



San Anselmo considers relaxing restrictions on second units

By Richard Halstead
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At the prompting of Mayor Ford Greene, town of San Anselmo staffers are exploring the possibility of easing restrictions on second units to encourage their creation.

Diane Henderson, the town's interim planning director, reviewed possible changes to the city's ordinance with the Town Council on Tuesday. Possible changes involve size limitations, height and location, parking, colors and materials and rent limitations. Henderson is also considering an amnesty program for illegal, existing second units.

Currently, town law limits the size of a property owner's second housing unit to 750 square feet in floor area or 30 percent of the primary unit floor area, whichever is less. Henderson said she believes the maximum size should be a flat figure, such as 750 or 800 square feet.

Also, the town has specific requirements about when a second unit can be located above the ground floor and to what height. Henderson said she believes the second unit

should be subject to the same setbacks and height limits as primary units.

She also noted she favors waiving a requirement for an additional parking space if the second unit is within half a mile of a transit stop.

Councilman Tom McInerney said that half a mile might be too far and recommended requiring that the second unit be within a quarter mile of a transit stop. But Greene disagreed.

"The name of the game is to get people out of their cars," Green said.

Henderson said the town

should consider dropping a requirement that a second unit be of the same colors and materials as the main residence; she also noted the town's requirement that second units be affordable to low-income residents is unenforceable and probably unnecessary due to the small size of the units.

Councilman Jeff Kroot said allowing second units to be a different color is a good idea because the original color might not be something the community wants to repeat.

For example, Kroot said, "I know of an

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orange second unit."

Specific recommendations will be brought to the Planning Commission for review, Henderson said.

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