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"Tiny Homes. What is required?"

In recent years, the desire to build and live in small residential structures, commonly referred to as tiny homes, has increased. Before deciding to invest in such a venture, it is important to understand the requirements on the local and state level.

NC 2018 Residential Code defines a dwelling as any building that contains one or two dwelling units used, intended or designed to be built, used, rented, leased, let or hired out to be occupied, or that are occupied for living purposes.

Furthermore, a dwelling unit is a single unit (or room) providing complete independent living facilities for one or more persons, including permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation.

North Carolina no longer requires a total minimum square footage for a residence, however the total minimum square footage for each dwelling unit (or room) is 70 square feet with at least one dimension being a minimum of seven (7) feet. This includes living areas and bedrooms. In addition, dwellings are required to have a kitchen sink, restroom facilities, and an automatic clothes washer connection.

In order to be permitted as a residence, any structure, regardless of size, must verify that it complies with the current North Carolina Building, Residential, and Energy Code. This can be done in three ways:

- Application of a HUD (US Department of Housing and Urban Development) label and placard. Manufactured homes, commonly referred to as Doublewides and Singlewides fall into this category. This label certifies that the manufactured home meets residential requirements as a dwelling through the federal government.
- Application of a modular stamp through the North Carolina Department of Insurance. Modular homes fall into this category. These units are built and inspected in a factory off site and are certified to be in compliance with North Carolina Building, Residential, and Energy Code.
- Construction of a new home via a licensed contractor and inspected by a certified building inspector with local jurisdiction throughout the building process. A private individual may act as their own private contractor if they own the property on which the new home is located and occupy the home as their primary residence for at least 12 months upon issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy.

All of these options require construction of a dwelling on a permanent foundation and must meet the requirements of the Yadkin County Zoning Ordinance.

A common misconception is that a recreational vehicle may be used as a permanent residence or tiny home. Recreational vehicles are constructed to standards put in place by the National Fire Protection Association and are not intended or allowed to be used as permanent dwellings. Furthermore, building officials in North Carolina are not permitted to inspect the internal construction of recreational vehicles. Building officials may only inspect and permit temporary utility connections located within campgrounds or RV parks and not the dwellings themselves. Recreational vehicles may not be connected to permanent utilities outside of established campgrounds or RV parks.

Park model trailers, while having the appearance of a site built home, are in fact classified as recreational vehicles. Should a person desire to construct a tiny home using a trailer or other mobile vehicle, the dwelling would be considered a recreational vehicle and would fall under the same requirements.

The location of campgrounds and RV parks is governed by the Yadkin County Zoning Ordinance.

Any individual with questions regarding the construction of a dwelling unit, regardless of size, or the establishment of a recreational vehicle park or campground must consult with Yadkin County Central Permitting located at 213 E. Elm St. Yadkinville, NC. The department can be reached at 336-849-7905.

Authority of Lisa Hughes, County Manager