ORDINANCE NO. 2374

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 115, ARTICLE I BY AMENDING THE DEFINITIONS OF "DWELLING", "DWELLING, SINGLE FAMILY", "DWELLING, MULTIFAMILY" AND "FAMILY"

WHEREAS, Sussex County Code, Chapter 115, Article I, Sec. 115-4 currently includes definitions of "Dwelling", "Dwelling, Single Family", "Dwelling, Multifamily" and "Family"; and

WHEREAS, in order to further comply with the Federal Fair Housing Act and State Law, the definitions of "Dwelling", "Dwelling, Single Family", "Dwelling Multifamily" and "Family" are being revised to allow more than four unrelated individuals to reside together and affirmatively address protected classes of persons or individuals with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, items that have been deleted are shown in [brackets] and items that have been added are shown <u>underlined</u>.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE COUNTY OF SUSSEX HEREBY ORDAINS:

Section 1. Amend Sussex County Code, Chapter 115, Article I, Section 115-4, <u>Definitions</u>, by deleting the definition of "Dwelling" in its entirety, as shown below:

[DWELLING – A building or portion thereof containing cooking and housekeeping facilities, designed or used exclusively for residential occupancy, but not including manufactured homes, hotels, motels, motor lodges boarding- and lodging houses, tourist houses, or similar structures.]

Section 2. Amend Sussex County Code, Chapter 115, Article I, Section 115-4, <u>Definitions</u>, by inserting the following:

<u>DWELLING – Any building, structure, or portion thereof which is occupied as, or designed or intended for occupancy as, a residence; and any vacant land which is offered for sale or lease for the construction or location thereon of any such building, structure, or portion thereof. "Dwelling" shall not include hotels, motels, motor lodges, boarding- and lodging houses, tourist houses, or similar structures.</u>

Section 3. Amend Sussex County Code, Chapter 115, Article I, Section 115-4, <u>Definitions,</u> by deleting the definition of "Dwelling, Single Family" in its entirety, as shown below:

[DWELLING, SINGLE FAMILY -- A detached dwelling designed for or occupied exclusively by one family.]

Section 4. Amend Sussex County Code, Chapter 115, Article I, Section 115-4, <u>Definitions,</u> by inserting the following:

<u>DWELLING, SINGLE FAMILY</u> -- <u>A detached dwelling designed or occupied by not more than one (1) of the following as a single housekeeping unit with single culinary facilities:</u>

1. **<u>One (1) family, which may consist of one (1) person or two (2) or more persons related by blood or marriage with any number of natural children, foster children, step children or adopted children</u>.**

2. Two (2) single parents or guardians with any number of their natural children, foster children, step children or adopted children, functioning as a single housekeeping unit.

3. A group of not more than four (4) persons not necessarily related by blood or marriage functioning as a single housekeeping unit.

4. A group residential facility licensed and approved by the appropriate state agencies serving 10 or fewer persons with disabilities on a 24 hour-per-day basis.

5. One (1) person or two (2) persons one of whom shall be elderly and/or disabled, and one (1) or both of who own the dwelling unit, plus one (1) family, which may consist of one (1) person or two (2) persons related by blood or marriage, and with any number of natural children, foster children, step children or adopted children.

6. For the purpose of this Section, "disabled" or "persons with disabilities" includes any person or persons with a handicap or disability as those terms are defined in the Delaware Fair Housing Act, Title 6, Chapter 46 of the Delaware Code, as may be amended.

Section 5. Amend Sussex County Code, Chapter 115, Article I, Section 115-4, Definitions, by deleting the definition of "Dwelling, Multifamily" in its entirety, as shown below:

[DWELLING, MULTIFAMILY – A dwelling designed for or occupied exclusively by two or more families living independently of each other. "Multiple-family dwellings" shall be considered as apartments, garden apartments, condominiums, duplexes or similar structures.]

Section 6. Amend Sussex County Code, Chapter 115, Article I, Section 115-4, Definitions, by inserting the definition of "Dwelling, Multifamily" as follows:

DWELLING, MULTIFAMILY -- A dwelling designed or occupied exclusively by two (2) or more of the following living independently of each other, each with single culinary facilities:

1. One (1) family, which may consist of one (1) person or two (2) or more persons related by blood or marriage with any number of natural children, foster children, step children or adopted children.

2. Two (2) single parents or guardians with any number of their natural children, foster children, step children or adopted children, functioning as a single housekeeping unit.

3. A group of not more than four (4) persons not necessarily related by blood or marriage functioning as a single housekeeping unit.

4. A group residential facility licensed and approved by the appropriate state agencies serving 10 or fewer persons with disabilities on a 24 hour-per-day basis.

5. One (1) person or two (2) persons one of whom shall be elderly and/or disabled, and one (1) or both of who own the dwelling unit, plus one (1) family, which may consist of one (1) person or two (2) persons related by blood or marriage, and with any number of natural children, foster children, step children or adopted children.

6. **For the purpose of this Section, "disabled" or "persons with disabilities" includes any person or persons with a handicap or disability as those terms are defined in the Delaware Fair Housing Act, Title 6, Chapter 46 of the Delaware Code, as may be amended.**

"Multi-family dwellings" shall be considered as apartments, garden apartments, condominiums, duplexes or similar structures.

Section 7. Amend Sussex County Code, Chapter 115, Article I, Section 115-4, Definitions, by deleting the definition of "Family" in its entirety, as shown below:

[FAMILY -- An individual or two or more persons who are related by blood or marriage living together and occupying a single housekeeping unit with single culinary facilities or a group of not more than four persons living together by joint agreement and occupying a single housekeeping unit with single culinary facilities on a non-profit, cost sharing basis. Domestic servants employed and residing on the premises shall be considered as a part of the family.]

Section 8. Effective Date. This Ordinance shall become effective upon its adoption by Sussex County Council.

I DO HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THE FOREGOING IS A TRUE AND CORRECT COPY OF ORDINANCE NO. 2374 ADOPTED BY THE SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL ON THE 2ND DAY OF DECEMBER 2014.

ROBIN A. GRIFFITH
CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

SYNOPSIS

This Ordinance amends the definitions of Family, Single Family Dwellings and Multifamily Dwellings to avoid unintended discrimination under State and Federal Law. It confirms that a family may include one or two people living together and not only their natural or adopted children but also step-children and foster children. It also clarifies that children are permitted to reside with legally appointed guardians. It permits licensed and approved residential houses or no more than ten persons with disabilities as defined in the Delaware Fair Housing Act. Lastly, it recognizes that it is appropriate for 2 families to reside in a single unit when the owner(s) of the unit are elderly and/or disabled.