

Approved minutes

Short Term Rentals Subcommittee

Nov. 13, 2019

10 a.m.

Superintendent's Conference Room, Lenox Town Hall

In attendance: Pam Kueber (PK), Deborah Rimmler (DR), Gwen Miller (GM)

Audience: Clarence Fanto, Berkshire Eagle, audiotaping

Documents used or reference at meeting:

- Minutes for Nov. 9
- Update of PPT
- Update of Table-talk document
- Punch list for Nov. 14
- Sign-in Sheet for Nov 14
- FRCOG presentation on STRs

Minutes:

PK had to be dialed into the meeting due to a personal issue. Open Meeting law says that a quorum of the committee must be in the room to allow this, but since our session is tomorrow PK, acting as Chair, okayed an exception.

The team reviewed GM's updates to the PPT. There were a number of changes that were minor – misspellings or simplifying messages.

Others came with new info or more discussion:

- DR said that she had talked to both state House and Senate committees re status of bills. Both are in committee. Legislature adjourns for the year around Nov. 15. Any action on these bills will not happen until Jan. Right now there are two bills on just taxation; and one bill that regulatory + taxation.
- PK asked if page 4 bullets, 'what you'll tell us' were all covered in the table monitor instructions. DR to tweak.
- PK had a few questions in particular about (1) how to discuss Building Code and Department of Health slides. and (2) Examples of other municipalities slides. GM will take out wordy text and use images that we talk over instead. We do not yet have an update from the Building Inspector on exactly how 9th edition of the Building Code changes/updates 8th edition. GM mentioned perhaps showing the FRCOG page on Building Code, but their decision tree is complicated so we decided against that. Gwen advised to say that 9th edition, which just came out three weeks ago, will treat STRs more like a commercial B&B or hotel and that each locality has inspectors that interpret and enforce the Building Code. Re Board of Health/Tri-Town Health, we will convey similar language about interpreting and inspecting also including that the state issued guidance on BOH issues in 2014. Another point that could be made is that none of these inspections are taking place right now because no hosts are requesting permits right now.

- There was discussion about the Other Community Examples. Cambridge looks good and PK understands the details. Salem has a more complex set of policy solutions and GM will tweak that PPT text to say something along the lines that (1) policies are decided by zone– e.g. proposed STRs in traditional low-density residential have a higher threshold of regulation than do busier mixed-use commercial areas; and (2) in certain zones and situations, homeowners can only rent their entire house 95 days each year – that is, they must be present in the home at least 270 days per year.
- PK will consult HPP on number of houses overall in Lenox in case that comes up. She mentioned she met with BOSelectman Dave Roche on Thursday to brief him on STRs. He had asked that question. She said it was a good meeting, with the goal to make sure he had solid info about STRs in case he was asked by citizens and also to let him get thinking about his views. He was supportive of the Planning Board coming in front of the Select Board after the PB had studied resident input and the survey results, to discuss the results and begin discuss possible policy options.
- In PPT, We added “do nothing” as a possible policy option.
- GM suggested we not go past 1.5 hours in each session in order to give presenters and table monitors a chance to breathe. We agreed that table monitors need be couched to take good notes. We discussed how, during the wrap up, to encourage and enable attendees to communicate further with us and give us their opinions.

In terms of the punch list:

- DR to get name tags and refreshments
- GM has everything arranged at Town Hall
- DR and PK will arrive at 2 to help set up
- PK will email all table monitors and ask them to come 20 minutes early for instructions.
- DR and GM stayed to make copies of the three pages

Survey:

- We looked at survey one last time. No video because PK cannot get her tape recorder to work. Take out slides – confusing. Otherwise looks good to go.
- Will launch it at 3 p.m. Nov. 14 – when the Roundtables start.
- PK will write something up for Town website and Lenox Planning Board website.

Next meetings:

- Community Roundtable Discussions Nov. 14
- Monday, Nov. 20, 10 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Pam Kueber

11/13/2017