

**Short-Term Rental (STR) Ad Hoc Committee
Committee Review Meeting
City Hall, City Council Chambers, Lake Geneva, WI
May 1st, 2024 - 5:00 – 6:30 p.m.**

Committee Members present: Tom Keefe, Luke Pfeifer, Jason Smolarek, Emily Hummel, Jason Renz (Code Enforcer, Assistant Building Inspector), Fred Walling (Building & Zoning Administrator), and Joel Hoiland, Chairman (3rd District Alderman); Neal Kolb and Jason Smolarek attended via Zoom.

Joel Hoiland called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Roll Call of members present.

Motion to approve minutes from April 17th meeting by Thomas Keefe; Second by Luke Pfeiffer.

Note that there were members of the public present to observe the committee discussions at this meeting.

Joel stated that the purpose of today's meeting was to continue reviewing and discussing language changes to the Short-Term Rental (STR) Ordinance – Sec. 98 – 206. **Refer to STR Ordinance Worksheet v8***

Beginning with the Property Management requirements, the committee reviewed the change in the rental language from (Monday) Calendar week to the number of days, and the logic for the change.

Discussion, followed by a decision to add clarification of the Rental Booking Period, which shall be identified as the time between when one rental arrives and the next rental arrives.

Discussion regarding the legality of our working language in light of current lawsuits in the State of Wisconsin regarding the issues of the distance property managers need to live from their STR properties which led to the decision to leave this open until cases are resolved.

Discussion regarding the value of the current rule that requires each STR in Lake Geneva to have a non-booking period of 185 days per year brought up several viewpoints. Jason Smolarek asked that the committee consider reducing or eliminating the off-season booking period and permit short-term rentals 365 days of the year. He pointed out that STRs hire cleaners and other service providers to maintain STR properties (jobs), that STRs accommodate tourists and visitors who provide income to City businesses, and that year-long STR rentals would eliminate, "ghost houses" in neighborhoods. Emily Hummel spoke about the value of upholding the non-booking period to the Residents in light of preserving the sense of community and maintaining neighborhoods. Joel Hoiland stated that making changes to the "off-season booking rental period" would be more appropriate after the current ordinance has been revised and in operation. Fred Walling stated that he believes the 185-day non-booking period should stay as it is, at least for now.

Discussion regarding where information about the names of STR guests are to be kept to protect individual privacy led to the decision that the Owners will keep this information; the City staff do not need this to enforce rules and regulations.

Discussion about the idea of external signage to identify STRs led to the decision not to do so, as it would become a Public Safety issue, as identifying which houses are vacant could attract criminal activity.

There was consensus that a failure to display the STR License Number on all booking platforms, direct booking websites, and anywhere else the property is posted would be a violation of the ordinance.

Discussion regarding the Violations and Penalties language led to the decision to continue this discussion to the next meeting, with members working on the language changes.

Joel Hoiland discussed the next steps as we work toward presenting a revised ordinance. He said we would have at least one more meeting before requesting City Attorney Dan Draper, and other appropriate City staff, to review the revised STR ordinance. Joel asked Fred Walling to provide an assessment of the time it would take once the committee sends the revised ordinance to the Plan Commission and through all steps of the decision-making process before enactment. Fred agreed to provide this timeline at the next meeting.

Joel confirmed that the STR ordinance revisions are still a work in progress and that further discussion and work will need to continue. He then asked each committee member for final comments on today's discussions, which led to more suggestions and ongoing concerns:

1. Will the City hire a software company or outside resources to help enforce the STR Ordinance?
2. What will the mechanism be for citizens to report suspected STR Ordinance violations?

Joel stated that our next STR Ad Hoc Committee meetings will be on May 15th & May 29th at 5:00 p.m. at City Hall. He also stated that after the Committee agrees on a revised ordinance there will be several opportunities for public comments at each of the next steps.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 pm, approved by Luke Pfeiffer and seconded by Emily Hummel.