

Info about Short-Term Rentals

For more information about this issue, process, updates, and to contact us with additional ideas and concerns, see the Planning Board’s website, LenoxPlanningBoard.com

What is the goal of the Short-Term Rentals subcommittee?

We are reaching out to Lenox citizens to discuss and decide how we want to regulate Short-Term Rentals – rentals under 30 days -- given the variety of issues involved. In particular, we need to decide:

- How to regulate complete houses and apartments rented with no owner on site.
- Whether to extend the time frame for our existing Seasonal Rental of Rooms bylaw.
- How Accessory Dwelling Units (guest houses) will fit in.

Why are we doing this now?

Lenox’s economy derives much of its strength from the tourism industry -- and nearly one in three Americans stayed in a Short-Term Rental in 2015.

At the same time, Lenox derives much of its vitality from year-round residents, and it’s likely that residents and visitors alike don’t want the town to lose its unique character.

We need to decide how Short-Term Rentals will fit into our long-term vision for our Town.

What is a Short-Term Rental?

“Short-Term” means renting for less than 30 days in a home, apartment, condo, etc. including:

- *Owner-occupied* -- renting a room in a house where the owner remains as host.
- *Non-owner-occupied* -- renting a whole house or apartment with no owner on site.

Rentals of more than 30 days are not considered short term. They are subject to different regulations (as if you were leasing a property long term) and are not part of this review.

What is allowed in Lenox right now?

Lenox’s current zoning bylaw (see 8.8.1) allows for:

- Owner-occupied Short-Term Rentals during the height of our tourist season.
- We do not currently permit non-owner occupied Short-Term Rentals.

Note: Hotels and B&Bs are a form of Short Term lodgings that are considered “commercial” (rather than “residential”) in use because of the number and frequency of guests they host. As such, they must comply with other, often costly state and local safety requirements, licensing and taxation.

How many Short-Term Rentals are operating in Lenox right now?

- To come

What about collecting taxes on these rentals?

That will require enabling legislation from the State. Right now, there are two bills, H3454 and S1353, that would make tax collection possible. We are told this legislation may pass this year and are monitoring the situation.

Importantly, this legislation also would likely provide additional framework for any new Lenox bylaws.

Worksheet: Short-Term Rentals in Lenox -- We Want Your Input

Our Subcommittee:

Planning Board: Pam Kueber and Deborah Rimmler

Affordable Housing: Kate McNulty Vaughan

School Committee: Molly Elliott

Finance Committee: Dave Neubert

Select Board: Ken Fowler

Think about your neighborhood specifically...
...then, about the Town more broadly.

If a large number of houses and apartments
are converted to Short-Term Rentals –
without an owner on site and/or by investors –
what could change?

Your viewpoints reflect your role as a:

- Year-round resident
- Resident who rents out rooms or home now
- Investor who rent units
- Licensed B&Bs, Hotels, Motels, Inns
- Lenox schools
- Neighbor
- Traveler to Lenox
- Local retailer
- Cultural anchor
- Other:

See
LenoxPlanningBoard.com
to contact us
or for more info

Which policy objectives do you think Lenox should focus on
as we develop guidelines around this issue?

Notes