

Caledonia Charter Township
SHIAWASSEE COUNTY
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MEMORANDUM

TO: Caledonia Charter Township Planning Commission Members
FROM: Doug Piggott, Zoning Administrator
RE: Shipping Containers
DATE: August 27, 2020

This week, a property owner contacted me about bringing a shipping container on to their property, “fixing it up” so it would look like a shed and using it as an accessory building. I reviewed the zoning ordinance. The term shipping container is not used in the zoning ordinance. The property is zoned A-2.

Section 12.3.3 Accessory Buildings – Residential Lots F. states “Tractor trailers and mobile homes are not compatible with residential buildings and shall not be used for accessory structures”.

I believe that shipping containers are similar to tractor trailers and mobile homes to the extent that they are portable structures designed for a purpose other than storage, but may become available at low cost to residents for storage or other accessory purposes. My determination was that shipping containers are not allowed as accessory buildings on residential lots.

I wanted to review this with the Planning Commission to see if it agrees with the determination and/or if it feels that the text of the ordinance should be modified to address shipping containers. If the Planning Commission feels that my interpretation is not supported by the ordinance, I will initiate an interpretation request to the ZBA on the matter. If you agree with my determination, the property owner has the right to appeal my determination to the ZBA as well.

If the Planning Commission feels that the issue of shipping containers should be clarified in the zoning ordinance, we can begin work on the issue. Caitlyn Habben has worked with several communities on this issue and authored a Community Education Session presentation on it. She and Corey could work with the Planning Commission if it something you feel needs to be addressed.