

## MEMO

**TO:** Northfield Township Planning Commission  
**FROM:** Patrick Sloan, AICP, Senior Principal Planner  
Erin Schlutow, Associate Planner  
**SUBJECT:** Proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendments – Little Free Libraries as Accessory Structures  
**DATE:** April 28, 2017

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At the Township's request, we have compiled the following proposed text change to permit the establishment of Free Little Library Book Stands/Boxes as Accessory Structures, allowed in all zoning districts and subject to the proposed regulations below. Little Free Library (<https://littlefreelibrary.org>) is a global use where someone constructs a small stand at the front of their property and puts books in it for anyone to borrow. A map of all of the registered Little Free Libraries in the world are on its website.

Currently, a Little Free Library is an accessory structure that would be subject to minimum front yard setbacks, which defeats the purpose of having the stand at the front of the property along the right-of-way or sidewalk. Therefore, we recommend including provisions specific to a Little Free Library where they can be placed at the front of a lot with certain restrictions.

The proposed amendments are presented below. Subject to any changes you wish to make, the appropriate action would be for the Commission to schedule a public hearing.

The proposed amendment is as follows. Items to be added are underlined and items to be deleted are in ~~strikethrough~~.

**Amend Article IV Schedule of District Regulations, Sub-section 36-98(d) – Accessory Uses and Buildings to add Little Free Library Book Stand/Box as a permitted accessory structure by adding the following new sub-section (d)(10).**

- (d) *Accessory uses and buildings.* Where a lot is devoted to a permitted principal use or a permitted conditional use, accessory uses are permitted as listed in the applicable zoning district. Accessory uses and buildings shall be subject to the following regulations:
- (1) Where the accessory building is attached to the principal building, it shall be subject to all regulations of the district in which located.
  - (2) In any SR-1, SR-2, or MR district, accessory uses and buildings not attached to the principal building shall not:
    - a. Be located in front of the rear line of the principal building or, in the case of a corner lot, in the required side yard;
    - b. Be located less than five feet from an interior side or rear property line;
    - c. Exceed 15 feet in height.
  - (3) In any LR, SR-1, SR-2, or MR district, not more than 35 percent of the minimum required rear yard may be occupied by accessory structures.
  - (4) In any AR or LR district, accessory structures may not be located in any required setback.

- (5) In any business or industrial district, any accessory use or building not attached to the principal building shall comply with all area, placement, and height regulations of the district in which located.
- (6) In any business or industrial district, except the AR agricultural district where buildings may be constructed for agricultural purposes, the ground floor area of an accessory building shall not exceed the ground floor area of the principal building.
- (7) In any zoning district, a detached accessory building shall be located at least ten feet from any other principal or accessory building.
- (8) No accessory building shall be used prior to the principal building or use, except as a construction facility for the principal building. An accessory building attached to the principal building of a lot shall be made a structural part thereof and shall comply with the provisions of this chapter.
- (9) Accessory structures that are intended to be made a structural part of an existing or proposed principal building shall meet the following requirements:
  - a. Continuous foundations shall be required for habitable and occupiable space.
  - b. Porches with roofs structurally attached to the principal building shall have continuous footings.
- (10) A Little Free Library Book Stand is a permitted accessory use in any zoning district, provided all such Little Free Book Stands meet the following requirements:**
  - a. Location.** The Little Free Library Book Stand structure may be placed anywhere on a lot, except as follows:
    1. The Little Free Library Book Stand structure shall not be located within or overhang the public street right-of-way or any other easement.
    2. The Little Free Library Book Stand structure must meet the clear vision standards of Section 36-98(h).
  - b. Maximum Number.** Not more than one (1) Little Free Library Book Stand is permitted for each lot.
  - c. Obstruction Prohibited.** The Little Free Library Book Stand structure shall not obstruct vehicular, bicycle, or pedestrian traffic, either physically, or by a person utilizing the Little Free Library. It shall also not obstruct barrier free access.
  - d. Design.** The Little Free Library Book Stand structure shall be constructed with similar materials and colors as the principal structure, if applicable.
  - e. Enclosure Requirements and Maximum Dimensions.** The Little Free Library Book Stand Box enclosure shall be mounted on a post that shall be secured in the ground. The Box enclosure of the Little Free Library Book Stand shall not exceed 24 inches in width, 24 inches in height, and 16 inches in depth. The Box enclosure must have a door that will fasten close to prevent rain, snow, or animals from getting into the enclosure.
  - f. Maximum Height.** The maximum height of the Little Free Library Book Stand structure, measured from the finished grade to the top of the Box enclosure, is 5 feet.
  - g. Identification Signage.** The Little Free Library Book Stand Box enclosure may have non-commercial sign content anywhere on the structure enclosure.
  - h. Land Use Permit Required.** Applications and plans for a Little Free Library Book Stand must be reviewed for Land Use approval by the Township prior to construction.