

Mapleton City Planning Commission Staff Report

Meeting Date: September 25, 2014

Item: 6

Applicant: Mapleton City

Location: City wide

Prepared by: Sean Conroy, Community Development Director

Public Hearing Item: No

Zone: All

REQUEST

A discussion item to discuss the construction of accessory buildings on residential lots prior to the construction of a single family residence.

BACKGROUND AND PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Staff occasionally receives requests from property owners to build accessory structures (garage, storage, shop, barn, etc.) on lots that are not yet developed with a single-family residence or other primary use. The purpose of this item is to discuss staff's interpretation of the code and to receive planning commission guidance on this issue.

EVALUATION

Most zones allow for accessory buildings and include language similar to the following:

“Accessory uses and structures are permitted in the RA-2 zone, provided they are incidental to the main residential dwelling unit, and do not substantially alter the character of the permitted principal use or structure.” (emphasis added)

In determining whether to allow a permit for an accessory building staff first identifies if there is an existing residential unit on the site. If there is an existing residence, then as long as the proposed accessory building meets all other codes and requirements, it can be approved. If there isn't an existing residence, staff then looks to see if there is an established primary use. For example, if the property is being farmed, staff could approve an accessory building if it will be used in conjunction with the farming activities.

If a lot is vacant and not being used for agricultural purposes, staff has not been allowing any accessory buildings. This is based on the interpretation that the code requires that an accessory building be accessory to a main residence and/or permitted principle use. Staff is requesting input from the Commission to determine whether or not it concurs with staff's interpretation.

An advantage of maintaining staff's interpretation is that it avoids a vacant residential parcel from being used strictly for storage or other non-residential, commercial or industrial uses that could become a nuisance to surrounding properties. A disadvantage is that a property owner that is not ready to build a residence may not have any viable use of his/her property.

STAFF RECCOMENDATION

Provide direction to staff.