



Lowell City Council

Housing SC Joint With Zoning SC Meeting Minutes

Michael Q. Geary
City Clerk

Date: April 4, 2023
Time: 5:00 PM
Location: Council Chamber, City Hall / Zoom(Hybrid)

PRESENT:

Present on Roll Call were Housing SC – C. Yem, C. Drinkwater, C. Nuon; Zoning SC – C. Drinkwater, C. Leahy, C. Yem. Also present were C. Gitschier, Francesca Cigliano (Insp. Services), Yovani Baez-Rose (DPD), C. Jenness, C. Mercier, Lloyd Dejesus (Insp. Services) and C. Robinson.

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

Chairman Drinkwater called the meeting to order commented on prior meeting and noted that public comments would be first. C. Yem noted attendance of interested parties and staff.

ORDER OF BUSINESS:

C. Drinkwater opened meeting up to public and following addressed the body: John Hamblet (Zoom); Deb Forgione (Zoom); Brian Meade (Zoom); Pat Vondal; Bobby Tugbiyele; Paul Early; Paul Gaudet; Alan Saba; and Jerry Frechette.

C. Nuon commented on the speakers noting the shortage of housing and that Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) is a manner to increase stock and that there are other methods as well. C. Nuon noted ordinance should have a narrow scope and that there should be a cap on units as well as a review period. C. Drinkwater noted the review could be data review and that there may be a legal issue with capping. C. Nuon noted the data review was appropriate and the Law Department should weigh in on the cap. C. Drinkwater noted that it applies to all zoning districts and only applicable for single family homes. C. Yem indicated that he has received sufficient information from the City staff and was supportive of the proposal. Ms. Baez-Rose noted cap would be a legal question and any review would be done by Inspectional Services which would be part of the ordinance. C. Leahy noted ordinance only applied to single homes and that owner must occupy one unit and that short term renting is not allowed. C. Drinkwater outlined the process to this point and that data indicates that ADU are successful for making rents affordable without public investment. C. Drinkwater noted the advantageous of owner



occupied and that other communities programs are successful and the proposed ordinance addressed many concerns of the neighborhoods. **Motion** by C. Yem, seconded by C. Leahy to recommend adoption of proposed ordinance with addendum that there be a one year review by Inspectional Services. Adopted per Roll Call vote 4 yeas. So voted. C. Robinson noted an ADU program will not create below market rent as added costs of owners will be passed to tenants. C. Gitschier noted affordable housing is a subjective term and that there is a serious issue concerning inspection of the added units and the ordinance needs better vetting. C. Jenness noted the effort to produce the proposed ordinance and that the time is right to move forward with it as many protections are in place; for instance owner occupied requirement. C. Yem commented on the protections in the ordinance and that no one is required to build it and if property is a rental property the owner is responsible to maintain it. C. Nuon supported the ordinance with review conditions. C. Leahy added the friendly amendment of one year review with no objections. C. Mercier questioned condition of the ordinance. C. Drinkwater outlined those conditions noting the one year review by Inspectional Services. C. Robinson questioned procedure from here. C. Leahy noted whole dwelling is served by one power meter.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion to adjourn and continue by C. Yem, seconded by C. Leahy. So Voted.

Meeting adjourned at 6:15 PM

Michael Geary, City Clerk