

Memo

To: City Council
From: Bryan Myrkle, Community Development Director
Date: May 18, 2017
Re: Front yards on corner lots

After your last meeting, I met with Fire Chief Kevin Fullerton to review the proposal to amend the definition of front and rear yards on corner lots, and consider alternatives.

Chief Fullerton expressed reservations about changing the definitions as he feels there could be unintended consequences that might be negative. He also pointed out that while the definition of front yard is ambiguous, it can be inferred from the definition of rear yard that it should match the street address.

This issue was raised because of the restrictive conditions placed on corner lots (25-foot setback on two yards and 35-foot on a third) that severely limit property owners' ability to make improvements.

In talking with Chief Fullerton and City Manager Guetschow, it may be possible to alleviate some of these problems using the Area, Height and Use Exceptions found in section 82-491 on a case-by-case basis. This would be helpful in that it avoids the potentially negative side-yard uses (parking and accessory structures), but does not rise to the level of a variance that could be much more difficult for a home-owner to obtain.

Because there are alternatives that may still provide relief for property owners of corner lots, I have no reservations about setting aside the proposal for revising the definitions. I will contact the affected property owners and work with them to pursue these options with the Zoning Board of Appeals.