

My name is James Stout and I live at 22xx Scudder Street in St. Paul, Minnesota. My wife and I have lived in the St. Anthony Park neighborhood for 44 years. This document is a written record of my presentation at the public hearing of the St. Paul City Council on June 15, 2016 at 5:30 PM. My presentation was in opposition to the proposal that would allow internal, attached and detached (external) accessory dwelling units (ADUs) in St. Anthony Park.

I am here as a member of the eight-person ADU Task Force That was charged by the District 12 Land Use Committee to evaluate the suitability of Accessory Dwelling Units in St. Anthony Park. After twelve Task force meetings and two public meetings, we made the recommendation that internal and attached ADUs are appropriate but that detached ADUs were not.

An important part of our deliberations was listening to people in St. Anthony Park. We listened to everyone who had a view on the issue: architects, real estate people, local business owners and of course homeowners. It became increasingly clear as time went on that many in the community were polarized; a faction that was fixed in their position that there should be no ADUs of any kind in St. Anthony Park and another faction that wanted all three kinds of ADUs, internal, attached and external. Many of the people we talked to and heard from were of the view that some middle ground might be acceptable.

Given the wide range of views and more or less legitimate reasons for them, the task force had some obligation to respect those views. Therefore we sought a compromise we believed would satisfy most of the people in St. Anthony Park. By allowing internal and attached ADUs, no additional habitable footprint would be necessary beyond that already allowed by code for home extensions, and most of the advantages of ADUs documented elsewhere would be possible. By not allowing detached ADUs, the wishes of those who wanted to preserve the character of single-family neighborhoods were largely satisfied. I want to emphasize that this recommendation by the task force was a COMPROMISE that all but a few hardliners from both sides of the fence were willing to accept.

The task force recommendation was endorsed by the District 12 Land Use Committee and was sent on to the St. Anthony Park Community Council, who then sent it along to the St. Paul City Council. This was a very democratic and satisfying process, proceeding from the wishes of the residents to the governing bodies that put those wishes into reality.

The proposed zoning ordinance you have before you takes one of the extreme views; that is to allow all three types of Accessory Dwelling units. Rather than embrace the compromise in the Task Force recommendation that disallows detached ADUs, approval of the proposal before you puts us right back where we were before evaluating the wishes of the St. Anthony Park Community. I urge the City Council to accept the compromise proposal embodied in the task force recommendation as the most reasonable way forward.

Thank You,  
James Stout