

‘Dwelling Unit’ Public Hearing

DATE: July 15, 2020

CODE SECTION: Chapter 1, Article II – Definitions

STAFF REVIEW AND ANALYSIS:

Background:

With the remodeling of a home in Round Rock West, staff was asked by a member of the Planning and Zoning Commission about the City’s regulations regarding a second dwelling unit in single family zoning districts. While second dwelling units, also known as accessory dwelling units, are prohibited, there must be a direct conflict with the code in order to effectively enforce this. A draft code revision, providing a definition for a cooking facility/kitchen and a slight change to the dwelling unit definition, resulted from two discussions held by the Planning and Zoning Commission, held on April 15th and May 6th.

The Commission held a public hearing on June 17th regarding the cooking facility/kitchen and dwelling unit definitions. David Glenn, representing the Home Builders Association of Greater Austin, reported that some builders have a new multi-generational product designed to accommodate an elderly family member or caretaker. These units are designed to serve the needs of the family living in the home and they are becoming more popular, particularly with increasing housing prices and the ongoing pandemic. After further discussion, the Commission voted 5-3 to table action on the proposed code revision.

Update:

Staff had considered a different approach to regulating second dwelling units. Instead of using cooking facilities/kitchens as the defining feature of a dwelling unit, the number of front doors on the house would be used to define a dwelling unit. After discussion with the Home Builders Association and representatives from Lennar, it was determined that this proposal was not workable for the multi-generational product. The following agenda item provides an opportunity for further discussion.