

December 3, 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 December 3, 2014 meeting of the University Heights Zoning Commission to order at 7:00 p.m.

**Present:** Zoning Commission Members: Alice Haugen, Kris McLure (joined the meeting at 7:35 p.m.), Stuart Rosebrook, Larry Wilson and Pat Yeggy. Staff present: Clerk Anderson. Also present was: Silvia Quezada

Absent: Attorney Steve Ballard.

The November 22, 2014 minutes were approved, as amended, by unanimous consent. Approval of the October 22, 2014 meeting minutes were tabled to the next Zoning Commission meeting.

**Public Input:** Silvia Quezada asked the commission to further define “open space” and “green space” in the ordinance and to use “plain language” for all of the definitions. Quezada also asked that the definition of projections be revisited. Quezada favors restricting the placement of projections when the main structure is located at the edge of buildable area; especially on smaller lot sizes. Quezada would like projections limited to 10 feet from the main structure. Commissioner Haugen stated one issue, that had been previously discussed, was families with multiple vehicles and the commission did not want to constrain location of the one-third area for paving/parking. Commissioner Rosebrook commented that property owners would like the flexibility to expand their driveway for their own personal reasons.

**Discuss Yard and Lot Diagrams:** Chairperson Yeggy distributed two diagrams the city engineer created for the commission. One diagram showed the typical R-1 single family residence with markings for the types of yards and setbacks discussed by the commission. The second diagram showed the typical property layout, featuring the buildable area for a property with yard and lot lines. The commission noted there were multiple corrections needed on both diagrams; Attorney Ballard will work with the city engineer to correct.

**Discuss Lot Coverage Ratios:** The commission discussed the advantages and disadvantages of using either the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) or lot coverage ratios in University Heights. Iowa City currently uses a 45% lot coverage ratio. Chairperson Yeggy stated that any building that has a roof and walls is counted in the lot coverage ratio. Under the lot coverage ratio, it would restrict property owners from paving large sections of their yards, as impervious surfaces are factored into the ratio. (sidewalks, patios, projections, etc)

FAR would regulate the mass of the main structure better than the lot coverage ratio. FAR would include all above ground stories, including garages, attics that could be used as living spaces and basements that are half-way above ground. Commissioner Wilson suggested creating a hybrid of the FAR and the lot coverage ratio. Haugen would like “a percentage penalty” for each story of the main residence to be included; if lot coverage ratio is used by the city. Rosebrook wants to “create a balance within our different neighborhoods” for new structures and renovations. The commission agreed that a hybrid that includes provisions for mass and merging two properties, along with the lot coverage ratio would be recommended to the city council.

**Definitions for the Ordinance:** The commission reviewed definitions for “garden structure”, “landscaping” and “open space”. The commission agreed a garden structure is an arbor, patio, pergola, trellis or other similar structure without solid walls or a solid roof, intended specifically to enhance the appearance of the garden or which has a function relating to the use of outdoor space, but not including a house, garage, carport or storage building, provided that it is not located within the front-yard setback or side-yard setback area of a main building.

Landscaping means the finishing and adornment of unpaved yard areas. Materials and treatment generally include naturally growing elements such as grass, trees, shrubs, and flowers. This treatment may also include the use of logs, rocks or stones, fountains, water features, mulch and contouring of the earth.

Open space is land within a zoning lot devoted to landscaping, lawns and other similar uses. Open space shall not include driveways, streets, parking lots or spaces, sidewalks, plazas, terraces, patios, swimming pools, decks or other similar impervious or semi-impervious surfaces.

**Additional Public Input:** None.

The next Zoning Commission meetings will be held December 10, 2014, at 7:00 pm at City Hall.

The meeting was adjourned **by unanimous consent at 8:57 p.m.**

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

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**Approved: Pat Yeggy, Chairperson**