

City of Milwaukie - Code Assistance Phase 2 Steering Committee Meeting #4 Summary

May 19, 2011

Milwaukie City Hall Conference Room

Overview

The purpose of this meeting was to update Steering Committee members on the residential standards project, report on the results of the public involvement process to date, and discuss a list of questions related to concepts for single-family (SFR) design standards. Specifically, staff was looking for Steering Committee input on SFR, garage, and accessory dwelling unit (ADU) design standards. Guidance from the Steering Committee will be used to draft new and amended language for Milwaukie's code. In order to generate focused discussion, the committee was divided into two smaller groups to go over the list of questions. Each group had two staff/PMT members to facilitate the discussion and take notes.

Attendees

The following PMT members attended the meeting.

- Katie Mangle, City of Milwaukie Planning Director
- Susan Shanks, City of Milwaukie Senior Planner
- Marcy McInelly, Urbsworks President
- Serah Breakstone, Angelo Planning Group

The following Steering Committee members attended the meeting:

- Group #1: Greg/Frank Hemer; Joe Loomis, Jim Perrault; and Lisa Batey (member-at-large from the Planning Commission)
- Group #2: Mark Gamba; David Aschenbrenner; Dion Shepard, and Jean Baker

Summary

The meeting began with introductions followed by an overview of the public involvement process to date for this project, including results from the survey, interviews, focus groups, and workshop. Marcy then presented the questions that would be the focus of the small group discussion. The questions related to architectural design of SFR development, design and location of garages, and design and location of ADUs. The following is a summary of the results of the discussion for each question.

1. Question: Is the list of goals that will be used to guide the draft proposed code amendments appropriate and is anything missing?



Answer: There was general consensus from both groups that the goals are appropriate and that nothing was missing.

2. Question: Proposed design standards for SFR development emphasize four elements: “eyes on the street”, main entrances, articulation, and detailed design. Articulation and detailed design standards provide some flexibility by allowing a developer to pick from a menu of options. Overall, is this a good approach for the City to take?

Answer: Most members thought the overall approach was appropriate and that the menu option added flexibility without dictating specific styles. Some wanted staff to look more closely at the specific elements listed in the menu to make sure they were style-neutral and the right elements to include. There was some discussion of using a point system rather than a “choose 5” system; however, it was noted that assigning point values to certain design elements may encourage a specific style type, which would not meet the goal of being style-neutral.

One committee member suggested reframing the “eyes on the street” standard to be as much about safety as about the home appearing friendly, welcoming, and supportive of community interactions. Another committee member suggested including belly bands on the design standards menu.

One committee member felt strongly that the City should not be regulating SFR design at all, but should only regulate basic safety standards. That member also felt that privacy was the biggest issue with SFR development, and that changes to the development standards, not design standards, could effectively address issues of privacy.

Group #2 liked the idea of including a “prohibited materials” list (to include things like raw concrete, T-1-11, etc.). The list of encouraged materials should include (real) stucco.

Follow-up: Staff needs to determine whether any or all of the City’s design standards could be legally applied to manufactured homes.

3. Question: Should design standards apply only to new homes or should they also be applied to expansion or garage conversions?

Answer: Some members felt that design standards should only apply to expansions that have a significant impact on the view from the street. Another member felt standards should not apply to expansions at all. Members of group #2 concurred that it is important that the approach not be too heavy-handed.

There was a lot of discussion about the balance between meeting specific design standards and “matching” with existing development. It was noted that achieving both may not always be possible and the City may need to decide which to prioritize. Some members thought that matching with existing development is more important and some felt that meeting design standards is a priority. There did not appear to be consensus on this issue.

Group #2 discussed the importance of the main entrance being covered in one way or another – that seemed to be a sure way to make a house feel more welcoming. Important that the main entrance cover be integrated into the design of the house, not just a lone little canopy-like cover – at

least 2” deep? Noted that a more massive elevation required more articulation. The priority should be for the expansion to meet new design standards, then to complement the existing house.

Staff follow-up: Members requested that future photo examples include little explanations to describe which aspect of the photo is being used as an example (i.e., an eave, a balcony, or a blank wall).

4. Question: Should the location of garages be limited to behind the front façade of the house? If so, should there be exceptions?

Answer: There was some agreement that allowing the garage to extend in front of the house was okay if the extent were limited (no more than 8 feet in front, for example) and the house was required to have a front porch that extended to meet the front of the garage.

The group also felt that the front-facing garage length should be limited to 50% of the length of the house for front-facing garages and that side-facing garages should be required to meet the window standard. Support for allowing garages to be closer to the street if a front porch is incorporated between the façade and the garage, as long as the garage is less than approx. 35% of the elevation.

5. Question: Should detached ADUs be required to look like the primary home, meet SFR design standards, or neither if not visible from the street?

Answer: There was a mixed response from the group. Some members felt the ADU should meet SFR design standards and some felt the ADU should be required to “complement” existing development. It was unclear whether complement referred just to the primary house or to the neighborhood as a whole. It was also noted that a requirement to “complement” development may be overly vague. There did seem to be consensus that ADUs don’t need to be hidden from view and that the limit on front entrances was not necessary. There is a need for detached ADUs without required parking. It is important that ADUs aren’t hidden and that police & fire can find them – don’t create a safety problem.