

Housing Code Update

August 21, 2019

Meeting Summaries

Open House 4-5PM

- Displays for both the draft housing and sign codes were placed throughout the room. Meeting began with an introduction from Glen DeVries (City of Wenatchee Community Development Director) and Bob Bengford (Makers Architecture and Urban Design). Some question and answer followed on both housing and sign code updates. Below is a brief summary of the discussion as it pertained to the proposed housing code amendments:
 - RH Zone: Several folks at the meeting came to get clarification on the RH zone proposal. One particular person noted that should their single family home burn down, they would be unable to rebuild it.
 - Glen and Bob noted that the use chart footnotes for the RH zone emphasize that existing single family uses are a permitted use, but that new such uses are not allowed.
 - Glen and Bob reiterated that the RH functions as the city's multifamily zone and that it's an important resource for new housing within the city.
 - Staff and consultant's biggest intent is to not allow SF subdivisions to use up valuable RH land.
 - Attendees noted that much of the RH area by them is now single family
 - Flyers were prepared by one of the RH residents expressing concern about the code and encouraging residents to attend the meeting. Several such residents came and sought clarification. Once told that we had updated the draft to clarify that existing single-family uses were considered a permitted use, many appeared content.
 - One RH owner wanted to subdivide his parcel to create a SF lot for his daughter and perhaps that should be allowed.
 - Glen noted that the draft could be changed to allow limited subdivisions (such as a short plat) – but prohibit larger subdivisions. Alternatively, a change could be made to simply allow single-family homes as a permitted use (as is the case currently).
 - Participants asked about how folks were notified of project – as most didn't know until seeing flier. Glen responded to describe process, previous meetings, social media announcements. Wenatchee World had also reported on previous meetings and was in attendance
- Permitted use charts – participant asked what “P” meant – noted that there is no legend! Good point – we clarified this and noted that there is a legend in the code – but that in our draft we had only focused on changes and hadn't included a legend. We will add one in future drafts.
- One participant lived in the RS zone and was curious of changes. We clarified uses and key standards adjustments.
- A question was asked about the biggest changes in the code. Bob noted that allowing for more flexibility for single purpose residential in the North Wenatchee and South Wenatchee Business Districts is likely to be the most impactful change – as those properties are likely the biggest resource of land available for housing. Current code only allows housing if ground floor commercial is integrated (and no such housing has thus been built under this provision).

Planning Commission Meeting 5:30PM -8:30PM

It was very late by the time we made it to the housing code on the agenda, thus it was decided to conduct a brief presentation and limit the discussion – under the assumption that there will be follow up meetings to discuss issues.

- Four members of the public spoke up at the beginning of the meeting to speak about the RH zone – noting that SF should be a permitted use – and asking for clarification about the code.
- PC members discussed RH issues, noting that SF development in the zone is likely more an exception rather than the rule (as much of the development includes duplexes, triplexes, and more), but that many existing single-family homes exist in the zone now.
 - Thus simply continuing to allow SF as a permitted use may be a reasonable move. This appears to be the simplest solution that pleases the participants – the market likely limits the development of low-density development. Though there was some interest in providing protections, thus we probably come back with two options for consideration.
- ADU discussion
 - We clarified that owner occupancy was only required in the RS and RL zones and that we eliminated the waiver opportunity
 - Some disagreement amongst PC members on the issue, but most favored approach in draft.