securely anchored to an adequately anchored foundation system to resist flotation, collapse and lateral movement.

(2) Manufactured homes to be placed or substantially improved on sites in an existing manufactured home park or subdivision that are not subject to the provisions of paragraph one above shall be elevated so that either:

- a. The lowest floor of the manufactured home is at or above the base flood elevation plus one foot; or
- b. The manufactured home chassis is supported by reinforced piers or other foundation elements of at least equivalent strength that are no less than 36 inches in height above grade and be securely anchored to an adequately anchored foundation system to resist flotation, collapse, and lateral movement.

(e) *Recreational vehicles.* Recreational vehicles placed on sites shall either:

- (1) Be on the site for fewer than 180 consecutive days;
- (2) Be fully licensed and ready for highway use;
- (3) Meet the permit requirements for placement and the elevation and anchoring requirements for manufactured homes in subsection (d)(1)d of this section.

(Zoning Ord. 2003, § 18.1-915.4.1)

Sec. 24-353. Floodway district.

In the floodway district no encroachments, including fill, new construction, substantial improvements, or other development shall be permitted unless it has been demonstrated through hydrologic and hydraulic analyses

performed in accordance with standard engineering practice that the proposed encroachment would not result in any increase in the 100-year flood elevation.

(Zoning Ord. 2003, § 18.1-915.4.2)

Sec. 24-354. Flood-fringe, special floodplain and approximated floodplain districts.

- (a) In the flood-fringe, special floodplain and approximated floodplain districts the development and/or use of land shall be permitted in accordance with the regulations of the underlying district, provided that all such uses, activities, and/or development shall be undertaken in strict compliance with the floodproofing, and related provisions contained in the uniform statewide building code and all other applicable codes and ordinances.
- (b) Standards for the special floodplain district. Until a regulatory floodway is designated, no new construction, substantial improvements, or other development (including fill) shall be permitted within the areas of special floodplain district, designated as zones AE on the flood rate insurance map, unless it is demonstrated that the cumulative effect of the proposed development, when combined with all other existing and anticipated development will not increase the water surface elevation of the base flood more than one foot at any point within the town.

(Zoning Ord. 2003, § 18.1-915.4.3)

Sec. 24-355. Decision criteria for utilities and facilities.

- (a) *Sanitary sewer facilities.* All new or replacement sanitary sewer facilities and private package sewage treatment plants (including all pumping stations and collector systems) shall be designed to minimize or eliminate infiltration of floodwaters into the systems and discharges from the systems into the floodwaters. In addition, they should be located and constructed to minimize or eliminate flood damage and impairment.
- (b) *Water facilities.* All new or replacement water facilities shall be designed to minimize or eliminate infiltration of floodwaters into the system and be located and constructed to minimize or eliminate flood damages.
- (c) *Drainage facilities.* All storm drainage facilities shall be designed to convey the flow of surface waters without damage to persons or property. The systems shall ensure drainage away from buildings and on-site waste disposal sites. The town council may require a primarily underground system to accommodate frequent floods and a secondary surface system to accommodate larger, less frequent floods. Drainage plans shall be consistent with local and regional drainage plans. The facilities shall be consistent with local and regional drainage plans. The facilities shall be designed to prevent the discharge of excess runoff onto adjacent properties.
- (d) *Utilities.* All utilities such as gas lines, electrical and telephone systems being placed in floodprone areas should be located, elevated (where possible), and constructed to minimize the chance of impairment during a flooding occurrence.
- (e) *Streets and sidewalks.* Streets and sidewalks should be designed to minimize their potential for increasing and aggravating the levels of flood flow. Drainage openings shall be required to sufficiently discharge flood flows without unduly increasing flood heights.

(Zoning Ord. 2003, § 18.1-915.4.4)

Sec. 24-356 - General Standards

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The following provisions shall apply to all permits:

- A. New construction and substantial improvements shall be built according to this ordinance and the VA USBC, and anchored to prevent flotation, collapse, or lateral movement of the structure.
- B. Manufactured homes shall be anchored to prevent flotation, collapse, or lateral movement. Methods of anchoring may include, but are not limited to, use of over-the-top or frame ties to ground anchors. This standard shall be in addition to and consistent with applicable state anchoring requirements for resisting wind forces.
- C. New construction and substantial improvements shall be constructed with materials and utility equipment resistant to flood damage.
- D. New construction or substantial improvements shall be constructed by methods and practices that minimize flood damage.
- E. Electrical, heating, ventilation, plumbing, air conditioning equipment, and other service facilities, including duct work, shall be designed and/or located so as to prevent water from entering or accumulating within the components during conditions of flooding.
- F. New and replacement water supply systems shall be designed to minimize or eliminate infiltration of flood waters into the system.
- G. New and replacement sanitary sewage systems shall be designed to minimize or eliminate infiltration of flood waters into the systems and discharges from the systems into flood waters.
- H. On-site waste disposal systems shall be located and constructed to avoid impairment to them or contamination from them during flooding.

In addition to provisions A – H above, in all special flood hazard areas, the additional provisions shall apply:

- I. Prior to any proposed alteration or relocation of any channels or of any watercourse, stream, etc., within this jurisdiction a permit shall be obtained from the U. S. Corps of Engineers, the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, and the Virginia Marine Resources Commission (a joint permit application is available from any of these organizations). Furthermore, in riverine areas, notification of the proposal shall be given by the applicant to all affected adjacent jurisdictions, the Department of Conservation and Recreation (Division of Dam Safety and Floodplain Management), other required agencies, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.
- J. The flood carrying capacity within an altered or relocated portion of any watercourse shall be maintained.

Section 24-357 - Elevation and Construction Standards [44 CFR 60.3]

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In all identified flood hazard areas where base flood elevations have been provided in the FIS or generated by a certified professional in accordance with Article III, Section 3.1.A.3 the following provisions shall apply:

- A. Residential Construction

New construction or substantial improvement of any residential structure (including manufactured homes) in Zones A1-30, AE, AH, and A with detailed base flood elevations shall have the lowest floor, including basement, elevated to or above the base flood level *plus eighteen (18) inches*². See Article III, Section 3.1.A.5 and Article III, Section 3.1.A.6 for requirements in the Coastal A, VE, and V zones.

B. Non-Residential Construction

1. New construction or substantial improvement of any commercial, industrial, or non-residential building (or manufactured home) shall have the lowest floor, including basement, elevated to or above the base flood level *plus eighteen (18) inches*³. See Article III, Section 3.1.A.5 and Article III, Section 3.1.A.6 for requirements in the Coastal A, VE, and V zones.
2. Non-residential buildings located in all A1-30, AE, and AH zones may be floodproofed in lieu of being elevated provided that all areas of the building components below the elevation corresponding to the BFE *plus two feet*⁴ are water tight with walls substantially impermeable to the passage of water, and use structural components having the capability of resisting hydrostatic and hydrodynamic loads and the effect of buoyancy. A registered professional engineer or architect shall certify that the standards of this subsection are satisfied. Such certification, including the specific elevation (in relation to mean sea level) to which such structures are floodproofed, shall be maintained by (title of community administrator).

C. Space Below the Lowest Floor

In zones A, AE, AH, AO, and A1-A30, fully enclosed areas, of new construction or substantially improved structures, which are below the regulatory flood protection elevation shall:

1. Not be ~~designed~~ ~~designed~~ or used for human habitation, but shall be used solely for parking of vehicles, building access, or limited storage of maintenance equipment used in connection with the premises. Access to the enclosed area shall be the minimum necessary to allow for parking of vehicles (garage door) or limited storage of maintenance equipment (standard exterior door), or entry to the living area (stairway or elevator).
2. Be constructed entirely of flood resistant materials, below the regulatory flood protection elevation;
3. Include measures to automatically equalize hydrostatic flood forces on walls by allowing for the entry and exit of floodwaters. To meet this requirement, the openings must either be certified by a professional engineer or architect or meet the following minimum design criteria:
 - a. Provide a minimum of two openings on different sides of each enclosed area subject to flooding.
 - b. The total net area of all openings must be at least one (1) square inch for each square foot of enclosed area subject to flooding.
 - c. If a building has more than one enclosed area, each area must have openings to allow floodwaters to automatically enter and exit.

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d. The bottom of all required openings shall be no higher than one (1) foot above the adjacent grade.

e. Openings may be equipped with screens, louvers, or other opening coverings or devices, provided they permit the automatic flow of floodwaters in both directions.

f. Foundation enclosures made of flexible skirting are not considered enclosures for regulatory purposes, and, therefore, do not require openings. Masonry or wood underpinning, regardless of structural status, is considered an enclosure and requires openings as outlined above.

D. Accessory Structures

1. Accessory structures in the SFHA shall comply with the elevation requirements and other requirements of Article IV, Section 4.3.B or, if not elevated or dry floodproofed, shall:

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a. Not be used for human habitation;

b. Be limited to no more than 600 square feet⁵ in total floor area;

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c. Be useable only for parking of vehicles or limited storage;

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d. Be constructed with flood damage-resistant materials below the base flood elevation;

e. Be constructed and placed to offer the minimum resistance to the flow of floodwaters;

f. Be anchored to prevent flotation;

g. Have electrical service and mechanical equipment elevated to or above the base flood elevation;

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h. Shall be provided with flood openings which shall meet the following criteria:

(1) There shall be a minimum of two flood openings on different sides of each enclosed area; if a building has more than one enclosure below the lowest floor, each such enclosure shall have flood openings on exterior walls.

(2) The total net area of all flood openings shall be at least 1 square inch for each square foot of enclosed area (non-engineered flood openings), or the flood openings shall be engineered flood openings that are designed and certified by a licensed professional engineer to automatically allow entry and exit of floodwaters; the certification requirement may be satisfied by an individual certification or an Evaluation Report issued by the ICC Evaluation Service, Inc.

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(3) The bottom of each flood opening shall be 1 foot or less above the higher of the interior floor or grade, or the exterior grade, immediately below the opening.

(4) Any louvers, screens or other covers for the flood openings shall allow the automatic flow of floodwaters into and out of the enclosed area.

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E. Standards for Manufactured Homes and Recreational Vehicles

1. In zones A, AE, AH, and AO, all manufactured homes placed, or substantially improved, on individual lots or parcels, must meet all the requirements for new construction, including the elevation and anchoring requirements in Article III, Section 3.1.A.6 and Article IV, Sections 4.2 and 4.3.
2. All recreational vehicles placed on sites must either:
 - a. Be on the site for fewer than 180 consecutive days, be fully licensed and ready for highway use (a recreational vehicle is ready for highway use if it is on its wheels or jacking system, is attached to the site only by quick disconnect type utilities and security devices and has no permanently attached additions); or
 - b. Meet all the requirements for manufactured homes in Article IV, Section 4.3.E.1.

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Sec. 24-358 Standards for Subdivision Proposals

- A. All subdivision proposals shall be consistent with the need to minimize flood damage;
- B. All subdivision proposals shall have public utilities and facilities such as sewer, gas, electrical and water systems located and constructed to minimize flood damage;
- C. All subdivision proposals shall have adequate drainage provided to reduce exposure to flood hazards, and
- D. Base flood elevation data shall be obtained from other sources or developed using detailed methodologies, hydraulic and hydrologic analysis, comparable to those contained in a Flood Insurance Study for subdivision proposals and other proposed development proposals (including manufactured home parks and subdivisions) that exceed fifty⁶ lots or five acres, whichever is the lesser.

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Secs. 24-359~~6~~—24-383. Reserved.

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⁶ The recommended standard here is 5 lots instead of 50. Fifty lots is the breakpoint suggested in the federal regulations, but the 5/5 rule is less confusing and captures more commercial development.