

October 7, 2014

**Proceedings of the Zoning Commission of University Heights, Iowa, held at the City Office, 1004 Melrose Avenue, subject to approval by the Commission at a subsequent meeting. ALL VOTES ARE UNANIMOUS UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED.**

Chairperson Yeggy called the October 7, 2014 meeting of the University Heights Zoning Commission to order at 7:01 p.m.

**Present:** Zoning Commission Members: Alice Haugen, Kris McLure, Larry Wilson and Pat Yeggy. Staff present: Attorney Ballard and Clerk Anderson. Also present were: Silvia Quezada.

**Absent:** Zoning Commission Member Stuart Rosebrook.

The minutes of the October 2, 2014 meeting were approved, as amended, by unanimous consent.

**Public Input:** None.

**Discussion of Changes to Ordinance 79:** Chairperson Yeggy began the discussion by asking if there was a need to change the height of accessory buildings in University Heights. Commission member Larry Wilson replied that he looked at the building on 114 Highland and it “looks like another house” in mass. The commission agreed that there needs to be a change to the maximum height in the city and use of accessory structures. No building in University Heights can be taller than 35 feet and the commission would like to lower to no more than 20-25 feet.

Yeggy distributed a handout outline neighboring city’s height regulations, as well definitions for private garages, accessory structures and accessory uses. Listed cities include: University Heights, Windsor Heights, Iowa City, North Liberty, as well as Johnson County. Commission member Haugen inquired if Johnson County’s definitions applied to University Heights. Attorney Ballard replied we can incorporate some or all of their definitions into the city’s own rules.

The commission discussed the definitions for private garages and accessory buildings. Currently, University Heights defines private garage as “an accessory building housing motor driven vehicles owned and used by the occupants of the main house”. The commission discussed if there was a difference between garages and carports; also, is there a difference if the garage is converted or used as a “man cave”, or for tailgating parties, or converted to an arts studio. Chairperson Yeggy stated she would like to change the setback for garages from two to five feet. Commission member Haugen commented she liked Iowa City’s definition and perhaps the commission could incorporate that language and add to it for the city’s regulations.

University Heights presently does not define an accessory structure. The commission was in agreement that there be a definition for private garages and one for accessory buildings, specifying height and use. There was discussion on prohibiting electricity and water in accessory buildings but it was decided this was not necessary. Occupancy would be prohibited in accessory buildings. Commission member Wilson stated he liked a 10 feet height for accessory buildings.

Attorney Ballard will draft language for the commission to consider at a future meeting. Chairperson Yeggy commented a chart or diagram showing how the height of a structure is determined would be helpful.

**Yard Orientation:** There are some properties in University Heights that do not have an abutting street or are completely land-locked and do not fit the regular definition for front, side and back yards. The commission discussed these various properties and how the front yard would be determined. Commission also discussed properties that had curb cuts on several streets (Mims property) and how that could determine the yard orientation. Attorney Ballard suggested that the city’s building inspector be invited to the next Zoning Commission meeting to address and answer the commission’s questions.

**Open Spaces and Green Spaces:** The city has received complaints and concerns regarding property owners paving front and backyards and using in an unlawful way. Concerns if there should be stricter standards for green spaces on properties. Should projections (patios, decks, etc) be required to observe the city’s setback rules? Currently, the city does not allow property owners to gravel over their yards, but what about mulching over their property; is this in the city’s best interest.

The next Zoning Commission meetings will be held October 22<sup>nd</sup> and October 30<sup>th</sup>; all at 7:00 pm at City Hall.

The meeting was adjourned **by unanimous consent at 9:06 p.m.**

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**Attest: Christine M. Anderson, City Clerk**

**Approved: Pat Yeggy, Chairperson**