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## MEMO

**Date:** January 13, 2016  
**Re:** Planning Commission/Board of Adjustment Report  
**From:** Ben Oleson, Zoning Administrator

Dear Mayor and City Council,

The Planning Commission/Board of Adjustment held its regular meeting on January 11, 2016. There were no public hearings. However, the Planning Commission did hold a discussion on an issue the Council had previously directed it to research and provide a recommendation (see 3-16-2015 Special meeting re: allowing for the construction of homes on smaller lots than the City Code allows).

The Planning Commission has held several discussions on this matter since the directive from the City Council, with City Staff providing research on both the question of whether to relax the minimum lot sizes for building a dwelling on a lot as well as whether to relax the minimum dimensions for a new dwelling. This relates to the growing interest around the country in the construction of "tiny homes" which are homes that are often 100-400 sq ft in size, although there is no formal definition.

### AGENDA ITEM #1

**Issue:** Allowing for construction of homes on small lots / "Tiny Homes"

**Background Information:** At their March 16, 2015 special meeting, the City Council was presented with a suggestion that the City look into allowing for small homes to be constructed on small lots that the current city code does not allow to be developed. One of the ways in which some cities have done this is to allow for "tiny homes" to be constructed - homes which may only be 10s or 100s of square feet, but generally less than the 576 (24' x 24') or 720 (24' x 30') sq ft that is the City's current minimum dwelling size.

**Planning Commission Recommendation:** The Planning Commission is recommending that the City not change existing city code in relation to minimum lot sizes for construction of dwellings nor the minimum dimensions required for new dwellings. This recommendation is based on the following:

1. The number of vacant lots in the city that do not meet the minimum width or size standard for construction of a dwelling is small – about 25 total. Six of these lots are already owned by the City or the HRA.
2. The City and its HRA have had a long-standing policy of attempting to take small lots and combine them with adjacent lots. Often this involves tearing down dilapidated housing on one of the lots. The goal of these efforts has much to do with improving the tax base of the community and eliminating dangerous or dilapidated housing that tends to detract from a neighborhood.
3. The current City Code does allow for smaller homes on smaller lots in the R-4 district. The language in this section could be improved to clarify that “tiny homes” are allowed within this district (i.e. as part of a development similar to a mobile home park), but there are opportunities for such developments that exist within the current City Code and opportunities to request rezoning of property to an R-4 district should someone want to create a development of this type.

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If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. I can be reached by phone at (888) 439-9793 or by email at [oleson@hometownplanning.com](mailto:oleson@hometownplanning.com).