

Fayetteville City Council passes Parksdale neighborhood rezoning

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File photo/NWA Democrat-Gazette/J.T. WAMPLER A three-story duplex is seen on Brooks Avenue near Walker Street in south Fayetteville on June 25. Residents in the Parksdale neighborhood petitioned the city to downzone their properties in order to keep out-of-scale development from moving in.

FAYETTEVILLE -- Residents in a neighborhood on the south part of town on Tuesday ushered a rezoning of their properties to match the character and development patterns to which they have grown accustomed.

The Parksdale neighborhood, with about 80 homes, sits south of 15th Street near Duncan Avenue. Residents there began working with city planners on a proposal late last year after a three-story duplex popped up on Brooks Avenue

near Walker Street.

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Fayetteville's City Council met Tuesday and authorized:

- The Parks and Recreation Department to apply for a \$250,000 matching grant with the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism for a splash pad and other amenities at Gulley Park.
- Extending for one year the lease with the University of Arkansas' Division of Agriculture for Lewis Park.
- Putting \$23,275 toward public transit in order to make Ozark Regional Transit service free to riders for the rest of the year.
- Mayor Lioneld Jordan to implement the mobility plan developed by Nelson/Nygaard.
- A contract with VeoRide for a bike-share program. The city will contribute \$20,000, the University of Arkansas will contribute \$20,000 and the Advertising and Promotion Commission will contribute \$10,000 annually to subsidize

Residents realized the zoning for all the properties in the neighborhood allowed multi-family structures up to 24 units per acre. However, the majority of the homes in the neighborhood are single-family or duplexes.

That meant once a homeowner sold his property, a new property owner could tear down the house and replace it with something much bigger.

Andrew Garner, the city's planning director, said the rezoning will help prolong the life of the homes in the neighborhood. Most of the houses were built between the 1930s to 1960s, he said, and have remained affordable because of that.

Condensing as much housing as possible into an area may make economic sense, but it doesn't always work everywhere, Garner said.

"When you're looking at housing prices, there are many more factors and microeconomic factors we need to look at," he said. "Parksdale is a really good example."

The neighborhood will have three zoning designations. The center will be a neighborhood

subscriptions for users.

Source: Staff report

conservation district, allowing only single-family homes. Other housing types would have to get

Planning Commission approval.

Portions west, north and east of the core would allow duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes and clusters of homes without having to get a permit. That zoning designation is called residential intermediate.

Properties to the north, lining 15th Street, would allow all those housing types and some small businesses under a neighborhood services, general zoning.

Robin Devine, a Parksdale resident, helped spearhead the effort. She said everyone in the neighborhood encounters each other naturally. Three-story structures such as the one at Brooks Avenue and Walker Street don't promote that sort of living, Devine said.

"It's really a beautiful thing," she said.

The council voted 5-1 to adopt the rezoning. Matthew Petty said he agreed with the ideas behind the measure, but preferred a more lasting solution. He suggested an ordinance preventing tearing down homes, and cast the dissenting vote.

New construction is expensive no matter what, Petty said, and the rezoning won't change that.

In a separate vote, the council voted 5-1 to approve an additional design standards for everything in the neighborhood except the properties lining 15th Street. Height will be limited to two stories under the adopted overlay district. The lowest height limit for everywhere else in the city is three stories. Petty also voted against that measure.

Eight members of the public spoke in support of the rezoning. Council members Sarah Marsh and Justin Tennant were not present at Tuesday's meeting. Marsh requested in an email to the city the item be held on its first

reading.

In other business, the council adopted changes to an ordinance on accessory dwelling units. Accessory dwelling units are livable structures separate from a house, usually detached. They can sometimes be attached or beneath a home.

The main change makes it so neither structure has to be owner-occupied. Also, detached units will be no taller than two stories. Up to one detached unit and one attached unit will be allowed per property, each structure no more than 1,200 square feet. Parking requirements will be waived if the accessory unit is smaller than 800 square feet. A number of design requirements also will be waived.

A power outage downtown in the midst of storms shut off the air-conditioning, monitors, microphones and some of the chamber lights at City Hall for the first two hours of the meeting. Proceedings continued as needed.

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