

REQUEST & PETITION OF CITIZENS TO CITY OF RALEIGH COUNCIL

THE CITY COUNCIL MEETS IN REGULAR SESSION ON THE FIRST AND THIRD TUESDAYS OF EACH MONTH. ON THE FIRST TUESDAY, REQUESTS BY CITIZENS WILL BE HEARD DURING THE 7:00 P.M. SESSION; ON THE THIRD TUESDAY, REQUESTS BY CITIZENS WILL BE HEARD DURING THE 1:00 P.M. SESSION, **BUT WILL NOT BE HEARD BEFORE 2:00 P.M.** REQUESTS BY CITIZENS TO APPEAR ON THE CITY COUNCIL AGENDA SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO THE CITY CLERK. IN AN EFFORT TO AID THE CITIZENS AND THE CITY COUNCIL, USE OF THIS FORM IS SUGGESTED.

PLEASE KEEP YOUR REMARKS TO THREE (3) MINUTES OR LESS. IF THERE IS BACK-UP INFORMATION YOU WISH TO SUBMIT TO THE CITY COUNCIL, PLEASE SUBMIT IT ALONG WITH THIS FORM. THIS FORM AND ALL BACKUP MATERIAL IS PUBLIC RECORD.

Please **PRINT** all information:

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ZIP 27604

ORGANIZATION / INDIVIDUAL REPRESENTED: Mordecai CAC

I WISH TO ADDRESS THE CITY COUNCIL ON: October 7, 2015 at 7p

TOPIC: Statement of presentation you wish to make and statement of action you wish Council to take. Attach additional sheets if needed.

The Mordecai CAC has voted to request that our area be considered as a pilot project for the inclusion of backyard cottages in the UDO. We would like to request that Council instruct the Planning Department to draft language for an overlay district that would permit backyard cottages within the boundaries of the Mordecai CAC.



Signature

THIS FORM MUST BE RETURNED BY TUESDAY, 12:00 NOON, ONE WEEK PRIOR TO THE SCHEDULED MEETING*. ONCE THIS FORM IS SUBMITTED, NO FURTHER REMINDER WILL BE GIVEN; IT WILL BE UP TO THE CITIZEN TO ATTEND THE APPROPRIATE MEETING. CITIZENS MAY CALL THE CITY CLERK'S OFFICE TO CONFIRM RECEIPT OF THEIR FORM AND SUBMITTAL TO THE APPROPRIATE CITY COUNCIL AGENDA DATE AND TIME.

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO: CITY CLERK & TREASURER
222 W. HARGETT ST., SUITE 207
RALEIGH, NC 27601
(919) 996-3040 8:30 A.M. – 5:15 P.M.
FAX (919) 996-7620

MAIL TO: P. O. BOX 590
RALEIGH, NC 27602

***NOTE:** IF A HOLIDAY FALLS IN THE TIME FRAME, PLEASE CALL THE CLERK'S OFFICE TO DETERMINE DEADLINE.





MORDECAI HISTORIC PARK | PILOT MILL | OAKDALE | PERSON STREET | COTTON MILL | CAPITAL PARK
EAST MORDECAI | SEABOARD STATION | MORDECAI | WILLIAM PEACE UNIVERSITY | HALIFAX PARK

September 28, 2015

Dear Mayor and City Councilors,

At our last Citizens Advisory Council meeting on September 8, 2015, the Mordecai CAC voted unanimously 26-0 to approve the following motion:

“That the Mordecai CAC petition Raleigh City Council to take the steps necessary to designate Mordecai, which consists of Mordecai, East Mordecai, and Oakdale, as a pilot neighborhood which will allow backyard cottages to be built in Mordecai according to the appropriate UDO regulations and requirements.”

Based on the feedback that we have received through emails, phone calls, the public info session we held in August, and discussion at our meeting, we would like add the following recommendations that would help in developing the proper UDO regulations that would help alleviate some citizen concerns:

1. Size requirements—set projects at 550 sq ft maximum.
2. Height requirements—regulate height requirements to help keep lower profiles and help preserve existing backyard site lines.
3. Lighting—regulate lighting so that it is not too bright and obtrusive into neighbors’ properties.
4. Greenspace—regulate placement of cottages so that the entire lot does not consist of dwellings and little usable green space (to keep in character with backyards in Mordecai).
5. Windows—regulate window placement to maximize privacy of neighbors’ adjacent yards.
6. Landscaping—use appropriate landscaping and screening plants, etc., to help buffer cottages in the backyard view scape.
7. Clarify the use of cottages in conjunction with garages—i.e., whether they are allowed over the top of garages.
8. Require that once begun, backyard cottages be completed. We do not want partially finished cottages cluttering backyards.

In addition, we would like the opportunity to review the newly written UDO regulations in a presentation by City staff at one of our regularly scheduled Mordecai CAC meetings before finalizing the creation of the pilot neighborhood program.

Please let us know next steps in this process or any other steps that our CAC needs to take.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Gazella
Co-Chair, Mordecai CAC
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What is a backyard cottage?

Backyard cottages are a historical housing type currently enjoying a resurgence of interest in North America. Also called elder cottage housing, in-law apartments, mother-daughter units, companion units, guesthouses, and alley flats, they are second, small living units located in the backyards of single-family homes. They are also called accessory dwelling units (ADU's), but an ADU can be an apartment in an existing house, whereas backyard cottages, as their name suggests, are separate, significantly smaller units. Backyard cottages used to be common but, beginning in the mid-20th Century, were increasingly zoned out and thus in many cities are illegal.

What are the pros and cons of backyard cottages?

Opponents of backyard cottages worry they will negatively affect the character of their communities. Frequently cited concerns are that they will result in increased density, traffic and parking; loads on city services, infrastructure and schools; absentee landlords; and substandard or incompatible housing. However, backyard cottages are recognized as a housing option that can provide stable housing as family needs change over time. They can provide a place for a parent or boomerang kid to live, or where homeowners can live as empty nesters (and rent the primary unit), or where a caregiver can live so the homeowner to age in place. Backyard cottages can also be a low-impact way to add affordable units to a municipality's housing stock. They can provide rental income to subsidize homeowners' mortgage payments and, if they already exist on the property, may even help them to qualify for a mortgage. And they are sustainable. They use fewer materials and require less energy to heat and cool, thus reducing utility costs and carbon emissions. Additional housing units in inner city neighborhoods can also mitigate sprawl and support public transportation. Backyard cottages can also bolster cultural sustainability by allowing people to age in place, increasing economic diversity, and providing security and companionship for the elderly.

What cities allow backyard cottages?

As it turns out, many cities do, some of which we consider to be our cultural and economic peers. Austin, Texas, for example, recently updated their zoning ordinance to make it even easier to create backyard cottages. Seattle, Washington, San Antonio, Texas, Phoenix, AZ, Boulder, Golden, and Aspen CO, and San Diego, Sacramento, and San Francisco, CA, have adopted backyard cottages into their development ordinances. In North Carolina Charlotte-Mecklenburg recently updated their legislation to allow them, and Asheville, where they were never taken off the books, has in recent years sensitively added them to their downtown neighborhoods. Some cities, such as Santa Cruz, CA, not only allow them, but also actively promote them.

How are they designed and regulated?

Most cities specify minimum lot size, set backs, height limitations, and maximum square footage. Some require off-street parking and that they match the style of the primary residence. Some cities require owner occupancy of backyard cottages to control who lives in them, but others, such as Portland,