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**Public Comment on Council File: 16-1468**

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**Teresa Baker**

Mar 19, 2017 12:55 PM

Posted in group: **Clerk-PLUM-Committee**

Dear Civic Clerk,

Please see my attached communication for Council File: 16-1468 and pass my comments along to the PLUM committee and wider council.

Many thanks.

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Teresa Baker  
Co-Founder of LATCH Collective  
ATHA State Chapter Leader  
Tiny Advocacy Network of LA Coordinator

March 19th, 2017

TO:

Councilmember Cedillo  
Councilmember Harris-Dawson  
Councilmember Price  
Councilmember Englander  
Councilmember Huizar

Dear Honorable Members of the Planning and Land Use Committee,

I am writing today to comment on the proposed amendments to Section 12.03 and Section 12.22 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code regarding Accessory Dwelling Units.

As you are probably intimately aware, the City of Los Angeles faces a major challenge in availability of affordable housing. We need an innovative, multi-faceted approach for increasing housing, maintaining affordability, and assisting the unsheltered. Additional Dwelling Units are a smart approach to increasing the housing stock while maintaining the character of our neighborhoods. The City should be commended for adding an urgency clause to this ordinance and for reducing regulatory barriers. I urge the City to consider further amending the current proposed ADU ordinance language to include **Movable Tiny Houses**.

A "Tiny House" generally refers to a house that is under 500 square feet and built to resemble a conventional home using conventional building methods. Tiny houses can be built on traditional foundation systems or built on a trailer foundation system and rest on wheels (Movable Tiny House) allowing for the flexibility to move if there is a change in employment or family situation. Tiny Houses are often highly customized to meet the needs of the occupier and can be built for a single person or for a small family. Permitting Movable Tiny Houses to be used as ADUs will enable more homeowners to support their mortgages with rental income, as the cost of preparing a yard for a Movable Tiny House is significantly lower than building a permanent structure from the ground up. From an environmental standpoint, the small footprint of tiny houses dramatically increases efficiency and promotes sustainable use of our resources by reducing needs (it doesn't take much to heat or cool a small space) and being conscious of the resources we utilize.

The trend of dramatically reducing one's square footage and living "Tiny" is capturing the attention of Americans nationwide, reflecting the desire for an affordable-by-design housing which fits our actual needs. Home building companies and architects across the State are catering to this demand and producing efficient, high-quality tiny houses, but there are only very limited options for legally living in Movable Tiny Houses within Los Angeles.

Fresno, California has allowed Movable Tiny Houses as Accessory Dwelling Units, and we can learn from their approach. In Fresno, they require that Movable Tiny Houses be built and certified to the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) codes 119.2 (RV standards) or 119.5 (Park Model RV standards), connected to utilities, and resemble conventional residential structures. These requirements allow for an infill housing option that is affordable and more quickly developed than other housing options which are subject to full building and safety inspections. ANSI oversees the creation, dissemination and use of thousands of norms and guidelines that guide businesses in nearly every sector.

Please consider the following suggested language for including Movable Tiny Houses within the ADU ordinance:

*Sec. 1 Section 12.03 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code should be amended by adding a definition for "Accessory Dwelling Unit" in proper alphabetical order to read:*

**ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT.** Attached residential dwelling units or detached Accessory Buildings, not considered to exceed the allowable density of the parcel, which provide complete independent living facilities for one or more persons with permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation on the same parcel as a single family dwelling. Accessory Dwelling Units include efficiency units, as defined in Section 17958.1 of the Health and Safety Code, and manufactured homes, as defined in Section 18007 of the Health and Safety Code, and a **Movable Tiny House as defined in Sec. 2 Section 12.03 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code.**

*Sec. 2 Section 12.03 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code should be amended by adding a definition of Movable Tiny House to read:*

**Movable Tiny House.** A structure intended for the separate, independent living quarters of one household for year-round residence that meets the following conditions:

- (1)** Is licensed and registered with the California Department of Motor Vehicles and meets ANSI 119.2 or 119.5 requirements;
- (2)** Is certified by a qualified third party inspector for ANSI 119.2 or 119.5 compliance.
- (3)** Is towable by a Class 3, 4, or 5 hitch, a frame-towing hitch, or a fifth-wheel connection. Cannot (and is designed not to) move under its own power. When sited on a parcel per requirements of this Code, the undercarriage shall be skirted;
- (4)** Is no larger than allowed by California State Law for movement on public highways;
- (5)** Has at least 70 feet of habitable living space but no more than 440 square feet;
- (6)** Is designed and built to look like a conventional residential structure, not a conventional recreational vehicle or travel trailer.

*Section 3 Subsection A of Section 12.22 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code should be amended by adding a new Subdivision 32 (f) to read:*

**32. Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU).**

**(f) Requirements for Movable Tiny Houses as Accessory Dwelling Units.** Movable Tiny houses must comply with the requirements for Accessory Dwelling Units, except for the following provisions:

1. Building and safety requirements are not required to be the same as those required of the existing single-family dwelling unit. The Movable Tiny House shall meet the requirements of ANSI 119.2 or 119.5 for its structure.
2. If the wheels are removed so the unit may sit on a foundation, the foundation requirements for a Movable Tiny House shall follow the State approved requirements for foundation systems for Manufactured housing. If the Movable Tiny House does not remove the wheels, the wheels and leveling/support jacks must sit on a concrete, paved or compacted gravel surface sufficient to support its weight, and the wheels and undercarriage must be skirted.
3. The Movable Tiny House shall be located in the back of the primary residence.
4. For the purposes of the Accessory Dwelling Unit code, Movable Tiny Houses are not considered a Recreational Vehicle.

Los Angeles has reached a tipping point, and we need to act now to secure a future where Angelenos live in healthy communities with adequate housing, robust local economies, and the opportunity to lead productive lives. When meeting basic needs is a daily struggle, life becomes a fight, which translates into a desperation that can negatively impact our communities (higher crime rates, homelessness, substance abuse and violence). Tiny houses will not fix these issues outright, but they have the potential to act as catalysts for the revitalization of neighborhoods by providing opportunities to a wider range of our residents. Please consider permitting Movable Tiny Houses to be used as ADUs. You will enable those wishing to live within their means by providing a legal option for placement, and create more affordable housing with little to no impact on the City's budget and without drastically affecting the integrity of our neighborhoods.

Thank you for your consideration on this matter,

Teresa Baker  
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