

February 2, 2015

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

Mayor From called the February 2, 2015, special meeting of the University Heights City Council to order at 7:30 p.m.

Present: Mayor From. Council Members: Carla Aldrich, Mike Haverkamp, Jim Lane, Silvia Quezada and Virginia Miller. Staff present: Attorney Ballard and Clerk Anderson. Also attending: Pat Bauer, Terry Goerd, Dan Stence, Larry Wilson and Pat Yeggy.

Pat Yeggy, Chair of the Zoning Commission addressed the council with proposed changes to the city's zoning ordinance. The Commission has been working on various definitions for the ordinance. An "accessory building" would be a building that is incidental and subordinate to the principal building on the property. The recommendation will be accessory buildings will be limited to a height of 20 feet; 15 feet to the ridge-point and will be calculated using the average grade surrounding the building. Currently, the height of a building is measured from the top of the curb. The commission recommends the city change the setback for accessory buildings from two to five feet. The council recommended including a diagram in the ordinance to show how the height will be calculated.

Council member Haverkamp stated that a future goal of the Comprehensive Plan is to include "accessory apartments" and he would like the Zoning Commission to consider this in future meetings. Building Inspector Goerd recommended the council write that as an exemption into the ordinance.

A "shed" is defined as a portable structure, not permanently installed with footings, that does not exceed 144 square feet in area. The commission further defined private garages and garden structures.

The council reviewed the diagrams for buildable area, setbacks and for yard definitions. It was recommended that the gray band surrounding buildable area be removed as it seemed confusing. After discussion, the entire buildable area outline will be completely shaded.

Haverkamp asked if the setbacks refer to the foundation lines or to the eaves. Setbacks are measured from the foundation line and projections are allowed over the foundation line and the setback.

"Yard" shall mean an open space on the same lot with a building remaining unoccupied and unobstructed by any structure. Yeggy commented that she felt the definition should remain in the ordinance.

The commission defined different "types" of yards: 1) front yard, 2) side yard, 3) rear yard, as setbacks; which were felt to be a clearer definition for property owners.

Open terraces, patios, or concrete slabs that do not extend above the level of ground may project into setbacks, provided they remain at least 2 feet from the adjacent lot line, and provided further that they shall not be used for parking of motor vehicles. Hardscape can be placed in setbacks as long as you do not exceed one-third of the area and do not park on the hardscape. A property owner can have hardscape and projections in the buildable area.

Yeggy stated the commission is still working on defining paving in the front yard. The commission is considering limiting paving to within 10 feet of sidewalks. Council member Aldrich stated she is in favor of this rule if property owners are allowed to have a double driveway. Haverkamp stated he did not feel paving in the front yard is an issue.

Awnings, eaves, porches, or other architectural projections may extend 5 feet into setbacks provided they are attached to the main building on the lot. Goerd said the support must be from the house and not the ground. Haverkamp stated he had concerns with run-off on the neighbor's property if the projections are the full five feet. After discussion, the council felt two feet was more appropriate.

Quezada asked Goerd if he had any recommendations for the council. Goerd recommended the council have "realistic standards" for accessory structures and to "control" the amount of paving in the front yard. Iowa City allows 50% paving the front yard but does not allow parking in the front yard.

Yeggy stated that in 1963, University Heights had a 40% lot coverage ordinance in place. In 1967, the ordinance was updated but lot-coverage was not included in the revised ordinance. Yeggy stated that Des Moines currently has a 35% lot-coverage ratio, as does Waterloo and Ames.

Yeggy stated the lot-coverage ratio can be determined by geographic information system (GIS) and is fairly simple to calculate. Pat Bauer stated that lot-coverage is two dimensional ration whereas Floor Area Ratio (FAR) is three dimensional and accounts for multiple stories in a building. Larry Wilson commented that there needs to be control over building mass. Council member Miller stated she would like to see a tiered structure; lot-coverage ratio that accounts for multiple stories. Lane stated he would like the size of the lots and mass of the building considered and for the commission to set restrictions.

Haverkamp stated he did not want a new ordinance created that made a lot of homes out of compliance. Miller commented that the ordinance should not restrict property owners from making welcome renovations.

Quezada stated the commission will address sensitive slopes and water-run off issues in future meetings.

The meeting was adjourned **by unanimous consent at 9:01 p.m.**

Attest: Christine Anderson, City Clerk

Approved: Louise A. From, Mayor