

**Webster Groves Plan Commission**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
January 4, 2021

<b>Members Present</b>	Charles Sindel	PLANNER
	Jeff Smith	Danny Jendusa
	Steve Hunkins	DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT
	Annie Tierney	Mara Perry
	Michael Buechter	CITY ATTORNEY
	Maddy Heikkila	Neil Bruntrager
	Christopher Michael	COUNCIL LIASON
	Toni Hunt	Pam Bliss
	Scott Mueller	

**REGULAR SESSION**

1. Sindel opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m.
2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**  
Sindel asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Hunt made a motion to approve. Tierney seconded the motion. The motion passed 9-0.
3. **PUBLIC COMMENTS:**  
There were none.
4. **PUBLIC HEARING:**
  - a) **20-PC-06 Zoning Code Text Amendments- Two Family Residential:** Proposed amendments include clarifications to the use and dimensional regulations regarding single family attached dwellings and two-family dwellings in the "A4" Seventy Five Hundred Square Foot Residence District in Sections 53.070 and 53.100 and amended definitions related to these uses in Section 53.020.

Perry said this is a continuation from the December 2020 meeting which was held open for further discussion. Staff is requesting this hearing be held open again to the February 2021 meeting. Staff is focusing on the following zoning code considerations:

Minimum lot size-Perry provided a map which showed the current minimum 7,500 sq. ft. lots and the legal non-conforming lots in the A4 district. The code is already set up to allow single family dwellings on legal, nonconforming lots. This would include attached single family dwellings with the amendments discussed so far. Two-family dwellings would not be allowed on nonconforming lots in the A4.

Width of lots-Perry said the minimum lot width is 60 feet. Two-family dwellings would not be allowed on lots with less than 60ft width. But there may be options for attached single family dwellings on narrower side by side lots.

Floor Area Ratio-Perry said the proposed maximum FAR for a single or two-family attached home shall not exceed: 0.32 per unit on lots greater than 7500 sq. ft but less than 10,000 sq. ft. For lots greater than 10,000 sq. ft., .30 per unit.

Setbacks for shared units-Perry said they will not require the side yard setback for the party (common) wall between the units. This would also apply if two side by side lots were used for a single-family attached home. Buechter asked if “party wall” was in the definitions and Perry said no, this can be added.

On-site parking requirements-The parking code was recently updated to provide standards for all single family dwellings and two-family homes. No changes requested.

Historic Districts-Perry said any new construction or addition would need to follow the historic guidelines for that district.

Perry said they did review other cities requirements and these changes are similar to practices that are working well in peer cities.

Buechter asked about converting an existing single family house in the historic district to a two family. Perry said if it affected the exterior appearance of the structure, it would require a certificate of appropriateness from the Architectural Review Board and meet the historic district design guidelines. If the conversion only affected the interior of the existing home to make a two-family, it would be an interior permit only that would not impact the historic district.

Bliss asked whether this amendment will cover lots of 10,000sqft or more. Perry said the amendments would only apply in the A4 district where most lots are smaller than that, but would still apply to larger lots in the A4. We’re starting the amendments in the denser A4 district at this point, because the A4 district already allows two-families in very limited parts of the district, while they’re not allowed at this point in any other residential district. A4 is a good place to start.

Smith asked to clarify whether the 0.32 floor area ratio for each unit on a two family dwelling would mean the total floor area ratio could be 0.64 for the whole lot. Perry said this was an error and will need to be corrected to mean the combined FAR of a two family could not be more than 0.32 of the entire lot. Another existing code section already says that there must be at least 3,750sqft of lot area per each dwelling unit for a two family, so this was intended to mean each dwelling unit could not be more than 0.32 of that 3,750. But this would need to be clarified to match what is being proposed to be changed in the set of code amendments in 20-PC-07.

Jendusa read a letter from Dave Buck, a resident. He stated that Webster is a shared community and this will allow a chance to share again as well as meet a growing demand for affordable housing.

Perry asked for any comments from the public. There were none.

Sindel asked for a motion to hold the hearing open to the February 2021 meeting.

Smith made a motion. Buechter seconded the motion. All in favor the motion passed 9-0.

- b) **20-PC-07 Zoning Code Text Amendments- Residential Dimensional Requirements:**  
Proposed amendments include changes to Sections 53.043, 53.053, 53.063, and 53.073 to clarify lot coverage and height regulations in the “A1” through “A4” Residence Districts; and amended definitions related to the dimensional regulations in Section 53.020.

Perry said this is a continuation from the December 2020 meeting which was held open for further discussion. Staff is requesting this hearing be held open again to the February 2021 meeting.

The first item for discussion is floor area ratio which is the square footage of the house divided by the square footage of the lot size. ½ of the square footage of attached garages count and we do not count basements. The issue is the undersized lots, where smaller older homes are often getting torn down and replaced with much larger homes 2 or 2.5 times their size or more because of the guaranteed minimum 2600sqft house allowed on even the smallest, undersized lots. The proposed amendment would bring lots less than 10,000 sq. ft to a maximum FAR of 0.32, getting rid of the guaranteed minimum for the smallest lots. The 3200sqft guaranteed minimum would remain for lots 10,000sqft and larger, as these have not presented as much of an issue. Applicants would still have the option to go before the ARB which has the ability to review a larger gross floor area, height and elevations for possible approval if the larger house would be appropriate in the context of existing nearby houses. Reducing the maximum size on smaller lots provides a variety of sizes and offers diversity for different stages of life in the community.

Perry spoke about capping impervious land coverage which may be something that may help with rain/water run off issues that we seem to be dealing with lately. A suggested amount may be no more than fifty five percent of the lot may be covered by impervious material. Perry said she could run numbers and see what the impact may be. Smith suggested maybe some exceptions if there were retention ponds or rain gardens etc., and Perry agreed.

Perry said staff is proposing to add a new requirement under the Preservation of Grade section to help with height issues as well as water runoff to read as: “When the allowed finished floor elevation exceeds the finished floor of the adjacent lower structure by more than three (3) feet, the side yard setback of the new structure shall be increased by one (1) foot for every six (6) inches above the five (5) feet.” Perry said “five (5)” feet was written from an earlier draft, but this number should be three (3) feet.

Hunt agreed this may help a home look more in character with the neighboring homes. Sindel asked for examples of this scenario. Perry said she will provide.

Smith said it should clarify that the increased side yard set back should only apply on the side of the lower house. Perry agreed.

Perry said there are some areas of the code they will be proposing to clean up and she has red lined those to include side yard setbacks and yard projections. Staff will also look to clarifying the definition of ½ story.

Jendusa read a letter from Dave Buck, a resident. He stated that Webster Groves prides itself on maintaining and advancing the character of the neighborhood and greater community. His question is are there residential dimensional requirements and or architectural design standards that define and ensure that the character is maintained or enhanced.

Perry asked for any comments from the public. There were none.

Sindel asked for a motion to hold the hearing open to the February 2021 meeting.

Heikkila made a motion. Buechter seconded the motion. All in favor the motion passed 9-0.

5. **OTHER BUSINESS:** Perry said there will be an application for a CUP on the February meeting. She spoke of the Equity audit proposed by the City Council.
6. **NEXT REGULAR MEETING:** February 1, 2021
7. **ADJOURNMENT OF THE EXECUTIVE**  
Sindel asked for a motion to adjourn. Heikkila made a motion. Tierney seconded the motion. All in favor motion passed 9-0. The meeting adjourned at 8:45.