



ARCADIA ZONING & SUBDIVISION CODE UPDATE

Ad Hoc Committee Meeting #1: Summary

October 30, 2014

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Ad Hoc Meeting #1 Summary

Introduction

ON OCTOBER 21, the Arcadia Zoning Code Ad Hoc Committee was convened to review Policy Issues Whitepaper #1. The following information provides a summary of Ad Hoc Committee input on the five topics discussed.

Use of Synthetic/Artificial Turf

Artificial turf (also known as synthetic turf) is a landscaping and sports field surface made of manufactured fibers that look like grass and lawn. Until 2013, Planning staff allowed artificial turf, but due to aesthetic and environmental concerns, has stopped approving it as landscaping. The City has received requests from residents to install artificial turf in their front yards. Given these requests and state-wide concerns about drought, the Committee discussed this and provided the following directions:

- In terms of front yard and street-side yard landscaping, artificial turf should be treated as hardscape (cannot exceed 40% of the required front yard area). It should only be considered for minor applications like strips or hard to irrigate areas, rather than as a true landscape feature like a lawn.
- Artificial turf may be allowed in other areas, such as the rear yard areas of a residentially zoned property, on an athletic field, and as part of the landscaping mix on commercial properties.
- The Ad-Hoc Committee requested that staff provide a few addresses that have artificial turf so that these installations can be examined. The properties that have artificial turf are: 2411 Doolittle Avenue (front yard area), in the City's parkway in front of 1208 and 1218 Magnolia Court, and at Campus Commons at 16 Campus Drive (in front of the building that faces Campus Drive).

Development Standards for Single-family Homes/Lots

The topic of “mansionization” is not new in Arcadia. The concern is not just the houses themselves, but the combination of large homes and one or more accessory structures which create a “compound” appearance on the lots. During the meeting, staff explained that this is a topic that needs to be vetted through the public outreach process and the Committee would like single family development standards to be considered at a public meeting that focuses on residential policy topics. Items to be discussed would include the full range of development standards (e.g. size, basements, number of rooms, setbacks, floor area, stepbacks, height, accessory structure size, etc.).

Preserving Multi-Family Rental Housing

The Committee would like to encourage rental housing retention and construction, however, it would be difficult to provide enough incentives for the real estate market to do this and there is no interest in “forcing” rental housing. No measures should be implemented at this time.

Calculating Building Height in the R-3 Zone

Currently, the Zoning Code requires developments in the R-3 zone (multi-family) to be limited in height to **either** two stories or 30 feet. Because of peculiar definitions that specify how building height is measured, multi-family developments are frequently designed with semi-subterranean parking. This design approach often results in development projects that lack design quality. The Committee agreed that the City should retain the existing height limit (30 feet) but remove the two-story limitation. Along with this, there should be a larger setback to the highest floor.

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Purpose of and Regulations for the R-3-R Zone

The R-3-R zone applies to only one area of the City; the west side of Baldwin Avenue, across from the Westfield Santa Anita Shopping mall. The zoning codifies the standards for these apartments that were developed by variances. For example, the buildings are limited in height to one story and 18 feet. The Committee felt these properties should remain the way they are because this area serves as a transitional area between the commercial corridor and the single family homes to the west. Also, the courtyard style of these apartments is unique to Arcadia and consistent throughout the area, and if possible, it should be preserved.

In other areas of the city where R-2/R-3 zoned properties abut single family zoned properties, the Ad Hoc Committee recommended increased setbacks for the second floor, and possibly for all portions of the structure.