

Memorandum



City of Tempe

To: Mayor & Council
Through: Tiny Houses Working Group
From: Parrish Spisz, Council Aide
CC: Andrew Ching, City Manager
Date: August 6, 2015
Subject: Small House Community

BACKGROUND:

The Tiny Houses Working Group was created to explore the feasibility of placing a tiny house community in Tempe. It was led by Vice Mayor Woods, and Councilmembers Granville and Kuby with support from the Community Development Department.

Tiny houses are typically between 150 to 400 square feet and in recent years, a tiny house social movement has gained popularity among people who are looking for simplified living. However, tiny houses are typically set on trailers to avoid building code and zoning ordinance restrictions. Due to this characteristic, city zoning ordinances and building codes would need to be amended to accommodate tiny houses.

The working group was also introduced to the small houses concept by Vesta Communities. Small houses are permanent structures ranging from about 400 to 1000 square feet with no special zoning or building code amendments required. Additionally, small houses are more favorable to sustainable living environments with some shared living components and community gardens. These facts guided the working group towards developing a small houses project.

An option was discussed to have ASU EPICS along with sustainability programs and the Del Webb School of Construction work with the city to develop a small houses pilot project. The land would be leased at no cost for a proposed 10-year agreement with two 5-year renewals. The objective is to permit students to build the project, live there and use it for research purposes to prove the concept.

Site selection pilot – Rita Lane

- City-owned property situated on 0.66 acres on Rita Lane north of the railroad tracks, east of Rural between Jen Tilly and Rita Lanes.

DIRECTION:

The working group seeks Council direction to move forward with executing the scope of work plan to engage ASU EPICS on creating a small house community pilot project.