

TO: Knoxville/Knox County Metropolitan Planning Commission, Staff and Commissioners.

FROM: Fountain City Town Hall Board

DATE: February 11, 2014

RE: Agenda Item 12-B-13-OA, Consideration of amendments to the City of Knoxville zoning ordinance regarding definitions, appropriate zoning and development standards for various group living facilities.

The Board of Fountain City Town Hall requests that the proposed term “Rooming Unit” be deleted until there can be a thorough public discussion of the impact of the term on our zoning ordinance and the One Year Plan.

From the proposed draft, the impact of “Rooming Units” on “Rooming and Boarding House” is already clear. Since more than one person can occupy a “Rooming Unit”, changing the definition of Rooming and Boarding House from “...not more than twelve (12) persons.” to “...not more than twelve (12) rooming units” has the potential to dramatically increase the number of residents in a Rooming and Boarding House.

We request that the proposed change to the definition of “Rooming and Boarding House” be deleted.

We are also concerned about the use of the term “Rooming Unit” as a measure of intensity or density and, in the future serving as the basis for establishing “equivalency” to “dwelling unit.”

It is our opinion that different populations in group living facilities have different characteristics and different needs. Using “number of persons” can take specific needs into consideration and therefore makes more sense than “rooming units” in determining intensity and impact.

It is worth noting that although the proposal recommends future consideration of the density/ intensity equivalency as has been done in Nashville, the Rooming Unit definition proposed for adoption in Knoxville is the Rooming Unit definition used in Ottawa, Canada, not the definition used in Nashville. The two definitions are quite different.

EXHIBIT F: ARTICLE V, Section 3 Development Standards for Uses Permitted on Reivew. F, 10, c. Parking for Rooming and Boarding Houses is presently limited to side and rear yards. The proposed change would allow parking in front yards with landscaped screening as may be required by MPC.

We believe parking should remain prohibited in front yards for Rooming and Boarding Houses and in other group living facilities when the facility is located in a converted single-family home.

We are concerned that our ordinance does not appear to directly address housing for alternative to prison programs (sentence diversion or alternative), drug and alcohol treatment, and court ordered housing and that what constitutes a “Halfway House” appears dependent on inclusion of the facility on some listing by the State.

These factors continue to make it almost impossible to meet the reasonable expectations of neighbors that the requirements of the zoning ordinance are being effectively enforced.

We ask that additional thought be given to definitions and provisions and processes that can effectively distinguish among the various populations.

FCTH Land Use Committee

Co-Chairs: Charlotte Davis and Carlene Malone