

City of Lake Forest Park - Planning Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes: February 9, 2021
Virtual/Zoom Meeting

Planning Commissioners present: Chair Maddy Larson, Vice Chair Rachael Katz, Steve Morris, Ira Gross, Richard Saunders, Joel Paisner, T.J. Fudge

Staff and others present: Steve Bennett, Planning Director; Nick Holland, Senior Planner; Councilmember Tom French, Councilmember Lorri Bodie; Deputy Mayor Kassover

Members of the Public: Elizabeth Duncan, Mike Dee, Elizabeth Fiene, Don Fiene, Jack Tonkin, Brian Highbarger, Corey Brewer, Adam Stoecker

Planning Commissioners absent: n/a

Call to order: Chair Larson called the meeting to order at 7pm.

Land Acknowledgement:

Chair Larson read the land acknowledgement.

Approval of Agenda

Mr. Gross made a motion to approve the agenda, Mr. Saunders seconded, and the agenda was approved unanimously.

Approval of Meeting Minutes from November 10, 2020, December 8, 2020, and January 14, 2021

Mr. Larson asked for comments on all three sets of minutes. Mr. Gross made a motion to approve the minutes from November 10, 2020, December 8, 2020, and January 12, 2021, Mr. Katz seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Meeting Dates:

Next regular meeting is scheduled for March 9, 2021

Citizen Comments:

None.

Report from City Council Liaison

Councilmember French provided an update. He said that the Council received 2 ¾ pages of comments on the town center materials and talked about Council meetings that occurred since the last Planning Commission meeting. He said the track changes version of the town center ordinance is available on the website and he encouraged the public to review it. He said that the regular meeting on 2/25/21 would be where the town center regulations are planned to be adopted. He went on to say that there could be an additional meeting on the topic, if needed. He said that the moratorium for town center expires on March 10th. He thanked staff and the City Attorney for their hard work. Director Bennett said that focus will be on the design guidelines for the Council discussions prior to the 2/25 meeting.

Mr. Saunders asked about developments with Sound Transit. Councilmember French asked Planning Director Bennett if he knew of any updates and Bennett responded that he was not aware of any. Director

1 Bennett added that Sound Transit has commented on the town center regulations. Councilmember French
2 mentioned some geotechnical work performed by Sound Transit for the purpose of the BAT lane widening.
3

4 **Old Business**

5 None.
6

7 **New Business**

8 *“NW Bungalows in the Park” Presentation on Accessory Dwelling Units by Don Fiene and Jack Tonkin with Cory
9 Brewer, Adam Stoecker, and Brian Highberger*

10 Chair Larson introduced Don Fiene and Jack Tonkin, and thanked them for the work that they have done.
11 She indicated that resources have been drafted to support this presentation. She said that this is for
12 informational purposes only, and that no decisions were being made.
13

14 Don Fiene introduced himself and provided his address and Jack Tonkin did the same. Mr. Fiene said that
15 Mr. Tonkin was integral in siting the current City Hall. Mr. Fiene said that in 2018 his group began exploring
16 a way to introduce a more diverse housing type in LFP, like Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU). He indicated
17 that they had drafted an ordinance and then presented the content to the Council in 2018. He indicated that
18 the Council was focused on the big five project list, so this did not become a priority. He explained why they
19 used the term bungalows and mentioned that bungalows can be an alternative housing option. He indicated
20 density would not be a part of his discussion.
21

22 In response to Mr. Fiene’s call for questions, Chair Larson indicated that some of the Commissioners had
23 provided written questions on the material prior to the meeting and that those questions had been forwarded
24 to Mr. Fiene and Mr. Tonkin prior to the meeting. She suggested that those questions be answered first. Mr.
25 Fiene summarized the types of individuals that can utilize bungalows. He went on to say that some segments
26 of the population can move out of urban centers and into the suburbs. He said that ADUs are an alternative
27 for seniors as well. Chair Larson asked Mr. Fiene to speak to the affordable element of the alternative. Cmr.
28 Fudge asked if everyone has seen the questions being discussed. Chair Larson said that the questions from
29 some of the Commissioners were only sent to Mr. Fiene, and that in retrospect, the questions should have
30 been shared with the entire Commission. Mr. Tonkin spoke about the rising housing costs of Seattle and,
31 that in LFP, ADUs as an alternative for those residents. Mr. Fiene indicated that if an ADU is constructed
32 on a single family lot, the property value of that lot will rise, but the affordability can come from rental
33 income for the property owner. He spoke about how ADUs will provide additional housing stock within the
34 City. He spoke about affordable housing as a function of the Council’s tax increment financing plans and said
35 that ADUs would produce affordable rents.
36

37 Cmr. Saunders thanked them for their hard work. He asked about what the City can do to encourage
38 homeowners to keep rental rates affordable. Mr. Fiene responded that the City could provide tax incentives
39 to owners of ADUs for providing affordable housing. Mr. Tonkin said that the City could pre-approve
40 standard ADU structures for construction. He said that the City should promote the idea of ADUs and make
41 it easy for people to add them to their property. Cmr. Saunders asked what the cost-revenue balance needed
42 to be in order for the proposal to work. Mr. Tonkin said that Brian Highberger would be the best person to
43 answer that question. Chair Larson mentioned that the Commission received a binder of information
44 describing the topics of discussion. She asked Mr. Highberger to elaborate on how to build a project like this.
45

46 Mr. Highberger introduced himself and said that LFP has many critical areas and they are challenging to
47 develop. He added that the tree code has been difficult to develop under as well. He said that a pre-
48 approved ADU plan would be helpful. He said that permit fees may not be able to be waived, but
49 eliminating the requirement that stipulates detached ADUs must be in the backyard area would make it easier
50 to develop ADUs.
51

52

1 Director Bennett said that pre-approved plans could be an alternative. He brought up the issue of parking
2 for ADUs and adjacent slopes. He said if transit is near-by, a parking space for the additional unit could be
3 waived. Cmr. Katz mentioned a legislative bill that would prohibit requiring off-street parking for ADUs
4 within a certain distance transit routes.

5
6 Cmr. Morris asked if ADUs on smaller lots are feasible. Mr. Highberger talked about lot sizes and ADU
7 feasibility. He spoke of several situations where lot size would influence the size and positioning of an ADU.
8

9 Mr. Fiene said that some lots are much larger than the minimum lot size of the zone. He talked about
10 impervious surface regulations and how relaxing those regulations could provide for more area for potential
11 ADUs. Director Bennett agreed and said that regulations should be added to guide how large ADUs become.
12 Cmr. Paisner talked about his understanding of impervious surface regulations. Mr. Highberger provided
13 insight on impervious surface regulations. Cmr. Paisner said that changes in regulations should be looked at
14 through a cumulative analysis of how lots will be affected by these proposed changes.
15

16 Chair Larson asked Cory Brewer to talk about who is looking for ADUs. Mr. Brewer introduced himself and
17 said that he works for Windermere rental properties which represent single family residences. He said that
18 the pandemic has had an effect on the housing market, and people are wanting to move out of the urban
19 centers. He indicated that a choice for an urban dweller who would like to move to the suburbs could be an
20 ADU in a single family zone. Chair Larson asked about the status of the housing supply in LFP. Mr. Brewer
21 said that there is a shortage of affordable housing. He said that supply and demand before the pandemic was
22 fairly balanced, but has changed since the pandemic. Chair Larson asked what the demand has been for 400-
23 1000 square foot homes in LFP. Mr. Brewer responded by asking if there are any of those size houses in
24 LFP. He said that there probably aren't any houses of that size, so the supply is low. A discussion occurred
25 on housing supply and demand and ADU potential. Cmr. Katz asked about how Mr. Fiene came up with a
26 50% interest level for those owners who desire to construct an ADU. Mr. Fiene provided an explanation as
27 to how he came to the fifty percent number.
28

29 Adam Stoecker introduced himself and said that he's lived in LFP all his life and that he works for a Seattle
30 based home lender. He said that financing is not the hurdle for housing. There are plenty of financing
31 options. He questions the idea of ADUs creating affordable housing and said that the idea of relatives
32 utilizing ADUs should be focused on and making better use of current properties. Mr. Brewer said that the
33 more housing options that are available, the better the choices the public has, which also would be reflected
34 in prices. Chair Larson said that community diversity is a driver to affordable housing options. Cmr. Gross
35 talked about owners not being involved or living on site for properties with ADUs. Cmr. Morris said that
36 most ordinances have an owner requirement. Cmr. Katz described an ADU that a friend of hers has. Mr.
37 Tonkin talked about how ADUs might change the character of residential neighborhoods in LFP. Cmr.
38 Paisner cautioned Mr. Tonkin about his statement and added that the State could potentially eliminate single
39 family zoning all together because of the barriers it creates to affordability. Mr. Fiene said the goal is to
40 increase affordable housing in LFP. Chair Larson asked how individuals qualify for financing on ADUs. Mr.
41 Stoecker said that there are only small programs where ADU income can be claimed for the purposes of
42 qualifying for a mortgage. Mr. Brewer thanked everyone and left the meeting.
43

44 Cmr. Fudge said he is uncomfortable with conversations that have impacts on individual living situations. He
45 said that the impact of these conversations should be considered. He asked Mr. Tonkin and Mr. Fiene what
46 type of public support exists for the idea of ADUs. He said that this idea seems like cluster housing. Mr.
47 Fiene said that ADUs would not be as disruptive as cluster housing which create greater density. Mr. Tonkin
48 said he has been involved in discussions regarding cluster housing and that cluster housing has a big impact
49 on a neighborhood.
50

1 Chair Larson asked for input on residential density and housing diversity. Mr. Highberger said that ADUs
2 and cluster housing are different. He said that encouraging smaller homes would be a thoughtful way for
3 LFP to accomplish housing diversity. He talked about his various housing projects.
4

5 Chair Larson thanked the guest speakers for their work and for participating in the meeting. Cmr. Katz said
6 that she would be interested in feedback from the Council on potential amendments to the ADU code and
7 thanked the guests for preparing the information presented. Mr. Fiene suggested that the supplemental
8 materials introduced at meeting should be sent to Council. Mr. Stoecker added that, in the last year, four
9 homes with an ADU have been sold in LFP with an average sale price of \$812K.
10

11 Chair Larson said that the Commission needs to understand the numbers and development trends for LFP.
12 Cmr. Saunders said that code revisions to the ADU regulations may be premature and said that he would
13 rather discuss issues at a broader level.
14

15 **Reports and Announcements**

16 None.
17

18 **Additional Citizen Comments**

19 Mr. Tonkin thanked everyone for their participation.
20

21 Mike Dee thanked everyone for participating and said that the legislature was in session and that ADUs were
22 a topic. He described the proposed legislation for ADUs. He also said that King County needs more
23 affordable housing and LFP needs to help with that. He thanked the Commission for the land
24 acknowledgement.
25

26 **Agenda for Next Meeting:**
27

28 Chair Larson reiterated her thought that the Commission needs to understand the numbers and development
29 trends for LFP and suggested adding that topic to the agenda for next meeting. She also said that debrief on
30 tonight's topic could be included.
31

32 **Joel Paisner Recognition**

33 Chair Larson thanked Cmr. Paisner for his service and Commissioners and others added their appreciation of
34 Cmr. Paisner's service on the Commission. Cmr. Paisner said that his time of the Commission has been very
35 meaningful and he thanked staff for all their work and efforts. Cmr. Morris said that he will stay on until they
36 find new members to ensure there would be a quorum.
37

38 **Adjournment:**
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40 Cmr. Gross moved to adjourn the meeting, Cmr. Saunders seconded, and all voted in favor. The meeting
41 adjourned at 9:10pm.
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43 APPROVED:
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45 46

maddy larson

47 Maddy Larson, Chair
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