TO: Mayor via City Secretary

REQUEST FOR COUNCIL ACTION

| SUBJECT: Ordinance amending the Chapter 10 of the Code of Ordinances relative to the numbering of multi-unit residential properties |
| Category # |
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| Agenda Item # 19 |

FROM (Department or other point of origin):
Department of Public Works and Engineering

DIRECTOR’S SIGNATURE:  
[Signature]
Michael S. Marcotte, P.E., D.WRE, BCEE

Origination Date
10-28-09

Agenda Date
NOV 4 2009

Council District affected:
All

For additional information contact:
Andy Ieken
Phone: 713 837-0510

Date and identification of prior authorizing Council action:
Ordinance #79-0863, May 22, 1979

RECOMMENDATION: (Summary) Approve an ordinance amending Chapter 10 of the Code of Ordinances relative to the numbering of multi-unit residential properties

Amount and Source of Funding: N/A

SPECIFIC EXPLANATION:

The Fire Department and Department of Public Works and Engineering, with the Houston Apartment Association as a participating stakeholder, collaborated on improvements to the current numbering ordinance, to better ensure the safety of emergency personnel responding to emergency calls at multunit dwellings. Amending the unit numbering and site plans drawings at entrances, and improving access for emergency personnel will provide better response time for residents.

These amendments address more specifically the location of directories and residential unit numbers, as well as the size and appearance of such numbers. Numbers would be required to be Arabic numerals or alphabet letters a minimum of four inches high. Any apartment or multi-unit residential property built for first occupancy after June 1, 2010, would also be required to illuminate the building’s numbers.

RECOMMENDED AUTHORIZATION
CUIC#20AF1 50

Other Authorization:
[Signature]
Andrew F. Ieken
Deputy Director

Other Authorization:
ARTICLE V. NUMBERING

Sec. 10-211. 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:

(1) Commercial building shall mean and includes any building used in whole or in part for any trade, business, the provision of services for remuneration, or for any commercial purpose, but the term commercial building shall not include any building used for residential or lodging purposes.

(2) Commercial unit shall mean and includes the portion of any commercial building that is used by any corporation, partnership, association or sole proprietorship which does not occupy the entire building.

(3) Family shall mean and includes one or more individuals living together in a single housekeeping unit.

(4) Identifying number shall mean the street address number assigned by the director of planning and development, or where no such number has been assigned by the director of planning and development, any number, letter, or number and letter combination which is distinct from any other number, letter, or number and letter combination used on the same premises.

(5) Lodging unit shall mean and includes any room, other than one in a residential unit, which is generally used for sleeping purposes.

(6) Premises shall mean any tract or tracts of land under common ownership. Premises shall also include the total area of any condominium or town house development where the owners of individual units hold all or part of the land in common.

(7) Residential unit shall mean and includes any building or portion thereof designed as a dwelling for a family.

(8) Residential unit number means the number on each residential or lodging unit in an apartment community or any other multiunit residential property, including but not limited to townhomes, garden homes, lodging units and condominiums.

Sec. 10-212. Directory for apartments multiunit residential properties, etc.

Whenever there are four or more residential units on the same premises, there shall be a directory posted and maintained near within eight feet or less of the front of
residential unit an identifying number posted on each unit is clearly visible from the public street. Such directory shall indicate by a map or clearly worded directions the exact location of each residential unit on the premises. This section shall not apply if all units on the premises are located in one building which must meet the requirements of subsection (b) of section 10-213.1 of this Code.

Sec. 10-213. Posting of residential unit numbers and directions.

(a) Each residential unit and each lodging unit shall have a residential unit an identifying number posted and maintained on or within 18 inches of the principal entrance to the unit or such greater distance as the fire marshal may approve.

Sec. 10-213.1. Posting of directions for multiunit residential properties.

(ab) If a building contains more than two residential or lodging units which cannot be entered directly from outside, directions shall be posted and maintained outside the principal entrance to such building or inside such building where it is clearly visible upon entering the principal entrance to the building. Such directions shall indicate one of the following:

(1) The location of all units in the building by arrows, by a map, or by clearly worded directional information.

(2) The location of all units on the same floor as the principal entrance and the floor on which each other unit is located. When the directions at the principal entrance to the building simply indicate the floor on which some units are located, directions shall be posted and maintained at the elevator entrance to each floor, or if there is no elevator, at the principal stairwell entrance. Such directions shall show the location of all units on that floor by arrows, a map, or clearly worded directional information.

If it is not obvious which entrance to a building is the principal entrance, a sign clearly indicating the location of the principal entrance shall be posted and maintained on all entrances to the building which might be confused with the principal entrance; however, two or more entrances may be considered principal entrances to the building if the owner person in control of the property so desires. Where two or more entrances are considered principal entrances to the building, all numbers and directories must be posted and maintained at each such entrance as though it were the only principal entrance to the building.

(eb) If a building contains four or more residential or lodging units, identifying residential unit numbers shall be posted and maintained at each end of said building indicating the units contained therein. If the residential unit numbers posted at one end of the building are clearly visible from a public street or private driveway, and the opposite end of the building is not visible from either a public street or a private driveway, residential unit numbers shall be required only on the end of the building that
is clearly visible from the public street or private driveway. It shall not be necessary to post the identifying residential unit numbers of all units contained in the building at the ends of said building if the residential unit numbers posted at the ends indicate the units contained in the building. (Example: Where a building contains units numbered 1 to 20, it shall be adequate to post “1--20” on the end of the building.) The ends of the building shall be designated by the owner of the property. The residential unit numbers required by this subsection shall be at least four inches in height, shall be permanently affixed to the outside of the building, and shall be of a color which is in contrast to the background.

Sec. 10-213.2. Numbers for buildings.

New and existing buildings and commercial and residential units therein shall have numbers placed in a position to be plainly legible and visible from the street, road, common driveway or common parking lot fronting the property.

Sec. 10-214. Listing of occupants.

It shall not be necessary to list the occupants of any unit on any sign or directory used to comply with this article.

Sec. 10-215. Specifications for numbers--Generally

(a) Each noncommercial building shall have an indentifying number posted in a position to be plainly legible and visible from the street, road, common driveway or common parking lot fronting the property.

(b) All residential unit identifying numbers which are to be posted and maintained on or within 18 inches of an entrance to the unit or such greater distance as the fire marshal may approve and shall be:

(1) Permanently affixed to the outside of the door or on the outside wall of such building or unit.

(2) Of a color which is in contrast to the background.

(3) For any noncommercial building built for first occupancy on or before May 22, 1979, at least two inches in height.

(4) For any noncommercial building built for first occupancy after May 22, 1979, at least three inches in height, except that a residential unit contained in a building built for first occupancy after May 22, 1979, where residential unit numbers are posted pursuant to section 10-213.1 of this Code may have residential unit numbers two inches or more in height or
more for units contained in buildings where residential unit numbers are posted pursuant to section 10-213.1 of this Code.

a. On residential or lodging units which had numbers posted on May 22, 1979, numbers at least two inches in height shall meet the requirements of this section.

b. On units contained in buildings where numbers are posted pursuant to section 10-213(c), numbers posted on or within 18 inches of the entrance of the unit shall be at least two inches in height.

(5) For each noncommercial building and each residential unit therein for which a building permit was issued after January 1, 2010: (i) of a color that contrasts with the background; (ii) one or more Arabic numerals or alphabet letters; and (iii) a minimum of 4 inches (102 mm) high with a minimum stroke width of 0.5 inches (12.7 mm).

(6) For any multiunit residential property for which a building permit is issued after January 1, 2010: required to be illuminated.

Sec. 10-216. Same--For commercial units and buildings.

(a) Each new and existing commercial building and each commercial unit therein shall have an identifying number posted in a position to be plainly legible and visible from the street, road, common driveway or common parking lot fronting the property.

Each commercial building shall have an identifying number posted and maintained on or within 36 inches of the principal entrance.

The identifying number of the building shall also be posted and maintained on any sign which:

(1) Sets out the name of the building; and

(2) Is located on the same premises as the building; and

(3) Is visible to persons traveling on the street from which the address is derived.

Each commercial unit having its principal entrance in such a location that it can be entered directly from outside the building shall have an identifying number posted and maintained on or within 36 inches of the principal entrance.

If it is not obvious which entrance is the principal entrance of a commercial building or a commercial unit, a sign clearly indicating the location of the principal entrance shall be posted and maintained on all entrances which might be confused with
the principal entrance. However, two or more entrances may be considered principal entrances if the person in control of the property so desires. Where two or more entrances are considered principal entrances; all numbers must be posted and maintained at each such entrance as though it were the only principal entrance.

(b) For each commercial building for which a building permit was issued on or before January 1, 2010, and each commercial unit therein, the identifying All numbers which are to be posted and maintained on commercial units and commercial buildings pursuant to this article shall be:

(1) Permanently affixed to the outside of the door or on the outside wall of such building or unit;

(2) Of a color which is in contrast to the background; and

(3) At least three inches in height.

(c) For each commercial building for which a building permit was issued after January 1, 2010, and each commercial unit therein, the identifying number shall:

(1) Be permanently affixed to the outside of the door or on the outside wall of such building or unit;

(2) Contrast with the background;

(3) Consist of one or more Arabic numerals or alphabet letters; and

(4) Be a minimum of 4 inches (102 mm) high with a minimum stroke width of 0.5 inches (12.7 mm).

(d) All numbers which are posted and maintained on a sign or marker pursuant to this section shall be permanently affixed to the sign or marker and meet the same color and size requirements as specified in subsections (b)(2) and (b)(3)(c) above.

(e) Provisions of this section shall not be construed to authorize the erection or maintenance of any sign or marker in contravention of any applicable provisions of chapter 46 of the Building Code.

Sec. 10-217. Compliance with article provisions notice; penalties for noncompliance.

(a) It shall be the responsibility of each owner of the property and of each person having control over the property to ensure that any number required to be posted and maintained on such property is so posted on such property at all times.
(b) Charges may be filed in municipal court for any violation of this article upon proper complaint under the following conditions:

(1) Written notice has been given the person charged, by an officer or employee of the city, either by hand delivery or by certified mail, return receipt requested. Such notice shall inform the person that identifying numbers must be posted on each building, lodging, residential or commercial unit and/or, in the case of residential units, that a directory must be maintained, as applicable. The notice shall also set out the requirements for such numbers and/or, if applicable, such directory, as specified in this article and shall be accompanied by a copy of applicable provisions of this article.

(2) The person charged did not comply with the applicable provisions of this article within ten days of the date such person received notice pursuant to subsection (b)(1) hereof.

(c) Any person who fails to ensure that all numbers or, if applicable, directories required by this article are posted and maintained on property under his control after receiving notice as provided in subsection (b) shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be punished by a fine of not less than $100.00 nor more than $500.00 for each offense. Each day a number or, if applicable, directory, required to be posted under this article is not so posted shall constitute a separate offense.

Secs. 10-218--10-230.  Reserved.