

Group Living Advisory Committee – Community Corrections Subgroup Meeting

Date and Time: Friday, April 6, 2018, 1:00-2:30 PM

Location: Fox Community Corrections Program

Attendees

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Paul Bindel

John Gross

Jamie Licko

Sarah Wells

Louise Martorano (on phone)

DENVER STAFF MEMBERS

Andrew Webb

Eugene Howard

Kyle Dalton

FACILITATOR

Meagan Picard

Meeting Summary

MEETING OPENING

Meagan Picard opened the meeting, welcomed everyone and shared the meeting agenda:

1. Introductions
2. Charter Housekeeping
3. Ideal Future State
4. Current State – Problem Identification

1. INTRODUCTIONS

Meagan Picard invited committee members to share their names, affiliation, and what they hoped to contribute to this process. Members shared passion, interest in preventing home loss due to DZC and perspectives on various group living arrangements and needs.

2. CHARTER HOUSEKEEPING

Meagan shared that the Definition of Success has been edited in response to kick-off meeting comments and asked committee members to review and consider it for discussion at the next full committee meeting. She also shared that the agreements page had been updated to incorporate input from the kick-off meeting and asked members to sign it. Signed agreements were received from Paul Bindel, Sarah Wells, Jamie Licko and John Gross.

3. IDEAL FUTURE STATE

Meagan shared that we have a worksheet to help guide this process but will start with where we want to be in our future state. Participants shared:

- More accessible/affordable/accommodating housing, meaning that the DZC should allow for a range options with accommodations for various needs that are accessible across all income levels
- Allow for rental collective/cooperative housing to be an option (see MN cooperative housing code)
 - Want various options within this arrangement, such as limited equity options
- Enable pathways to ownership for more than just single family homes
- Allow for boarding houses in more zone districts
- DZC makes room for people who want to live together
- Want a way to keep people in their homes; prevent displacement and trauma that comes with it
- Keep cultural vibrancy; allow interesting spaces to exist in Denver
- Allow live/work arrangements
- Identify pallet of options that are less restrictive than existing code
- Consider any need to provide for safety of young people in adult group living spaces – are different parameters suitable for artists versus families?
- Enable group living options throughout Denver – not just in a few neighborhoods; RiNO invites all and would like to see that in more neighborhoods
 - “huge education need here” – encourage education
- Enable some neighborhoods, like RiNO, to go above and beyond
- Limit NIMBY barriers – treat all neighbors with respect
 - Group living in these situations perceived as likely to have parties and create parking challenges
- Work with best practices and trail blaze when needed
- Enable a welcoming and supportive place for artists
- Don't follow Boulder's registered co-op process
 - Too complex (80-page application); make options possible to access through more simplified process
 - Parking issues
 - Doesn't allow parent-child shared rooms

During the discussion, several group living definitions were discussed and clarified. Group understanding is as follows:

- Co-housing: apartment buildings with shared meeting/work space (currently allowed and isn't considered group living; lots of co-housing exists but may not be affordable)
- Boarding houses: owned and managed by one person with rented guest rooms
- Collective/cooperative housing, bedroom rented with shared bathroom/kitchen
 - Often intentional communities with shared community responsibilities
 - Variations exist, including rental versus ownership – limited equity options is one variation (handout on this arrangement to be emailed to subgroup)

- Coops as a business exist for the benefit of members (versus landlords) – arrangement increases stabilization of vulnerable populations, giving them more to contribute to the community as well

4. CURRENT STATE – PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

The group agreed that the biggest problem is the definition of “dwelling” and relationships within those dwellings (# of unrelated adults allowed to live together as well as differing family structures, including tri-parenting). Kyle noted that a code change is expected next month – will gender neutralize definition of “spouse”

Other problems identified, based on current knowledge, include:

- Live/work barriers:
 - “Impossible” to do because of expense requirements, such as parking
 - “Work” definition – issues with converting space
 - Requires separate entrances and distance for assembly space and living space
 - Can’t have food/drink in assembly space
- Change of use process triggers need for other updates – *how can minor changes not trigger full change of use process?*
- Limited areas/zones allowed – Current code allows some options in some areas but not others
- Paved parking lots, landscaping, and fencing requirements for group living are cost-prohibitive.
- Distrust of city exists – This isn’t a problem in the DZC, but it was noted that this process, if responsive to needs/recommendations, will help. It is also something to be aware of as we move forward.

People are using work-arounds now to try to get the living arrangement they want/need. Could updating DZC avoid the challenges that come with work-arounds?

- 24-hour access given to artist work space
- Some landlords are allowing more unrelated residents or other arrangements not code-compliant now, but it is a tenuous relationship (not official agreements) and could be taken away at any time
- Financial barriers to work-arounds regarding existing code, such as a structure that is zoned as a single unit and could accommodate more but extra kitchen requirement is cost-prohibitive
 - Other codes also impact affordability, such as energy (window requirements), building and fire codes

MEETING CLOSING

For the next meeting, staff will be prepared to walk the group through the code to help identify any other problems not known/understood at this time. Group members will also bring examples of good or near good zoning codes to help identify deficiencies/areas of desired change in DZC. The next meeting will be held Monday, April 23 from 2 to 4 p.m. at Queen City Cooperative, 901 N. Clarkson Street.