

Wilmington, Delaware  
February 20, 2020

**#4776**                    **WHEREAS**, the average size of a home in the United States is 2,687 square feet (the highest it has ever been) which is an increase of 1,000 square feet over the last four decades.

**Sponsor:**            The size of homes is growing fast, along with the cost of a home; and  
**Council President Shabazz**

**Co-Sponsor:**        **WHEREAS**, a residence is deemed “affordable” if the members of the household spend no more than 30% of their income in meeting the mortgage or rent of that residence.

**Council Member Freel**        Based on this definition, in order to afford a two-bedroom home in New Castle County the household needs to make on average at least \$48,000 annually. The average price of a house in New Castle County based on research in 2019 was \$300,000. The median household income in Wilmington in 2017 was \$40,221. The median sales price for a single-family home in Wilmington that year was \$62,730, which is not affordable for households that earn the median household income. There are strong indicators that the cost of housing in a number of Wilmington neighborhoods will experience a sizeable increase in price due to expected new housing and real estate developments; and

**WHEREAS**, the “Tiny House Movement” is becoming very popular in the United States. Tiny Houses now range anywhere from 150 square feet to 1,000 square feet. Tiny Houses are no longer primarily On Wheels, nor are they the sole interest or focus of DIY (Do It Yourself) individuals. Tiny Houses/Tiny Homes are attracting and being marketed to millennials, retirees, veterans, and seniors as they are looking to downsize, reduce their carbon footprint, and/or live in an affordable home; and

**WHEREAS**, several City governments and Non-Profits have begun taking this affordable housing concept and implementing it to address homelessness, increasing the

growth of starter homes, and combating rising housing costs. As far back as 2014, and as recently as May 2019, communities have been developing various types of “Tiny Houses/Tiny Homes” in response to housing affordability issues for various constituent groups which also positively impacts neighborhood stabilization; and

**WHEREAS**, there have been many initial reports of success in the incorporation of “Tiny Houses/Tiny Homes” in the Housing Codes of several cities, such as Austin and Dallas, Texas; Eugene and Portland, Oregon; Fresno, California; Nashville, Tennessee, Seattle and Olympia WA, and Syracuse NY, to name a few. Tiny Houses/Tiny Homes in these Cities are serving a range of constituents who are seeking affordable housing. By taking best practices from existing approaches in other Cities, the inclusion of “Tiny Houses/Tiny Homes” has great potential to become equally successful (if not more so) in the City of Wilmington; and

**WHEREAS**, the inclusion of Tiny Houses/Tiny Homes in Wilmington will not only create an answer for various constituent groups who need and will benefit from being able to access affordable housing through the availability of Tiny Houses/Tiny Homes in our City of Wilmington, Delaware, the economic impact of creating a new business in the City will bring new employment opportunities for Wilmingtonians through the creation of a new industry thereby benefiting the City as a whole.; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WILMINGTON** that the City Council supports the inclusion of Tiny Homes/Tiny Houses without wheels in the Wilmington Housing Code at a minimum of 400 square feet to a maximum of 1,000 square feet of permanent housing that is congruent with the existing Wilmington and State of Delaware Housing Codes, that is not on wheels, and is located in areas designated as residential. Tiny Homes/Tiny Houses will substantially address the

dwindling supply of affordable housing in Wilmington while also adding a new economic engine in the City of Wilmington that will create potentially hundreds of new jobs in the building of Tiny Homes/Tiny Houses in the City.

Passed by City Council,

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk

**SYNOPSIS:** This Resolution strongly encourages the City of Wilmington, Delaware to support the inclusion of Tiny Houses/Tiny Homes in our City’s housing stock to address the growing problems associated with the scarcity of Affordable Housing, issues regarding Neighborhood Stabilization, Millennials needing Starter Homes, Homelessness, Seniors Seeking to Downsize, Veterans needing affordable housing, and those seeking to lower their Carbon Footprint.