

**MINUTES
CITY OF AMES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

Date: September 11, 2023	Susan Minks	2024
	Angie Kolz	2024
Call to Order: 6:00PM	Mary Jo Winder	2024
Place: Council Chambers	Scott Huffman	2026
	Lisa Muccigrosso	2026
Adjournment: 7:26PM	Robert Ewald	2026

[*Absent]

CALL TO ORDER: Scott Huffman, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

MOTION: (Ewald/Muccigrosso) to approve the agenda for the meeting of September 11, 2023.

MOTION PASSED: (6-0)

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF AUGUST 14, 2023:

MOTION: (Winder/Muccigrosso) to approve the Minutes of the meeting of August 14, 2023 with edits.

MOTION PASSED: (6-0) Mr. Ewald noted the last paragraph on the last page overstated a comment he made. He said the paragraph should state that from what he has seen of the revisions of Chapter 31, the Commission Sub-Committee would not be proposing any radical or substantive changes to the Chapter.

PUBLIC FORUM: There were no public comments.

DISCUSS PROPOSED ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT STANDARDS

Kelly Diekmann, Director of Planning & Housing, presented the draft of the Proposed Accessory Dwelling Unit Standards (ADU's) related to Chapter 31 Design Criteria and Guidelines. The Planning Department felt it was appropriate to discuss the proposed ADU standards with the Commission. Director Diekmann requested the Commission make a recommendation by choosing one of the three noted alternatives, which he explained in more detail.

Angie Kolz, Commission Member, inquired about covered parking regulations for accessory dwelling units. Director Diekmann noted Accessory Dwelling Units do not need covered parking spaces. Ms. Kolz asked if the Old Town Historic District was reviewed to discern how many lots may qualify for an ADU. Director Diekmann explained the review was city wide and looked at the 60% impervious area requirement to determine if lots might support an ADU. A total of more than ninety percent of lots would qualify, based only upon that one requirement.

Susan Minks, Commission Member, asked about minimum lot requirements. Mr. Diekmann said the standards will be based on a percentage of the lot, rather than set lot size requirements.

Mr. Huffman noted if an ADU is built above a garage, it can't exceed eighty percent height of the main dwelling. Mr. Huffman asked if paved sidewalks to an ADU from the main house or sidewalk would be required. Director Diekmann replied that a door to an ADU would be required to be connected to another part of the property that would then provide access to the street. If a garage did not have a rear door, where the sidewalk would connect, the sidewalk might need to go around the garage to the front.

Mr. Ewald asked if a porch is required for ADU's in general as well as on any garages that would be converted into an ADU. Director Diekmann said if nothing changed in the proposed standards they would, but Planning staff are suggesting that a porch not be required.

Mr. Huffman asked if a covered porch is required, would the square footage of the porch count towards the 900 allowed square feet? Director Diekmann thought it would count against the total 900 square feet.

Ms. Winder asked if a porch would be considered part of the lot coverage. Director Diekmann affirmed that was correct. Ms. Winder also inquired if the Commission chose Alternative 1, would they have to deny an ADU application that did not have a porch. Director Diekmann stated that was correct and pointed out Planning staff would inform the applicant of the requirements before the application would go before the Commission.

Mr. Huffman asked if an ADU application is denied, would the applicant be able to appeal to the Zoning Board of Adjustments? Director Diekmann stated that he does not know what grounds the applicant would have to get any relief from ZBA, given that the denial would be related to an accessory structure, not the principal dwelling.

Ms. Kolz discussed garage conversions and garage demolitions, and asked if non-contributing garages are required to be maintained under the same standards as a contributing garage? Mr. Diekmann replied that only contributing garages require Commission approval for demolition. Ms. Kolz asked about the approval requirements of garages in the Old Town District that would face the street. Mr. Diekmann said any new garage in the Old Town District requires Commission approval regardless of the direction it faces.

Ms. Kolz discussed the repurposing standards of a structure and asked if such structures would be subject to all the Chapter 31 guidelines. She also questioned the review criteria the Commission would need to adhere to if a second story was proposed on such structures.

Mr. Ewald commented that two-story ADU's are allowed in some cases. Director Diekmann replied that is the case if the main house is two or more stories. The 900 square foot limitation includes the entire ADU structure, including any square footage of the ground level garage.

Ms. Muccigrosso inquired about regulations on ADU's being used as Airbnb's. Mr. Diekmann said that one of the two dwellings has to be owner-occupied for either dwelling unit to be rented, regardless whether it is short-term or long term.

Ms. Winder asked if a main dwelling was two stories and the lot coverage was at sixty percent, would the ADU have to be two stories. She did not think an owner would attempt a two-story ADU with the current Design Guidelines that are in place. Director Diekmann stated property owners are not entitled to 900 square feet but are allowed up to 900 square feet if the lot allows it.

Ms. Winder asked if an existing garage was 450 feet, if the second story ADU addition would be limited to 450 square feet. Director Diekmann replied that was correct and pointed out an ADU is limited to one bedroom regardless of square footage.

Ms. Muccigrosso felt Alternative 3 made the most sense and the Commission could work with the height restriction. Mr. Huffman commented the Commission would need to discuss which items would be excluded for Alternative 3. Most of the items that could be cleaned removed from the list are not necessarily historically aesthetic items but more functional and problematic items that can be excluded.

Ms. Minks said she prefers the alternative that gives the Commission the most flexibility to approve an ADU application because there are a lot of compatible designs that would work with an historic home.

Mr. Ewald asked where the Planning Department is at procedurally with the proposed ADU standards. Director Diekmann stated that this is the HPC's opportunity to suggest edits to Chapter 31 to accommodate ADUs. The next step is for City Council to hear public feedback at the October 10th Council meeting. If CC wants to initiate edits to Chapter 31, staff would draft specific language that would then come back to the HPC for a formal recommendation on an actual text amendment before it returns to City Council for adoption.

Mr. Huffman said he would entertain a motion on this item.

MOTION: (Kolz / Ewald) to approve Alternative 3 with the following specific edit:

- ADUs that involve garage conversions or additions will not be required to have a porch.

MOTION PASSED: (6-0)

MOTION: (Kolz/ Muccigrosso) Accessory Dwelling Units are not required to have two stories.

MOTION PASSED: (6-0)

MOTION: (Ewald/Kolz) Accessory Dwelling Units are not required to have a raised foundation (can be built on slab at grade).

MOTION PASSED: (6-0)

Ms. Winder commented that she supports Accessory Dwelling Units being required to have double-hung windows (the same window requirement as additions and garages).

Commission members asked if alternative materials would be allowed for the construction of an ADU, if the owner suffered from a financial hardship, and if all construction materials used for building an ADU would be subject to Chapter 31. Ray Anderson, Planning staff and Liaison to the Commission, indicated that new construction of any accessory structure does not require the same materials as those required for the principal contributing building. The New Construction section of Chapter 31 gives specific alternatives that are acceptable.

Director Diekmann commented that the Commission should consider how Chapter 31 applies today and not how it potentially could be applied in the future if Chapter 31 is revised.

Mr. Huffman asked Planning staff if they had any thoughts on what else might need editing. Director Diekmann replied they may need to consider the footprint criteria. If an ADU is not 900 square feet, how would it meet criteria of the Design Guidelines. Director felt the best option was for a motion to be made regarding how the footprint would apply to various ADU's.

MOTION: (Huffman/Kolz) The portions of Chapter 31 pertaining to footprints be reviewed and edited to provide more flexibility.

MOTION PASSED: (6-0)

DISCUSS PROPOSED REVISIONS TO CHAPTER 31

Ms. Winder stated the Commission subcommittee met and Ms. Muccigrosso had written a memo for the Commission to review regarding proposed Chapter 31 revisions. The memo would have then gone to City Council. However, Mr. Anderson was not informed in time to add the memo to the agenda for this evening's meeting. The subcommittee proposes to investigate the Certificate of Appropriateness process for cities similar in size to Ames. The response from City Council will determine how the Commission proceeds.

Director Diekmann discussed how other City commissions interact with Council. The Commission needs to be specific in what they mean regarding what changes to pursue. City Council needs to know what the Commission is trying to accomplish. The Commission needs to specify and bring the proposed sections they wish to work on to the October meeting if they want this item to be addressed in the next year. Director Diekmann commented if that does not happen, the Commission would have to wait an additional year or more before having another opportunity. Director Diekmann emphasized that the City Council needs to understand the level of involvement expected of City staff in terms of time and outreach.

City Council generally does not update ordinances and Director Diekmann cautioned the Commission to carefully consider the scope of an update. The 2014 update to Chapter 31 took years to accomplish. City Council will want to understand what would be gained from an update and will factor that in with all the other interests under consideration for the Planning & Housing Department work plan.

Ms. Winder was unsure how to best communicate with City Council and if a letter would be appropriate. Director Diekmann said format is not critical, but a motion stating the Commission is in support is critical. The Commission can sort out text changes that are ordinance based. They do not have to update Chapter 31 to have illustrated Design Guidelines.

Ms. Muccigrosso said the Commission is wanting to be prepared with ordinance language in Chapter 31 in the event that Chautauqua Park becomes a local Historic District. Director Diekmann said the Chautauqua Park neighborhood has not asked for a local district designation and until that happens, he does not know what the treatment of the survey area would be. The Chautauqua Park neighborhood has only asked for national recognition.

DISCUSS EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMISSION MEMBERS AND THE PUBLIC

Ms. Sahlstrom handed out information on an upcoming workshop in Decorah. The State of Iowa has interest in Historic Preservation Commissions from across Iowa attending training. Interested members would need to register soon to qualify for the early fee. The City would pay for lunch for members who attend. Ms. Minks and Mr. Huffman expressed interest in attending and will RSVP to Ms. Sahlstrom by September 18th.

COMMISSION COMMENTS:

Ms. Kolz said that prior to the meeting this evening, she did not understand how ADU's were an feasible option for the Old Town Historic District. Her opinion has changed due to tonight's discussion. Allowing ADU's as an option to allow people to stay in their homes is a positive.

STAFF COMMENTS

Mr. Anderson reiterated the need for the Commission to be specific in the letter to City Council regarding what they would like done with Chapter 31. The Commission subcommittee will need to put together an action item for the October Historic Preservation meeting.

MOTION TO ADJOURN:

MOTION: (Winder/Muccigrosso) to adjourn the meeting.

MOTION PASSED: (6-0)

The meeting adjourned at 7:26 PM.



Scott Huffman, Chairperson
Historic Preservation Commission



Laura Colebrooke, Recording Secretary
Department of Planning & Housing