

Sharing your reading: Granny flats

The Bethlehem Gadfly Affordable Housing, Serious Issues, Sharing your reading August 10, 2019

(Latest in a series of posts about affordable housing)

(also 4th in a series about sharing your reading)

Jeff Speck: “Pass an Accessory Dwelling Unit ordinance . . . and create a City program encouraging their construction.”

(Walkable City Rules, 2018)

So you see what Gadfly is doing here, right? Trying to educate himself.

Bethlehem has an acknowledged problem with lack of affordable housing.

(Remember, he’s liking the term “attainable housing” too.)

We could hop over to the sidebar, click the “candidates for election” link, and find several of the candidates affirming attention to affordable housing as a campaign platform position.

Easy *to say* in campaign mode.

And, of course, in that setting, nobody talked about how *to do* anything to further affordable housing.

The Mayor’s response to the South Bethlehem Historical Society letter named a housing program example but hardly indicated any wide-ranging program to address affordable housing.

So Gadfly's trying to educate himself.

Speck says, "there is a way to almost invisibly increase density, affordability, and diversity in single-family neighborhoods."

That is:

the Accessible Dwelling Unit (ADU): the Backyard Apartment, the Garage Apartment, the Mother-in-law Apartment, the Granny Flat.

Now just with inclusionary zoning, we may already have codes for ADU's. Gadfly doesn't know. And just like with inclusionary zoning, Speck may be glossing over big negatives,

But this idea as a partial solution to the lack of affordable housing was new to Gadfly and sounded kinda interesting.

ADU's have a small footprint: 500 – 800 sq. ft. They work well in neighborhoods with rear alleys. They increase property values. They (Gadfly's antennae go up) "make aging in place possible," as seniors rent them out or live in them and collect rent for the main house.

One town offers zero-interest loans up to \$20,000 to build them.

[Seattle offers a guide.](#) Look at the pictures!

There are 11 houses on Gadfly's block. The yards are 60ft. long. Only two "use" the yards. A couple are jungles. Is my neighborhood ripe for Granny flats?

Take this eyesore of a single-car garage, for example, that hasn't housed a car in the 50yrs Gadfly has lived next to it.



Ripe for a
Granny flat?

Just tryin' to
stir the pot . . .

*What are you
reading these
days? How*

about sharing with us? Gadfly invites you to share a few clips of your reading — with or without comment — or a few thoughts from your reading pertinent to the Gadfly project of the good conversation about Bethlehem that builds community.