

Chair John Gale reports from the WECA Zoning Committee Re: October 25 meeting about Accessory Dwelling Units

The WECA Zoning Committee met on September 25 to discuss Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). They formed a task force to meet again and to report back to the Zoning Committee, which will then convene another meeting on the subject. The members of the task force are Toni Gold, Tomas Nenortas, Chris McCarron, and Christy Rubenstein.

Email comments may be made to David Barrett, dbarrett@hartsem.edu
He will forward them to the task force.

A presentation was made by Toni Gold of Kenyon Street describing what an Accessory Dwelling Unit is and what potential benefits there might be to changing Hartford 's Zoning to allow for ADUs. About 25 people attended. After the presentation there was a question, answer, and comment period.

There seem to be several varieties of ADUs, including dwelling units in garages or carriage houses (as they are referred to in the West End), units that are build as additions to existing house; and units that are part of existing houses (the typical third floor apartment existing in many West End homes). The units typically allow up to 3 person occupancy; they are attached to properties that are owner-occupied; they must meet building and housing codes. Part of the motivation for Ms. Gold is the carriage house existing on her property which is in need of repair, and which might provide a dwelling unit of 1000 square feet, producing income which could fund the necessary repairs.

Comments included the following:

1. Allowing ADUs might make properties more valuable and allow more people to then maintain these older homes in better condition, by providing additional income.
2. The West End housing stock is considered historically significant, and we (the residents) have a responsibility to do what we can to help preserve the buildings. ADUs might ease the financial burden of higher quality historical maintenance.
3. ADUs would change the quality of living that presently exists.
4. Enforcement of the owner-occupied requirement might be difficult.
5. Parking is an issue.
6. Difficult issues should not prevent us from considering ADUs.

At the conclusion, a straw poll was taken as to whether the consensus was to continue to explore ADUs or nix the idea. The consensus was to consider exploring the idea of ADUs, keeping the scope fairly narrow.