

# **Little Free Library: Book Exchange Structure Regulations**

**Quality of Life & Environment Committee  
September 12, 2016**



# Background

- This item was previously briefed to the Quality of Life and Environment Committee on November 9, 2015, and December 8, 2015. The Committee directed staff to take the item to the Zoning Ordinance Advisory Committee (ZOAC).
- ZOAC considered this item at three public meetings and on May 19, 2016 voted to send staff's recommendation to the City Plan Commission (CPC).
- CPC heard this item on June 30, 2016 and recommended approval.

# General Information

- Little Free Libraries is a concept to promote free book exchange “take a book, leave a book”.
  - National organizations (Little Free Libraries - [littlefreelibrary.org](http://littlefreelibrary.org))
  - Local organizations (Libros Libres Dallas in conjunction with [bcworkshop](http://bcworkshop))
  - Anyone can use their DIY skills to build one by installing a box or receptacle that holds books to share, in a pedestrian friendly accessible location.
- The recent emergence of these, often in the front yard setback in single family neighborhoods, is in conflict with the Dallas Development Code which requires that front yards be open and unobstructed except for fences.
- Consequently, Code Enforcement has received calls regarding these structures.

# CPC Recommendations

## Definition:

**Book Exchange Structure** means an enclosed structure that holds books or other literacy material to be shared or exchanged in a pedestrian accessible location constructed and maintained by the owner of the property.

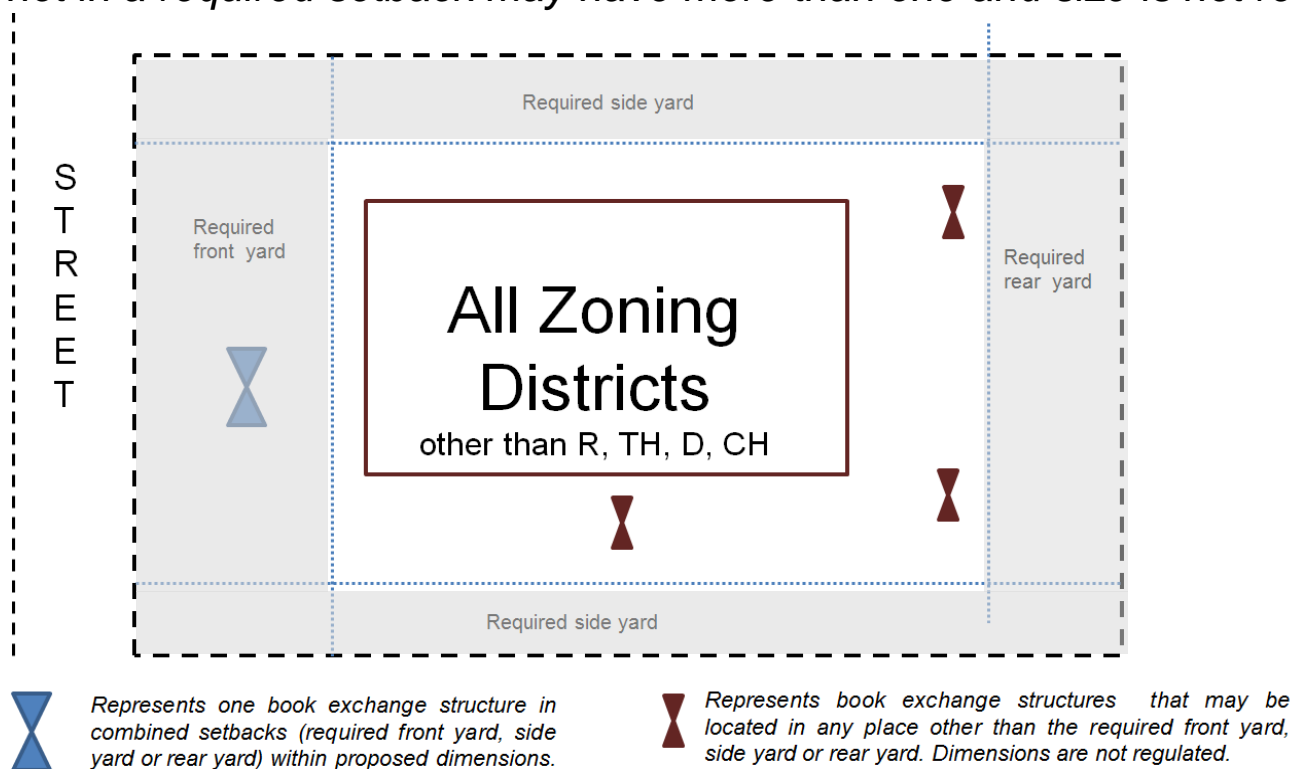


# CPC Recommendations

## When in all zoning districts other than R, D, TH, CH

- Allowed in a required front yard, side yard or rear yard
- Maximum of one book exchange structure allowed in the combined setbacks on a lot within the proposed dimensions

**Note:** when not in a required setback may have more than one and size is not regulated

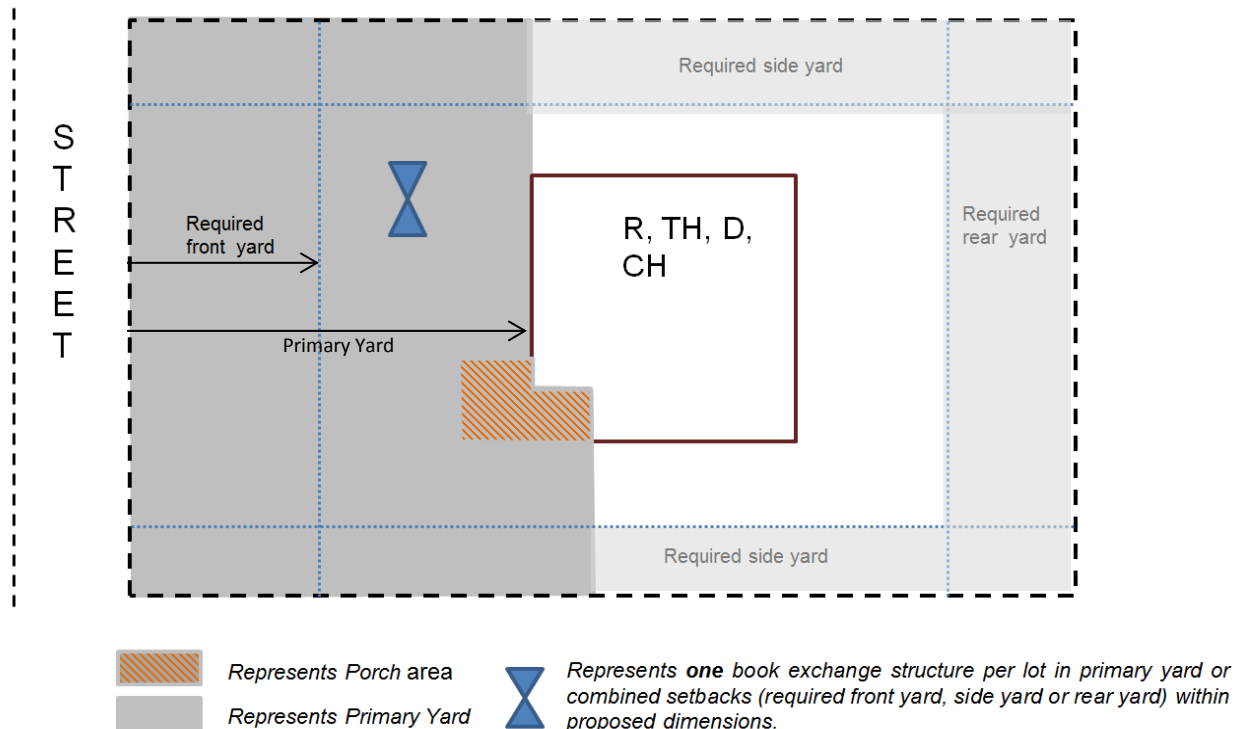


# CPC Recommendations

## When in R, D, TH, or CH Districts

- Allowed in the required front, side, rear yard or primary yard or front porch within the proposed dimensions
- Maximum **one** book exchange structure per lot

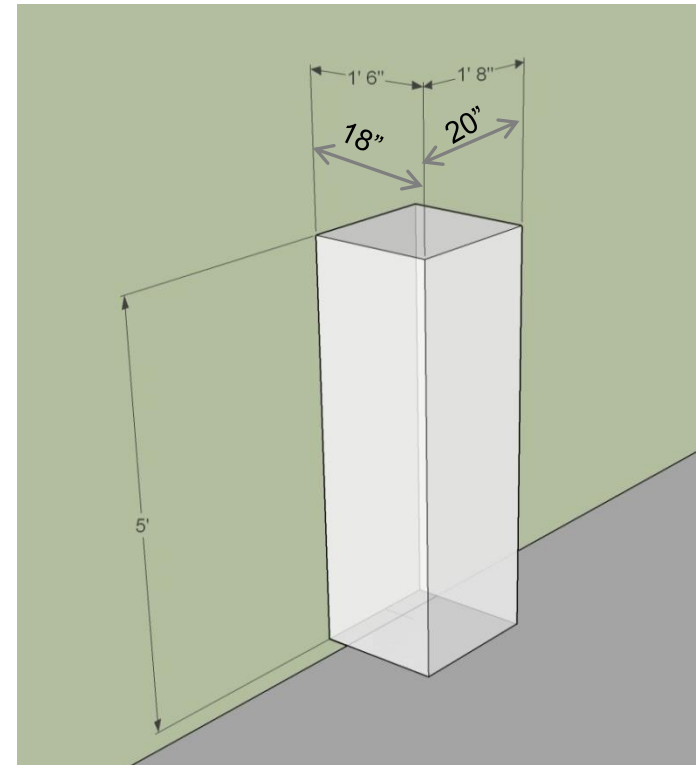
*Primary Yard means the portion of a lot or tract which abuts a street and extends across the width of the lot or tract between the street and the main building.*



# CPC Recommendations

## Maximum dimensions:

- when located in the required front yard, side yard, or rear yard; and
- when located in the primary yard or front porch in R, D, TH, and CH districts:
  - **no taller than 5 feet in height**
  - **20” wide**
  - **18” deep**



Picture shows the buildable envelope of a book exchange structure

# CPC Recommendations

- Distance between the book exchange structure and the adjacent property line shall **not be less than 10 feet**



located too close to adjacent property line



# Other concerns regulated by existing Codes

- Cannot be used for selling or advertising
- Cannot be placed in the public right-of-way without a license
- Cannot obstruct required parking
- Cannot be placed in the visibility triangle
- Made of material resistant to damage or deterioration from exposure to the outside environment
- Properly mounted, bolted, and protected to withstand winds, rain, and other seasonal changes
- Regular upkeep and monitoring
- Noncompliance with any of the regulations is subject to Code Enforcement

# Issues

- During the City Plan Commission hearing, bcworkshop identified 3 out of 16 of their structures that do not meet the proposed regulations. Staff was asked to see what it would take to make these three structures legal.
- The issues associated with these structures are:
  1. Two structures are too large - taller, wider, and deeper than the proposed dimensions (5'x18"x20")
  2. One location exceeds the maximum number (1) of structures allowed on a lot in a single family district

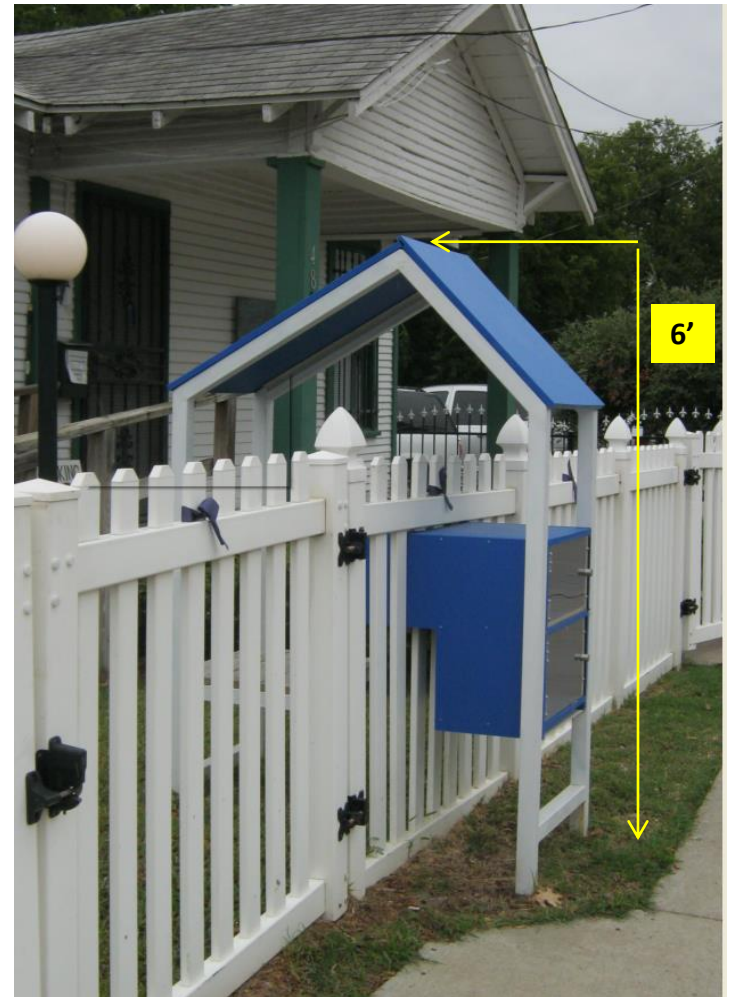
# Issues



## Too Large

(6'tall x 24" wide x 46" deep)

- Too tall (by 1')
- Too wide (by 4")
- Too deep (by 28")



# Issues



## Too Large

(3'4" x 31" x 21")

- Too wide (by 11")
- Too deep (by 3")

**Exceeds** the maximum number of structures (1) allowed on a lot in a single family district



# Options

- No changes to CPC recommendation
- Allow BDA to grant a special exception to the dimensions
- Propose recommendations to allow taller, wider and deeper structures
  - The larger dimensions would apply city wide for all structures
- Create a special provision for non-residential uses in single family districts to allow more than one structure on the lot or allow an administrative waiver for size and maximum number provisions

# Next Steps

- Direction on options
- Schedule for City Council action