

May 20, 2009

Dear Members of the Madison Zoning Advisory Committee,

We are a group of citizens interested in changing the zoning ordinance to more easily allow construction of ADU's or "granny flats" in residential districts in Madison. Following are our reactions to the ADU section of the current draft zoning rules:

1- We were happy to see the square footage limits changed.

2- The language about the number of people allowed in an ADU is unclear. It sounds like a family of four with an additional roomer would be acceptable.

3- The proposed process seems to require as much if not more participation from different city employees and departments than the current "provisional use" process.

We understood that the original goal was to streamline the process so that each ADU would not require "provisional use" designation and so much work for builders and city employees. The proposed process would require 5 distinct steps – a neighborhood meeting called by the City, a neighborhood survey conducted by the City, a report by the Department of Planning and Community and Economic Development, a study by the Plan Commission, and the vote of the Common Council. This seems contrary to the original goal.

4- It is still not entirely clear in this proposal if homeowners have the right to build an ADU.

Would the required steps be about the specifics of *how* the ADU would be built in that particular overlay district? Or would the conversations be about *whether* the ADU should be built at all?

It seems that the proposed ordinance does NOT give homeowners this right and instead gives neighbors, folks in different City offices, and the Common Council the power to say yes or no. It seems that the homeowner can only ask permission. Again, this does not seem different than what we have now.

5- We are skeptical that the ordinance as proposed will encourage people to build ADU's.

The process is lengthy, complicated, and has the potential of creating unhappiness between neighbors. It is likely that the current proposal will discourage most potential builders and will drive ADU construction underground as has happened in Chicago.

We wish that the proposal encouraged construction of ADU's more strongly and put fewer barriers in the way of bringing this potentially powerful vehicle for infill, creation of affordable housing and support for a variety of family needs to our city. We strongly urge you to reconsider the current proposed ADU rules.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

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P.S. If this is the process you choose to adopt, here are some important details that are not covered in the current proposal:

- a) How soon after a request, must the City call the informational neighborhood meeting?
- b) What is the goal and format of the meeting and who facilitates it?
- c) How long does the Director of the Department of Planning and Community and Economic Development have to tabulate the neighborhood survey results and prepare the report?
- d) How long does the Common Council have to deliberate on the report and authorize the study?
- e) How long does the Plan Commission have for the study?
- f) How much weight does the survey have in the study or can the Plan Commission go against the survey results?
- g) How long does the Common Council have to discuss the study and vote?
- h) Who will be passing judgment on design issues?
- i) Is there an appeal process for anyone?