STUDY SESSION

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

1. Zoning amendment – accessory dwelling units (ADU)

Rita Trapp, HKGi, presented the update to the commissioners.

Ms. Trapp stated staff is recommending that this initial ADU ordinance be simplified to focus on allowing ADUs in single-family homes and defining ADUs as self-contained units that are fire-separated from the principal single-family dwelling. In conjunction with the adoption of the ADU ordinance, the city policy regarding second kitchens will change so that they are allowed. This change will allow homeowners to have family, friends or up to two borders stay in their single-family dwelling without having to create a formal ADU.

Ms. Trapp explained that the ordinance does not include specific requirements related to rental licensing or sewer and water connections as those provisions are already addressed in other parts of the city code. Information about this requirement would be included in any handouts prepared about ADUS.

Ms. Trapp added that staff followed up with the building and energy department to confirm when there will be a sanitary sewer access charge or water access charge when a new ADU is constructed. In addition, staff confirmed that there is at least five feet needed between building openings for two buildings on the same lot.

Ms. Trapp noted that the ordinance as proposed would allow an accessory structure or an ADU in the side yard.

Commissioner Johnston-Madison asked about the number of people allowed to live in the ADU. Ms. Trapp indicated that the ordinance would allow up to two people over the age of 18 with an unlimited number of children. Mr. Walther added that the building code would need to be followed along with zoning, in order to limit the total number of people in the dwelling.
Ms. Trapp stated the parcel must meet parking requirements and will not require additional parking.

She noted that an ADU that is attached or internal to the single-family dwelling shall be no more than 40% of the principle structure. She also described how decks are proposed to be handled for a detached ADU.

Commissioner Kraft asked about the height and setback restrictions. Ms. Trapp stated there will be limits in height similar to an accessory structure, adding that in all likelihood ADUs could not be built on top of an existing garage, but would likely need to be built as a new structure with a new foundation with frost footings.

Ms. Trapp presented a diagram illustrating the yard definitions and a table showing the current and proposed yard requirements for various structures. Commissioner Erwin stated the table illustrating setbacks is helpful.

Ms. Trapp explained new ordinance language that prohibits short-term vacation rentals. Short-term rentals are already prohibited in St. Louis Park, and this new language clarifies the current interpretation of the zoning code.

Commissioners were comfortable with the information presented. Mr. Walther stated the ordinance draft is ready for city council input and it will be reviewed with them soon at a study session.

2. Communications

Mr. Walther stated on January 14th at 7 p.m. the state demographer will be at city hall presenting on the implications of the 2020 census on Minnesota. Also, staff intends to give the commission a short presentation related to the census, and efforts underway to engage and inform residents. He added the U.S. Census Bureau is hiring census takers.

Mr. Walther confirmed there are no items scheduled for January 15 so that meeting will be cancelled. Mr. Walther stated the next regular meeting of the commission will be February 5, 2020.

Mr. Walther added that on February 24, 2020 the annual boards and commissions meeting will be held.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.