

**Short-Term Rental (STR) Ad Hoc Committee
Committee Review Meeting
City Hall, City Council Chambers, Lake Geneva, WI
May 15th, 2024 - 5:00 – 6:30 p.m.**

Committee Members present: Tom Keefe, Luke Pfeifer, Emily Hummel, Jason Renz (Code Enforcer, Assistant Building Inspector), Carol Pearson, Joel Hoiland, Chairman (3rd District Alderman), and Jason Smolarek via Zoom. Neal Kolb, excused absence.

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

Roll Call of members present.

Motion to approve minutes from May 1st meeting by Tom Keefe; Second by Carol Pearson.

Public Comments.

Brian Holt, Vacation Rental Property partner here in Lake Geneva.

As someone who manages STRs in this community, Brian feels that we are all aligned in purpose: decrease in STR guests that are disruptive and out of compliance. He says this ordinance redraft is well done. However, Brian believes that this ordinance is punitive only. Brian thinks that the City should make it easier to bring more people to the table to be in compliance rather than discouraging new STR Ownership, which he sees is what the current code is accomplishing.

Resident Sheri Ames, Alderperson for District One

Sheri says she agrees with what Brian said, but the people who are not in compliance are not the only problem. The fact is that allowing STRs in residential neighborhoods changes our neighborhoods. "I am not a fan of STRs in residential neighborhoods and you will not change my mind on that."

Scott Robinson, STR Owner

Scott says he is not sure what the goals and objectives of this committee are if the illegal operators are not held accountable. He does not see what the value of keeping the STR vacant for much of the year accomplishes. He suggests the City consider restricting the amount of STR permits it allows. Scott also wants to review the concept of Property Manager and the distance they are required to live from the property. Scott states that property ownership in Lake Geneva breaks down to 54% of year-round residents and 46% are a combination of short and long-term rentals.

Thomas Cincotta, STR Owner and Co-Owner of a Cleaning Business that services STRs.

Thomas says he has seen more responsible renters in the STR industry than within the long-term renters. He says that through their cleaning business, he and his wife provide jobs for over 30 local families. He points out that if we discourage STRs from being here, it could stifle local economies. Thomas does not see the benefit of the 180-day off-season.

5: 20 pm Closed public comments: Tom Keefe moved; Luke Pfeiffer seconded.

Ordinance Review: Joel explained the ordinance as it appeared on the screen.

- Wording changes are STR rather than Short-term rentals spelled out
- Annual rental period to Annual License
- Need to clarify the rooming requirements with bedroom/bed count, to be consistent with the state laws.

Jason Smolarek, STR Committee member, via Zoom, asked that the off-season requirements be changed. He said it seems like Emily Hummel is the only person on the STR committee against it. Several audience members made additional comments so Joel reminded audience members that the public comment session of the meeting was over. He stated that the STR committee was formed primarily because of complaints by residents who want greater monitoring and enforcement. He stated that since our discussion ensued, changing the minimum ordinance parameters was not considered possible at this time. In response to Jason's request that the minimums be part of the current ordinance revisions, Joel said that the revisions wouldn't pass the Plan Commission and the City Council. Additionally, if it came to a committee vote, other members of the committee would not vote to change the off-season requirements, at least at this time. Carol Pearson, Tom Keefe, Luke Pfeiffer, Jason Renz, and Emily Hummel concurred. Joel stated that we will stick to the task at hand, to clarify the language so the revised STR ordinance has the best potential to be enacted.

Several other sections were discussed and language changes were reviewed:

- Annual off-season rental
- Review of Neighborhood Impact
- Access and inspection requirements
- STR advertising
- Penalties and license revocation
- Penalties for violations

Joel asked Jason Renz, the code enforcement officer, how he enforces non-licensed STRs. Jason said there is an ongoing problem of how to identify and enforce unlicensed STRs. People can say, "My cousin is visiting..." for example.

Joel asked if members of the committee were satisfied with the current work in progress.

Tom Keefe said he agrees with most of what we have except 3 issues that need clarification:

1. The definition of Designated Operator.
2. How to establish maximum occupancy.
3. Illustrated examples of how violations are assessed during the booking period.

Carol stated she is pleased that there is a clearer way for residents to make reports and get heard. She said that she was able to communicate a concern this past week that Jason Renz was able to handle quickly.

Joel asked that the committee review and offer additional modifications before the next meeting.

Joel stated that once the committee has moved the revised ordinance forward, additional committee work will be pursued to improve resident education and communication and to reward exemplary STRs by considering ways to relax the 180 minimum days and one rental per week provision during the peak season, among other initiatives. "We live in a tourist destination and we need to recognize that many STRs bring value to our

community. They pay property taxes, provide jobs, and their guests patronize local restaurants, businesses, and entertainment venues.”

He stated that the next meeting of the STR Ad Hoc committee will be held on Wednesday, May 29th at City Hall at 5:00 pm.

Motion to Adjourn meeting at 6:15 pm. Motion by Emily Hummel. Seconded by Carol Pearson