



CITY OF AUBURN HILLS
City Council Workshop Meeting
Minutes

August 17, 2020

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor McDaniel at 7:00 p.m.

LOCATION: Virtual Meeting

Present: Mayor McDaniel, Council Members Burmeister, Kittle, Knight, Marzolf, Moniz and Verbeke

Absent: None

Also Present: City Manager Tanghe, Assistant City Manager Grice, City Attorney Beckerleg, City Clerk Pierce, Fire Chief Taylor, Police Chief Baker, Deputy Chief of Police Gagnon, Senior Services Director Adcock, Mgr of Business Development Carroll, Community Development Director Cohen, DPW Director Melchert, Director of Authorities Skopek, Management Assistant Hagge

4 Guests

Mr. Cohen reviewed potential policy changes with the City Council as they relate to Section 1813 of the Zoning Ordinance. The four topics addressed include the type of commercial vehicles that should be allowed on residential property, the location where recreational vehicles should be stored on residential property as well as other associated regulations, addressing the maintenance of gravel driveways, and whether tarped or covered vehicles should be permitted in the front yard.

Mr. Cohen presented the first topic and explained that staff recommends that the types of commercial vehicles allowed in residential districts be better defined and that the list of commercial vehicles prohibited in residential districts be expanded. He explained that the proposed ordinance revision would allow one small commercial vehicle to be parked outside of an enclosed building on residential property provided the vehicle is parked on an improved surface in the front, side, or rear yard. The proposed ordinance revision would also permit one commercial business-related or non-recreational equipment use utility trailer to be stored outside of an enclosed building provided the trailer is screened and parked in the side or rear yard. Also, the proposed ordinance revision would allow signage on the "allowed" commercial vehicle and utility trailer provided the advertising is directly related to the use of the vehicle.

Discussion ensued. There was concern by some that the ordinance amendment would be too restrictive and would eliminate the take home service-related vehicles. Mr. Cohen explained that small take-home vehicles would be allowed provided they met the new standard. The type of screening required was questioned. Mr. Cohen stated that screening requirements were recently created for non-traditional recreational vehicles, which would be used for the storage of a commercial business related utility trailer. It was pointed out that there are vehicle storage facilities in the area that could be utilized for a small monthly fee. Discussion ensued regarding grandfathering in the existing vehicles. Mr. Beckerleg confirmed that several property owners currently parking a commercial vehicle allowed under the current ordinance, but not permitted under this amendment, would be grandfathered provided the vehicle type and location is compliant with the existing ordinance standards.

It was noted that new commercial vehicles would have to comply with the ordinance. It was explained that if Code Enforcement saw a violation, they would have to address it. If they cannot see a violation, they are not able to address it unless there is a complaint. The majority of the City Council members agreed with proceeding with the amendment.

Mr. Cohen presented the second topic and explained that staff recommends that recreational vehicles no longer be permitted to be parked in the front yard. Mr. Cohen explained that staff conducted a study of

adjacent municipalities and found that the majority of communities surrounding Auburn Hills do not allow the parking or storage of recreational vehicles, including boats and trailers, in the front yard since the storage is viewed as bulky and unsightly. He noted that many property owners currently parking a recreational vehicle in their front yard would be grandfathered in provided their storage is compliant with the existing ordinance standards. He reviewed the proposed update to the standards, which include increasing setbacks from property lines, utilizing a lot coverage standard, requiring recreational vehicles to be in a proper state of repair, reducing the amount of time a visitor can park a recreational vehicle on a property, and prohibiting non-traditional recreational vehicles.

Discussion ensued. Mr. Cohen suggested allowing recreational vehicles to be parked on the lawn in the rear yard. However, the majority of the City Council members felt recreational vehicles should be parked on an improved surface and not the lawn in the rear. It was noted that one of the reasons parking on the lawn was prohibited was due to concerns of potential leakage of oils and gas into the ground. In response to a question regarding parking on a temporary basis, Mr. Cohen confirmed that the City allows 48 hours for loading, unloading, and cleaning. The majority of the City Council members agreed with proceeding with the amendment.

Mr. Cohen presented the third topic of readdressing gravel driveways from a property maintenance standpoint. He noted that it is difficult to enforce laws related to parking on the lawn when there is little difference in appearance between the lawn and the driveway. Four City Council members agreed that a gravel driveway should be required.

Mr. Cohen presented the fourth topic of covered vehicles in the front yard. He noted that staff recommends that covered parking only be permitted in the rear yards. It was noted that this is a blight issue that detracts from the appearance and character of the City's neighborhoods. The majority of the City Council members agreed with proceeding with the amendment.

The meeting adjourned at 6:55 PM.

Kevin R. McDaniel, Mayor

Laura M. Pierce, City Clerk