STUDY SESSION

The study session commenced at 6:00 p.m.

1. Accessory dwelling units

Rita Trapp, consulting planner with HKGi, provided background on accessory dwelling units (ADU). She noted this is a strategic priority of the council related to housing, and the planning commission will be asked to provide feedback to staff on the proposed zoning amendment and the provided policy questions.

Ms. Trapp noted the goals of the city related to ADUs, including that they offer a continuum of diverse lifecycle housing choices suitable for households of all income levels including, but not limited to affordable, senior, multi-generational, supportive and mixed income housing, disbursed throughout the city. She added ADUs can be attached, detached or within the existing housing, and the city is interested in providing all three types.

Commissioner Dumalag asked about how ADUs fit into the comprehensive plan, how they align, and what limitations might exist.

Chair Eckholm stated a discussion of best practices on ADUs would be helpful also, so as to balance regulations and not have an ongoing need for variances.

Commissioner Robertson asked when a single-family dwelling with an ADU becomes a duplex.
Sean Walther, Planning and Zoning Supervisor, stated an ADU is typically smaller than the original unit, and added later, whereas a duplex is larger. There will be distinguishing features of an ADU, and it will fall under a certain category in the code.

Commissioner Robertson asked if an ADU exists and is rented out, will the city need to be notified and will the owner need to be licensed.

Mr. Walther stated this will need to be determined, including if the unit is not owner occupied. He added a registration of land use might be needed, and how this will be navigated remains to be seen.

Commissioner Eckholm stated he would like to see a contingency plan in place for owner occupancy properties, where the owner moves out, and the ADU is still being rented. He would like to discuss the possibility of two different tracks being utilized in a case like this.

Commissioner Dumalag had a question on sale, and if a parcel could be split in two and sold.

Mr. Walther stated that would be a subdivision and that would be possible, if the owner could meet the minimums and not create non-conformities.

Commissioner Kraft stated she felt it would not be necessary for the owner to occupy the dwelling with the ADU.

Commissioner Erwin asked about Airbnb or VRBO rentals.

Mr. Walther stated these short-term rentals are not currently allowed in the city, but this could be better defined in the code. He added a number of policies within the code will be coming up for discussion and will need to be addressed by the commission in the near future.

Commissioner Robertson stated the impact to neighborhoods will be important to consider and asked if resident approval will be needed for ADUs, or if licensing will be needed.

Ms. Trapp noted other areas for discussion include size of ADUs.

Commissioner Eckholm said there is potential for many ADUs in two-story garages, but he has concerns this might push past size limits set and asked if the proposed regulations would result in teardowns and new structures built.
Commissioner Robertson stated he does not think this would be a concern, but a mechanism should be in place for variances to be addressed.

Ms. Trapp asked if the 300 – 800 square foot size of ADUs is appropriate.

The commissioners discussed and agreed the square foot size was appropriate, as well as limiting ADU occupancy to 4 people.

Ms. Trapp asked the commissioners about off-street parking, stating that currently two off-street parking spaces are allowed now. Ms. Trapp noted council directs and staff recommends there be no additional off-street parking.

The commissioners discussed this issue and noted if an ADU was added to a dwelling, and if the code might have a limit in any additional off-street parking – this could be a cause for concern.

Ms. Trapp asked the commissioners about design, and if there should be limits to design elements with an ADU.

The commissioners had a few concerns with exterior stairways, windows and extra doors. Commissioner Robertson added the current regulations should remain in place, and there should be no special additional design elements for ADUs.

Commissioner Eckholm preferred no additional stairways.

Commissioner Kraft stated if additional stairs are in scale or not out of place, they could work fine.

Ms. Trapp asked the commissioners about ADU scale and massing, height, setbacks and impervious surface limitations.

Commissioner Eckholm added the setback of the structure would need to be further back, if the structure were built taller than allowed.

Commissioner Kraft added a ratio might need to be developed related to setback and height.

Commissioner Eckholm noted also there should be a path to the ADU from the street, so as not to walk through a yard to get to the ADU.

Mr. Walther stated the final draft will go to the planning commission in November or December of 2019, and to city council by the end of December.
2. Texa Tonka small area plan

Jennifer Monson, Planner, presented the report. She noted many of the commercial properties located near the Texas Avenue and Minnetonka Boulevard area have been owned by the same property group for many decades. This ownership group has decided they will divest many of the commercially zoned properties in Texa-Tonka in the coming years.

Ms. Monson stated a survey of area residents was conducted with over 800 responses, along with two neighborhood meetings. Ms. Monson added the planning process will continue with more public input and it will conclude in December.

Commissioner Kraft asked if this plan takes into account any short-term planning.

Ms. Monson stated yes, noting there will be many aesthetic upgrades during the short term.

Commissioner Beneke stated he hoped there would be more outdoor seating at restaurants in the Texa Tonka area.

Ms. Monson noted that was a desire of many and was noted in the survey responses as well.

Mr. Walther added the commissioners are invited to complete the survey as well.

3. 2020 Census

The commissioners had no concerns about the 2020 census at this time.

Mr. Walther stated in the interest of time, the 2020 census topic will be added to a future study session agenda.

Mr. Walther noted a future study session topic will include C1 and C2 rezoning.

The meeting was adjourned at 8 p.m.