



City of Sunnyvale

Meeting Minutes - Draft

Planning Commission

Monday, March 6, 2017

7:00 PM

Council Chambers and West Conference
Room, City Hall, 456 W. Olive Ave.,
Sunnyvale, CA 94086

Study Session Cancelled | Special Meeting - Public Hearing 7 PM

4. [16-1128](#) Storage Space for Multi-Family Residential: Forward a recommendation to the City Council to Introduce an Ordinance to Amend Section 19.12.130 ("L") of Chapter 19.12 (Definitions), Section 19.38.040 (Individual Lockable Storage Space) of Chapter 19.38 (Required Facilities) and Section 19.90.030 (Procedures) of Chapter 19.90 (Special Development Permits) of the Sunnyvale Municipal Code, and Find that the Action is Exempt from CEQA Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3).

Associate Planner Kelly Cha presented the staff report.

Commissioner Howe commented that Table 1 on page three of the staff report gives three examples of recent approvals. Commissioner Howe asked staff in these examples if the common garage would be located underneath the building and if each unit's garage would be attached. Associate Planner Cha advised that the last example is a townhome style and so each unit has its own garage. Commissioner Howe confirmed with Planning Officer Andrew Miner that the storage was attached to a habitable building in the example at 238 Carroll Street. Commissioner Howe asked staff if in all three examples the storage was attached to a habitable building. Planning Officer Miner clarified that in example two the storage was in a garage, which could be below the unit or detached.

Commissioner Howe asked staff if the current ordinance requires sprinklers for all units. Planning Officer Miner stated this is unknown but that sprinkler requirements are based on the building code standard and likely depends on the location of the unit, whether it's within or near the habitable area.

Commissioner Howe stated that it was voiced during the Study Session that a lockable storage unit should have sprinklers, if attached to a living area. Commissioner Howe noted potential fire concerns in several examples, regardless of the garage's location. Planning Officer Miner stated that the first example did have sprinklers, that it's unknown if the third example has sprinklers and that any garage below a unit must have sprinklers. Commissioner Howe asked staff if there

was a Condition of Approval (COA) regarding sprinklers. Planning Officer Miner stated that the fire code mandates sprinkler requirements, which are purposefully excluded from the zoning ordinance because the fire code changes the most rapidly. Planning Officer Miner confirmed that all the examples with sprinklers had them installed because of the fire code requirements. Commissioner Howe confirmed with Planning Officer Miner that if a lockable storage space was attached to a living space then it would be required to have sprinklers.

Commissioner Olevson commented that Option A on page seven of the staff report recommends a three-foot minimum dimension and this seems small. Commissioner Olevson asked staff how this minimum dimension was determined. Planning Officer Miner advised that staff tried to determine a reasonable standard, which was a three-foot minimum with a maximum height of ten feet and at least one dimension of eight feet. Planning Officer Miner stated that lockable storage units have different configurations and so staff recommended three feet for access, with the option to build higher or wider for additional storage space. Planning Officer Miner advised the goal is to give developers flexibility in their design and that the Planning Commission could change this minimum to four feet.

Commissioner Olevson noted that on page seven of the staff report under the "Location" bullet point there is a typo – "bedroom closest" should be "bedroom closet". Commissioner Olevson mentioned there are other instances with the same error and Planning Officer Miner confirmed this language will be updated.

Commissioner Howard confirmed with Associate Planner Cha that most municipalities don't have lockable storage requirements. Commissioner Howard asked if the public had voiced this need and if staff had considered not mandating lockable storage space. Planning Officer Miner advised that one reason for this Study Issue was feedback from residential developers who don't want to build this storage, so staff's first action was to analyze the need for this standard. Planning Officer Miner stated that a standard has been in place in the City since 1986 which forces developers to provide this space. Planning Officer Miner advised that only two survey responses were received, one in support and one opposed. Planning Officer Miner stated that the draft ordinance maintains the current requirements with a small revision to allow smaller units to have less storage. Planning Officer Miner commented that public storage businesses in the City advise that they are experiencing a high demand for storage space. Planning Officer Miner stated that it's a benefit of living in Sunnyvale to have lockable storage space but that staff can't comment on public opinion due to low feedback response.

Commissioner Howard asked staff if there are requirements for secure bike storage

and rental facilities. Planning Officer Miner stated that it depends and that there are two classes of bike storage, which is typically required for projects heard by the Planning Commission. Planning Officer Miner advised that staff toured lockable storage units and saw that few units were used, except to store bulky items. Planning Officer Miner commented that one potential reason is that residents have different priorities and may own less belongings. Commissioner Howard confirmed with Planning Officer Miner that there are generally different requirements for bicycle storage space.

Vice Chair Rheaume asked staff if the recommendation allowed for two smaller spaces to be combined to meet the minimum size, allowing for more flexibility in creating the storage space. Planning Officer Miner advised that a standard storage usage exists in parking garages, where the storage is above the roof of the cars, but that another larger space in a more common area would be required. Vice Chair Rheaume asked staff if the developer could decide how to distribute the storage space, if the site meets the total required amount of storage space. Planning Officer Miner stated they can distribute the storage space but still must meet the minimum dimensions. Associate Planner Cha advised that staff's recommendation is for each unit to have a 200-cubic foot minimum and not to combine or break up the storage into different sizes. Vice Chair Rheaume asked staff if a developer could build one storage space of 400 cubic feet for two units and still meet the requirement of 200 cubic feet per unit. Planning Officer Miner stated that this would not meet the requirement, since each unit must have 200 cubic feet of storage space. Vice Chair Rheaume stated an opinion that considering the price of real estate, it makes more financial sense to use public storage then to pay for the extra real estate.

Chair Harrison commented that there was a description of an option for storage space with a small minimum and an additional 50 storage locations onsite, offered to tenants for a cost. Chair Harrison asked staff to explain why this option wasn't recommended. Planning Officer Miner stated the goal is not to overcomplicate or create another potential revenue source for owners but to have a perk for tenants. Planning Officer Miner commented that this is an asset for City residents and that the draft ordinance is similar to the current standard while also addressing concerns for flexibility. Planning Officer Miner stated that the Planning Commission can change these requirements.

Chair Harrison confirmed with Planning Officer Miner that this item was initially driven by requests for deviations and by developer feedback. Planning Officer Miner commented that some of the properties staff visited weren't occupied, or the tenants were forewarned, so it was difficult to find current examples of storage

space usage. Associate Planner Cha stated that the property managers said that prospective tenants were happy to learn that storage units were included in the lease and that at least 50% of the storage space was used by current residents.

Chair Harrison asked staff to give data on the two survey answers that were received. Associate Planner Cha noted that these survey results will be included in the report to the City Council. Associate Planner Cha advised that the first response was from residents of a two-bedroom unit who fully use the storage space and want it increased, while the second response was from a resident of a one bedroom unit who uses 25% of their storage area and wants it decreased.

Planning Officer Miner returned to Commissioner Howe's earlier question and advised that per the fire code, sprinklers are required in all storage areas that are within five feet of the exterior building walls, roof overhangs, canopies or constitute an exposure to adjacent property.

Chair Harrison opened the Public Hearing.

There were no public speakers on this item.

Chair Harrison closed the Public Hearing.

MOTION: Commissioner Howe moved and Commissioner Simons seconded the motion for Alternative 1 – Introduce an Ordinance to amend Section 19.38.040 (Storage Space for Multi-Family Residential) regarding size, location, configuration, exception process and applicability and make associated amendments to Section 19.12.100 ("I") of Chapter 19.12 (Definitions) and Section 19.90.030 (Procedures) of Chapter 19.90 (Special Development Permits) of the Sunnyvale Municipal Code, and find these actions are exempt from CEQA.

Commissioner Howe noted that in selling real estate, most homes in the City have additional storage space which is often used to store seasonal items outside of the house. Commissioner Howe commented that this storage space is a strong amenity for Sunnyvale homes. Commissioner Howe stated that the goal with this draft ordinance is to have a smaller storage space for smaller units, such as one bedrooms or studios, while keeping the same current standard. Commissioner Howe stated that the storage space is both used and needed.

Commissioner Simons commented that there is a great diversity of rental unit types but that having secure storage is required because of the difference in the use of shared versus personal lockable storage. Commissioner Simons commented that

the parking requirement is a burden on renters, especially those without cars, and that this could be revisited in the future. Commissioner Simons stated that there are a great number of requirements for rental and housing units and so it's not unusual that the lockable storage standard has existed since 1986. Commissioner Simons stated that lockable storage positively differentiates the City and that he will be supporting the motion.

FRIENDLY AMENDMENT: Vice Chair Rheaume offered a friendly amendment to allow more flexibility for the applicant in meeting the square footage by combining storage spaces, while still providing the same total square footage.

Commissioner Howe respectfully declined the friendly amendment, stating that it makes a difference to have a personal locked storage space and not a shared space, which might raise concerns over personal property.

Vice Chair Rheaume stated an opinion that this is micromanagement of the determination of storage space but that the draft ordinance did improve the standard by reducing the requirement to 200 cubic square feet and so he will be supporting the motion.

Commissioner Olevson commented that he will support the motion and confirmed with Planning Officer Miner that Alternative 1 should introduce an ordinance consistent with Option A. Commissioner Olevson stated that he won't ask for a four-foot minimum or inquire how developers will sell the product. Commissioner Olevson stated that the Planning Commission should approve this item as recommended and hope for the best with the City Council.

Commissioner Howard clarified with Associate Planner Cha that this requirement will apply to the new zoning districts that were recently created and to any multi-family residential projects.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Chair Harrison
Vice Chair Rheaume
Commissioner Howard
Commissioner Howe
Commissioner Olevson
Commissioner Simons

No: 0

Absent: 1 - Commissioner Weiss