



DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Planning Division

MEMORANDUM

TO: Bruce K. Walden, Chief Administrative Officer

FROM: Elizabeth H. Tyler, AICP, Director

DATE: October 7, 2004

SUBJECT: Motion Directing Plan Case Review of Accessory Parking Lots in Single Family Residential Areas

Introduction

A number of Urbana citizens have recently contacted the Mayor, Councilmembers, and City staff regarding an anticipated proposal to construct an accessory parking lot on a residential parcel located at 806 West Iowa Street. The planned parking lot would serve the Alpha Chi Omega Sorority on Lincoln Avenue. The subject lot adjoins the south side of the sorority's current parking area located behind the sorority house. A demolition permit has been requested to clear a house currently standing at 806 West Iowa Street. Representatives of the sorority indicate that they will propose construction of an expansion to their parking lot onto the lot at 806 West Iowa Street sometime next Spring.

What has prompted the residents concern is not only the demolition of the existing house at the site, but a concern that construction of a parking lot at this location would not necessarily have been anticipated by its R7, University Residential, zoning. The site is bounded on all sides by other single-family and University Residential uses. Specific concerns about the anticipated parking lot include lighting, traffic volumes, appearance, and safety.

Background

Under current Zoning Ordinance regulations, accessory uses – including accessory parking lots – are allowed on any zone where the principal use to which the accessory use is accessory is allowed. Because a sorority is a permitted use in the R-7 University Residential zone, an accessory use to that sorority is also permitted on any lot zoned R-7 that adjoins or is located within 600 feet of the parcel on which the principal use is located. The result of this application of accessory versus principal zoning use provisions can sometimes result in the creation of accessory parking lots in areas which are otherwise predominantly single family. This may occur in areas which have disparate zoning (e.g., such

as the subject block which contains R-2, R-3, and R-7 zones) and as associated with non-residential uses which are regularly permitted in residential zones, such as churches and schools.

Discussion

In order to provide an opportunity for more detailed review of accessory parking lots where they are proposed in predominantly single-family areas, requirement of a conditional use or special use permit may be advisable. Adding these provisions would require an amendment to the Urbana Zoning Ordinance, including a public hearing and review by the Urbana Plan Commission. Additional development regulations may also be helpful in reducing the potential impacts that may be associated with such accessory parking lots. Such provisions could include specific lighting requirements that do not impact nearby residential properties, additional landscape screening requirements, limitations on parking lot size, and improved visibility requirements. Any revisions to the development regulations associated with accessory parking lots would also require a text amendment to the Urbana Zoning Ordinance, including a public hearing and review by the Urbana Plan Commission.

Staff Recommendation

In order to direct staff to initiate a plan case to address the issue of accessory parking lots in single family neighborhoods, staff recommends that City Council adopt the following motion:

“Motion to direct staff to initiate a plan case for Zoning Ordinance amendments necessary to address the issues presented by the placement of accessory parking lots within single family residential neighborhoods through such means as requiring conditional or special use review of such lots and establishing appropriate development regulations.”