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April 12, 2018

Common Council
Safety and Development Committee
West Allis, WI

RE: Home Business Occupancies

Dear Committee Members,

Recently, a few new home business occupancies have caused city staff to want to reexamine our code requirements for these uses. This communication is intended to be a starting point to the conversation about this important, but often overlooked, part of the city code.

There are approximately 25 home business occupancies right now in the City. These types of businesses run from small day cares to architectural studios to sales offices. I have attached the code section (RMC 12.17) to this communication which outlines what is allowed, and what our current rules are. Basically, the code is set up for businesses, uses and procedures that are not going to cause a nuisance to the neighborhood.

Recently, several new businesses have come up utilizing Internet-based sales offices. These have traditionally been allowed to fall into the category of "Sales Representatives – Offices Only." The way the business works is that a customer can go on-line and order something...this could be anything from Tupperware to Avon to computers. It could be literally anything you can legally buy on the Internet. The customer orders it, it gets shipped to the home business, and the sales representative (resident) either arranges a delivery or has the customer stop by via appointment to pick up the goods. On the surface, this looks like an easy, low nuisance transaction. However, we are finding that as these businesses become successful, there are several deliveries every day from UPS or FedEx, and several customers stopping by to pick up goods. The code reads that traffic should not be excessive, but that is hard to define and watch. There is also no regulation on what is being sold there. There may be other issues that should be addressed now before they become a problem in the future.

I would like to discuss this at the next Safety and Development Committee meeting to see if there are certain aspects of this code section that should be addressed, updated or changed. I welcome any questions you have now or at the meeting.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ed Lisinski".

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