

LOCAL / REGIONAL

Mayor Tim Kelly to Allow Homeowners to Build Accessory Dwelling Units to Help Curb Runaway Housing Costs

Ordinance to allow accessory dwelling units by right will increase the supply of housing across the city by unlocking the full potential of single-family dwellings.

Chattanooga, Tenn. (Monday, April 11)— Chattanooga Mayor Tim Kelly is working to increase housing options and affordability for Chattanooga residents through a proposal that will permit accessory dwelling units on single-family lots under certain conditions.

Accessory dwelling units, alternatively known as in-law suites, carriage houses or granny flats, are often found above garages, in a detached structure or either above or below the principal dwelling. And at a time when Chattanooga is suffering from a deficit of more than 5,000 units as housing costs skyrocket, allowing ADUs by right on single-family lots couldn't come at a better time, Kelly said.

"Chattanooga is on the brink of becoming a city in which our children cannot afford to live, and that is unacceptable," Kelly said. "This ordinance will allow our seniors to age in place, support multi-generational households, and create energy-efficient housing while also maintaining the character of our neighborhoods."

The ADU ordinance is the latest piece of Kelly's One Chattanooga strategy to expand access to homes Chattanoogaans can afford. The average cost of a home has climbed to \$290,000 today, up from \$159,000 in 2015, while median household income during the same period rose only slightly to \$47,165 from \$40,177 in 2015.

The 80 percent increase in housing costs has left 43% of renters defined as "housing burdened," or spending more than 30% of their income on housing. And 22% of renters are "housing inse-

cure," defined as spending more than half of their income on housing costs.

Last month, Kelly launched a \$100 million affordable housing initiative seeded by \$33 million in city money that will leverage public and private funds to create thousands of units that residents can afford, ranging from supportive housing up to missing-middle homes. The city is working on the initiative in conjunction with the philanthropic, nonprofit and private sectors, creating a capital stack that offers a return on investment for those who help create homes that residents can afford.

The Kelly administration has also rolled out a number of initiatives to bolster low-income housing providers directly, including offering \$100,000 in backing for security deposits, as well as undertaking comprehensive zoning reform to unblock the pipeline of new home construction.

Under the proposed ordinance, ADUs must be permanent structures limited to 700 square feet in size, and only one ADU will be permitted per single-family dwelling. ADUs must be located in the rear or side yard, and will not be permitted in front yards. They will also be height-limited to two stories, and cannot exceed the height of the principal home.

Existing parking must be maintained or replaced if parking is lost in the course of creating the ADU, and ADUs are required to adhere to the architectural design of the principal home, including the facade, building materials, roof and windows.

The ordinance does not supersede homeowner association rules or historic district guidelines as they relate to ADUs.

Soul Food Combines All of America's Flavors, Experts Say

By Shawn Ryan

Kenyatta Ashford fondly remembers family dinners from his childhood in Louisiana as "like a hug."

"My dad comes from a family of 13 out of rural Louisiana, and my mom comes from a family of nine. Our home became the central gathering place for family during holidays," he recalled. "It was one of the things that propelled me into wanting to take care of people and prepare, you know, a really, really good meal for them."

Ashford is chef at the local restaurant Neutral Ground and winner of the culinary competition "Chopped Next Gen" last year on the Food Network. He partnered with author Adrian Miller in a Thursday lecture, "A Conversation about Black Cuisine."

"My central focus making food is ultimately to always make it delicious because it just brings up a certain comfort to you and everything," Ashford said. "It's kind of almost like a hug."

Miller's first book "Soul Food: The Surprising Story of an American Cuisine, One Plate at a Time," won the James Beard Foundation Award for Scholarship and Reference in 2014. His latest, "Black Smoke: African Americans and the United States of Barbecue," published in 2021.

Sponsored by the Department of History Africana Studies at the Uni-

versity of Tennessee at Chattanooga, the title of the lecture may have been "Black Cuisine," but the conversation broadened far beyond. While there were discussions on the roots of soul food, the use of vegetables in many of its dishes, barbecue and other topics, it also branched into locally-sourced foods vs. corporate products, building a restaurant business and healthy food choices.

Considering soul food to strictly be a province of blacks, for instance, is the wrong attitude, Miller said.

"This is not a widely shared take, but this is my take. I think that anybody can make anybody's food, but there are certain guidelines," Miller said. "You've got to be on point with the flavor profile and make it correctly because the worst thing you could do is take food from another culture and make it poorly and make a nasty version of it."

While the idea of soul food seems intrinsically tied to the South, the reality reaches much farther, Miller and Ashford said.

Some of it goes back to African slaves who brought recipes and cooking techniques from their native countries. Europeans also brought their styles. The Great Migration from 1910 until 1970 took blacks from the East into western America, where cuisines from Native Americans, Latinos and other cultures blended.



From left, food author Adrian Miller, moderator Nicole Brown and local chef Kenyatta Ashford.

"When people come in contact with other people, they notice. They borrow. They experiment. That's what the human experience has been about," Miller said.

"Soul food is a coming together of West Africa, the Americas and Europe in terms of ingredients, techniques and culinary traditions. That all comes together in America," he said.

Nor is soul food unhealthy, as many believe, Ashford explained. Despite the

use of lard, fatback and other artery-jamming flavors in some dishes, the base of the cuisine is vegetables.

"I think, as a culture here in the United States, food became an unhealthy thing when it became industrialized," he said. "Before World War II, lots of folks grew their own food. Food was vegetable heavy."

"Soul food is about being hands on, about vegetables, about putting your hands in the soil."

Chattanooga Clergy for Justice Responds to the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office

The Chattanooga Clergy for Justice in accordance with research, law experts, and the state law itself, maintain that state law does not intervene in local department policies. Furthermore, the Chattanooga Clergy for Justice assert that this is yet another tactic by the Sheriff, Deputy Sheriff, and HCSO General Counsel to circumvent having a necessary and timely conversation with the community about use of force policies. In response to J. Matt Leas's statement, however, that HCSO cannot be involved in the mediation agreement because state law puts departmental decisions related to discipline and termination in the hands of the civil service board, the Chattanooga Clergy for Justice is thereby requesting a meeting with this civil service board.

Chattanooga Clergy for Justice would also like to publicly request that the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation handle the investigation into the Collegedale Police Officer's use of excessive force against Delane

Gordon by a Collegedale Police Officer.

"Based on a review of HCSO current use of force policies and Coty Wamp's biased public statements in support of law enforcement, we feel that the HCSO cannot complete an unbiased investigation of the incident. The Chattanooga Clergy for Justice would like to publicly request that TBI (Tennessee Bureau of Investigation) handle the investigation into the use of excessive force against Delane Gordon by a Collegedale Police Officer." - Chattanooga Clergy for Justice

Background: Chattanooga Clergy for Justice was in the process of scheduling a meeting with a mediator from the Department of Justice and the Hamilton County Sheriff's Department to discuss their Use of Force Policies. Previously, the Clergy documented 19 instances of abuse by Hamilton County Sheriff's deputies since Sheriff Hammond's election in 2008. One deputy identified by the Clergy was fired but

many others remain on the streets. Deputy Blake Kilpatrick is one of those who continues to be paid while under investigation for abuse. In 2018, a bystander recorded Kilpatrick punching and kicking handcuffed Chattanooga resident Charles Toney as he lay on the ground. The FBI is investigating the incident, but the Clergy insist more is needed to protect Hamilton County residents.

In June of 2021, the Clergy submitted a formal request to the U.S. Department of Justice to investigate a pattern and practice of misconduct by the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office. On March 10, 2022, door-dash driver Delane Gordon was tased by a Collegedale Police Officer during a traffic stop. The Hamilton County District Attorney, Neal Pinkston, who routinely redirects investigation of excessive use of force to other authorities and offices, turned the investigation over to the HSCO, which itself has pending investigations regarding use of force by its deputies.



Historic: from front

as vice chair of the President's Board of Advisors on Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), commended President Biden "for staying the course and keeping his commitment to our community and Black women with his nomination and now confirmation of Judge Brown."

Kennedy Booker, a junior political science major from Detroit, said Judge Jackson's confirmation provides a fresh face for the Supreme Court, and her previous judicial and governmental experience creates the diversity needed at the federal court level.

"Justice Jackson represents the kind of change our federal courts need," Booker said. "She will forever be an asset and trailblazer for those that come after her."

Fellow political science major Anisia Fleming, a sophomore from Franklin, Tennessee, said Judge Jackson will be a "representation of the change taking

place in the country."

"As a symbol, Judge Jackson represents moving past the stereotypes that have to do with race and gender," Fleming added. "As an individual, she is more than qualified for the job. She will provide exactly the type of representation this country needs as a role model and as a source of inspiration in the Supreme Court for so many in this country."

Dr. Shameka Nicole Cathey, assistant professor of political science at TSU, said the historic confirmation of Judge Jackson is "symbolic of the ongoing strive of Black women in our country."

"Having Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson included in the U.S. Supreme Court offers a particular significance in relations to diversity and representation," Cathey said. "Beyond her personal background, she brings a plethora of professional experiences that not only qualifies her for this moment but gives her the ability to own this moment. Her very presence on the High Court will

push the framework of public policy in our country."

Since 1790, there have been 115 Supreme Court justices. The confirmation of Jackson for the first time in history seats four women and two Black justices on the High Court. Judge Clarence Thomas is the current seated African American Justice.

Council: from front

Ledford, the East Brainerd councilman, has served as chair of the council's planning and zoning committee since 2017, as a planning commissioner on the Chattanooga Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission, and as a board member of the Regional Transportation Planning Organization.

As a councilman, Ledford has prioritized operational efficiency, increased public services, and his work on the zoning and planning process.

"I am overwhelmed by the support and trust my colleagues have placed in me to serve as chair, and I look forward to

working alongside vice-chair Dotley and the City Council in continuing to foster communication and relationships as the building blocks of our community," Ledford said.

Dotley, the district 7 councilwoman, was elected in 2021 and has quickly become a respected voice on the council through both her service as chair of the Equity and Community Engagement committee, as well as her hard work on behalf of her constituents.

She represents one of the most diverse districts in Chattanooga, stretching from downtown to Alton Park, and from St. Elmo to East Lake.

"I deeply appreciate the faith my colleagues have placed in me, and as vice-chair I look forward to representing the amazing residents of district 7, and collaborating at a deeper level with my fellow council members in order to accomplish our urgent work," Dotley said.

The results of the election were effective immediately on Tuesday night.