

Sustainable Code Committee
Minutes
June 19, 2013
3:00 PM
Joel D. Valdez Main Library
101 N. Stone Ave., 4th floor conference room

1. Welcome and Introductions

Attendees:

City Staff: Adam Smith (PDSO), Frank Dillon (PDSO), Bruce Plenk (OCSO)

Committee Members: Danielle Kontovas Fidel, Rob Kulakofsky, Merrill Eisenberg, Jason Wong, Hank Krzysik, Joseph Maher.

M/C Aides: Bonnie Medler (Ward 6)

Audience: Tres English

2. Discussion of the Proposed Urban Agriculture Text Amendments

Staff informed the committee that they received comments on the proposed Urban Agriculture amendments from Colette Altaffer, a neighborhood activist, on June 18th. When applicable, staff informed the committee at various points during the committee's discussion where Ms. Altaffer made a recommendation.

Keeping of Small Farm Animals

Animal Units:

- Only regulate the number of chickens that are of laying age (i.e. older than 4-6 months), not chicks younger than this.
- Consider allowing greater animal units in rural residential zones.
- Allow more animal units as the residential lots get bigger. This approach is preferred over requiring homeowners to go through a special exception, DDO, or variance process.
- One idea – revise the animal unit calculation from 0.2 to 0.3 (or some variable greater than 0.2) per 1,000 sf of gross lot area.

Setbacks:

- Revise to stipulate that zero foot setback allowed provided meets the “doghouse exemption” and is 20' from adjacent residence.
- Allow exceptions in areas where the setback cannot be met because of existing development patterns, such as in parts of the barrios where the houses are on

relatively small lots and have zero foot setbacks. A committee member commented that chickens have been kept in these neighborhoods for years without incident.

- Require opaque screening when shelters are in the front yard.

Greenhouse

- Conduct further research on noise levels from heating and cooling systems.
- An evaporative cooler, which is not very loud, could be used to cool the greenhouse, and therefore, should not require additional setbacks.
- Using an A/C system, which is noisier than an evaporative cooler, for a backyard greenhouse is unlikely because the cost would be so prohibitive.

Composting

Contact the Tucson Organic Gardeners to get information about specific ways composting areas can be mitigated.

Liability Insurance

A neighborhood activist recommended (via email to staff) that owners/managers of community gardens and urban farms be required to carry liability insurance to cover accidents once the activity is in operation. The committee discussed the proposal and decided to not recommend this for the following reasons: 1) it goes beyond what is typically a requirement of zoning; and, 2) organizers of community gardens would most likely not get insurance until after permits had been secured. [Note: the Planning and Development Services Department does not require proof of liability insurance for any other application.]

Urban Farm

- Revise the proposal to only require landscaping and screening for urban farms where adjacent to residential uses only.
- Re: Heavy machinery – limit hours of use and tie to nuisance mitigation standards for neighborhood compatibility purposes.

Community Gardens

- Remove the provision that the PDSO Director may require parking is the level of incidental sales warrant it. This requirement is unreasonable and difficult to enforce once the garden is already in place.
- Strike the second sentence in Section 5.B. It is inconsistent with the preceding standard.

Farmers' Markets

- Research whether there are currently any farmers' markets located in residential zones and what type of property they are located on (e.g. church or school parking lot).
- Research Menlo Farms as a model when refining the draft proposal.
- Vary the development standards depending on whether the farmers' market is accessed from a major (i.e. less restrictive) or minor street (i.e. more restrictive).

3. Summer Meeting Schedule

The meeting in July is canceled. The next committee meeting is Wednesday, August 21st at 3 pm.

4. Call to the Audience

Tres English: Emphasized the importance of addressing the potential nuisances rather than prescribing numbers, which often times don't allow flexibility to accommodate good projects.

5. Next Steps

The meeting in July is canceled. The next committee meeting is Wednesday, August 21st at 3 pm at the Joel D. Valdez Main Library (101 N. Stone Ave., 4th floor conference room).

The meeting concluded at 4:55.