

*Approved at Feb 2 meeting*

**Short-Term Rentals Subcommittee**

Jan 5, 2018, 1:30 p.m.

Superintendent's Conference Room

Subcommittee members attending: Pam Kueber, Deb Rimmmler, Dave Neubert,

Others attending: Kelly Brown (by phone); Clarence Fanto, Berkshire Eagle (recording)

Documents used at meeting:

- Draft of minutes for Dec. 11, 2017
- Email sent to Nov. 14 participants
- STR info web page created, including timeline
- Correspondence from James Harwood and Scott Shortt
- Punch list, 11-27 minutes, GMiller note – all related on to-do items for Jan. 20 sessions

– Pam updated the group on the Dec. 13 presentation to the Board of Selectmen to brief them on our activities and timeline. She noted that she had created the webpage and timeline in advance of the meeting; Gwen had weighed in on it and suggested we also add minutes the page. The Select Board was interested in and appreciative of the work we had done so far. There were a few questions, including about the Host Compliance charts; Pam followed up with clearer information. Channing Gibson asked that we upgrade our web page plan to remove the advertising, which Pam did the next day. Pam told the group that she told the BOS that we would keep them informed of progress, likely returning if and when we had policy proposals to share. The meeting was videotaped and played on CTSB.

– Deb updated on the Dec. 21 meeting to brief State Rep. Pignatelli on our activities. He also seemed appreciative and thought that the legislature would be likely take action in the first quarter of 2018. He had attended the June 5 forum held by the state in Lenox and said it was his impression that Lenox townspeople were not interested in any substantial regulation of short-term rentals. Pam noted that she had not been able to attend that meeting but had heard that at that meeting it had no been clear to everyone what a short-term rental was, versus a rental of 31 days or more. The group agreed it was important to keep Rep. Pignatelli informed of our activities. His office has been very helpful in helping us keep track of regulatory plans. Mr. Brown said that he had been in touch with some state legislators and that he had been told that the state will cover more than than taxation, it will also cover regulation. No one knows for sure

– The group moved to discussing plans for the Jan. 20 Community Discussion. We reviewed the punch list and other to-do items and assigned as appropriate.

Mr. Brown said that he expected 10 to 15 people to come via his outreach efforts.

Gwen is also trying to get addresses –and will try to reach out

Mr. Brown said he wanted to give us a heads up on three points he wanted to cover at Jan. 20. The subcommittee explained the format of the Community Discussions.

Mr. Brown mentioned innkeepers and 1Berkshires. The group clarified that it had never been in contact with 1Berkshires on this issue and could not even remember if they had seen or shared anything from them.

Mr. Brown said STRs are homes at vastly different prices and can accommodate people with kids, dogs, babies – a house is a place to go with family and not comparable to a B&B or hotel. Different animal different market. If made restrictive in Lenox, he said, visitors will to ¾ mile to Pittsfield or Lee. Dave agreed that renting a house is a different experience than renting at a hotel.

Mr. Brown said it affects the merchant market because airbnbs bring more tourists to Lenox.

Mr. Brown said that he had talked to several types of hosts:

- People who don't need to be in Lenox in summer – they are here for school year, spend summer on the cape;
- Types who have homes that they use during the winter months, are retired in Lenox, rent their homes out for a few months in the summer to help allay costs;
- Third type – in between -- Lenox is our home, but we do have this building (and ADU) used for STRs. He mentioned that when he and his husband bought their house, Scott Pignatelli was renting and living in the ADU. He said that people he knew, knew he had a house in the Berkshires and wanted to rent for a week in the summer.

Mr. Brown also questioned whether the economics work for big house.

It was clarified that there was no registration required for the Jan. 20 Community Discussions.

Mr. Brown said his husband Ted Silverman had looked at the survey and said some of the questions in survey are biased; he will give us feedback and we can take this into consideration.

The group looked at the correspondence. The email from Jim Harwood suggested, among other things, that the bubbles were biased. The group talked about whether and how to neutralize the language on bubbles and Pam agreed to work on it.

Deb is reworking the Table Monitor form to simplify it a bit.

Pam to rework punch list and begin working on publicity.

Pam and Deb approved the minutes for Dec. 11, 2017

Respectfully submitted,

Pam Kueber