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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

related topics and develop options for the council to consider.

Earlier in the meeting, the panel took on the city's housing crunch, approving amendments to the municipal code regarding accessory dwelling units (ADUs)—such as so-called “granny units”—that eliminate a requirement for property owners to live on-site in either an ADU or primary home.

The issue had been studied in the wake of the fire, which has exacerbated the city's already low housing availability. Stone said the removal of the owner-occupancy requirement for ADUs is needed.

“This is sweet-spot housing,” he said. “This is for low-income residents. One and two bedrooms, maybe three, in our existing infrastructure.”

Vice Mayor Alex Brown, who said she resides in an ADU, supported the move, saying it addresses availability problems for populations such as young professionals and other people who cannot afford to buy a home. “I think we need to do everything to empower that type of housing.”

During public comment, resident Rob Berry told the council that eliminating the owner-occupancy requirement was the wrong move. He said the biggest problems with rental properties include maintenance, aesthetic and nuisance issues. Without a landlord on-site, the surrounding neighborhood suffers.

The move does not affect the West Avenues neighborhood area, which already had a special permitting process for ADUs because of infrastructure and density concerns there. That didn't go unnoticed by Reynolds, who, along with Councilman Sean Morgan, voted against removing the owner-occupancy requirement.

“I think if you remove the owner-occupancy requirement you will soon have neighborhoods that look like [the West Avenues neighborhood], and you'll wish you had not done it,” Morgan said.

In approving the amendments, the council also tasked the city's housing committee with exploring extra protections, enforcement ideas and ways to increase landlord accountability.

—ANDRE BYIK

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