

Lee, Chris

From: R P <palmra@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 14, 2025 5:34 PM
To: Lee, Chris
Subject: Re: Zoning, Neighborhoods, and Development Committee Meeting 4/15

Comment to be published on
Item 8. 240999 A substitute ordinance relating to zoning regulations for accessory dwelling units.

My name is Robin Palm, I'm an AICP certified urban planner and resident of Washington Heights in Aldermanic District 10. I'm also the southeast wisconsin representative to the state's professional planning chapter, although I won't be speaking in that capacity or at their behest. I work as a planner in the Village of Mount Pleasant in Racine County, population 27,000. Mount Pleasant's code has allowed ADU's by right in **every** residential zoning district for almost 5 years now.

See: <https://ecode360.com/36325148>

§ 90-110.10 Allowed building types.
[Ord. No. 19-2020, 6-8-2020]

(a) Allowed residential uses must occupy residential buildings which are allowed in R Districts as indicated in Table 90-110-3.

(b) Allowed public and civic uses must occupy civic buildings which are allowed in R Districts as indicated in Table 90-110-2.

Building Type	RE	RL	RM	RH	See Section
Residential buildings					
Detached house	●	●	●	●	§ 90-110.90
Apartment house	—	●	●	●	§ 90-110.90
Townhouse	—	●	●	●	§ 90-110.100
Townhouse building	—	—	●	●	§ 90-110.110
Multi-unit building	—	—	●	●	§ 90-110.120
Cottage court	—	—	●	●	§ 90-110.120
Accessory cottage	●	●	●	●	§ 90-110.140
Nonresidential buildings					
Civic building	●	●	●	●	§ 90-110.150

§ 90-110.140 Backyard cottages.
[Ord. No. 19-2020, 6-8-2020]

(a) **Definition.** A backyard cottage is a small accessory residential building occupied by a single, self-contained accessory dwelling unit. Backyard cottages are located on the same lot as but not attached to a detached house. See also § 90-330.110, Secondary suites.

(b) **Where allowed.** Backyard cottages are allowed in all R Districts on lots occupied by a single detached house.

(c) **Lot and building regulations.** Backyard cottages are subject to compliance with the lot and building regulations of Table 90-110-3.

[Amended 1-10-2022 by Ord. No. 31-2021.]

Regulation	All R Districts
(a) Lot	
(1) Maximum lot area (square feet)	Same as required for detached house
(2) Minimum lot width (feet)	Same as required for detached house
(b) Building Siting	
(1) Setback, setback (minimum feet)	Permitted in rear yard only
(2) Setback, side and rear (minimum feet)	10'
(c) Maximum Building Size	
(1) Dwelling height (feet)	24 or height of principal building, whichever is less
(2) Dwelling floor area (square feet)	700

NOTES:
Two-foot minimum rear setback on lots with alley access to parking/garage.

(d) **Additional regulations.**

- Code compliance. Backyard cottages must comply with applicable building and fire codes.
- Number. No more than one backyard cottage is permitted on a single lot. Backyard cottages are not permitted on lots occupied by a secondary suite. (See § 90-330.110.)
- Rental. No more than one of the dwelling units on a lot occupied by backyard cottage may be a rental dwelling unit. Backyard cottages may not be rented for periods of less than seven consecutive days.
- Parking. No additional parking is required for a backyard cottage.
- Number of residents. The total number of residents that reside in the backyard cottage and the detached house, combined, may not exceed the number permitted for a detached house.
- Design. The design regulations of this subsection apply to all newly constructed backyard cottages.
 - Color or finish materials. The exterior finish material must be the same or visually match in type, size and placement, the exterior finish material of the principal dwelling unit.
 - Roof pitch. The roof pitch must be the same as the predominant roof pitch of the detached house.
 - Trim, type, size and location of trim elements must match those of the detached house.
 - Utilities. Utilities for the backyard cottage must be installed under or over the property line unless otherwise allowed by the property line.
- Deed restriction. Before issuance of any permits for a backyard cottage, the subject property owner must file a deed restriction with the Registrar of Deeds stating that the owners of the subject property agree to comply with all applicable regulations and to notify all prospective purchasers of such regulations. The deed restriction must run with the land and be binding upon the property owner, their heirs and assigns, and upon any persons subsequently acquiring any right, title, or interest in the property. The deed restriction must be in a form prescribed by the Community Development Director.

Comments in the record have questioned the applicability of ADUs as a solution to the housing problems of the 15th aldermanic district and the Five Points neighborhood. They have a point. ADUs are not feasible from a cost benefit standpoint to be built in areas with low existing property values and high percentages of vacant lots. After all, why build an accessory home when you can buy or build a standard home?

But ADUs are not a policy to increase affordable housing in distressed areas suffering from disinvestment.

ADUs are a policy to increase housing supply in higher demand areas, areas that have historically benefitted from zoning and historical designations to keep densities artificially low.

By increasing housing supply in in-demand areas, we are preventing those potential new residents from fleeing to the burbs or from gentrifying other areas of the city when they find the supply of housing stock dwindling and the prices skyrocketing. We're also expanding opportunities for multi generational housing, student housing, and the ability to age in place.

Why would anyone be against that? If it doesn't apply to a particular neighborhood, why is that neighborhood so vocal in its opposition to it?

Honestly, it just seems odd to see so much recorded opposition that freely admits the discussed policy proposal (ADUs) won't really affect them.

I support this code revision, as it allows expansion of housing supply that's driven by small individual landowners, and not large multifamily real estate equity firms.

Thank you

Robin Palm, AICP

804 400 0744

1559 N 51st Street
Milwaukee, WI.

On Fri, Apr 11, 2025 at 11:52 AM Lee, Chris <clec@milwaukee.gov> wrote:

The ones specified as public hearings have a legal requirement to open up for public testimony.

Otherwise, all other items are at the discretion of the committee to open up for public testimony.

I can note your request but will have to defer to the chair of the committee.

Alternatively, you may submit written correspondence, email, or letter to any file.

Sincerely,

Chris Lee

Staff Assistant

From: R P <palmra@gmail.com>

Sent: Friday, April 11, 2025 11:48 AM

To: Lee, Chris <cleee@milwaukee.gov>

Subject: Zoning, Neighborhoods, and Development Committee Meeting 4/15

Is there comment allowed on any item or just the ones specified?

I wish to comment in favor of these two items. How would I go about doing this?

Item 7. 240997 A substitute ordinance relating to creation of the RT5 zoning district.

Item 8. 240999 A substitute ordinance relating to zoning regulations for accessory dwelling units.

My name is Robin Palm, I'm an AICP certified urban planner and resident of Washington Heights in Aldermanic District 10. I'm also the southeast wisconsin representative to the state's professional planning chapter, although I won't be speaking in that capacity or at their behest.

Thanks for your assistance.

Robin Palm

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