



City and Borough of Sitka

100 Lincoln Street • Sitka, Alaska 99835

Coast Guard City, USA

Memorandum

To: Chair Spivey and Planning Commission
Through: Amy Ainslie, Director, Department of Planning and Community Development ~~AS~~
From: Scott Brylinsky, Special Projects Manager ~~AS~~
Subject: ZA 19-06 – Tiny Houses: Addendum to Staff Report
Date: January 8, 2020

ZA 19-06 was first presented and discussed at the December 18, 2019 Planning Commission meeting. This meeting is the second time it is before the Planning Commission.

The item consists of proposed amendments to the Sitka General Code that create a legal status for tiny houses provided they are built to the International Residential Code and inspected by the Building Official prior to use. This includes tiny houses on permanent foundations as well as tiny houses on chassis, with or without wheels.

During discussion at the December 18, 2019 Planning Commission meeting, some questions and considerations were brought forward. This memo addresses those items.

1. How will a tiny house be safely moved over the streets if it is built to the maximum proposed height of 16-feet, considering possible interference with electric lines?

Before moving a tall unit the Electric Department can be contacted and they will advise on the most advantageous route to minimize interference. Where interference with lines may occur, Electric Department personnel will use push sticks to elevate the lines to provide clearance.

2. What is the legal status of a tiny house built on a chassis? Is it a vehicle or a building?

The chassis with wheels may be licensed with DMV as a trailer. Then the tiny house, constructed under a building permit, can be transported on that trailer.

OR

The tiny house on chassis with wheels could be licensed with DMV as a recreational vehicle. For the tiny house to fit under the parameters outlined in the proposed code amendments, it would still need to be constructed under a building permit and issued a certificate of approval by the Building Official prior to occupancy as a long-term dwelling unit.

3. For a tiny house on chassis to be placed long-term, how would structural adequacy of the ground to support the tiny house's chassis be assured?

The Building Department routinely oversees adequacy of soils and fill for supporting loads to be placed. Placement of a tiny house on chassis would be no different.