Small House, Big Community: Tiny housers’ views on community
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There is a small body of academic literature on the modern tiny house movement. However, what does exist suggests that tiny housers place value on principles of simple living, minimalism, and environmental sustainability (Ford et. al 2017, Mangold and Zschau 2019). With the incorporation of design mechanisms believed to foster social interaction into tiny house communities such as Boneyard Studios in D.C., it seems those who are interested in tiny living may also be interested in living in sustainable communities (Kilman 2016, Ford et. al. 2017). Yet, no research exists detailing tiny houser’s interests in communal living or their definitions of community. This research attempts to fill a gap in the literature by addressing what interests in community exists among those with tiny house interests, and what their ideal communities encompass. A purposive sampling strategy with three different age categories (18–34, 35–54, and 55 and older) were created, totaling 30 semi-structured interviews. Participants definitions of community and their conceptions of an ideal community were explored. Five interviews were coded inductively using Nvivo 12 to create a coding scheme. The resulting 17 category coding scheme was used to code the remaining 25 interviews deductively. Preliminary results suggests many of these tiny-housers are seeking a more collaborative community environment, rejecting the normative American suburban model. Yet, an uneasy tension exists between in having a sense of community and maintaining a sense of privacy.

Key words: Tiny house, alternative lifestyle, community, sustainability, simple living