

Approved March. 5, 2018
Minutes
Short Term Rentals Subcommittee
Feb. 2, 2018 meeting
1:30 pm
Superintendent's Conference Room

Attending from Subcommittee: Pam Kueber, Deborah Rimmler
Attending from Advisory Group: Ken Fowler – arrived late
In audience: Angela Lomanto; Joel Williams, Berkshire Recording (recording)

Documents used or references at meeting:

- Talking points taken from a presentation made by Jack North, owner of Mayhurst B&B in Virginia, to PAII; provided by Angela Lomanto.
- Draft meeting minutes for Jan. 15 and 12
- STR timeline in right-hand side of website page

Minutes:

- Angela Lomanto, owner of the Brook Farm Inn, was at the meeting, and was asked if she wanted to comment. Shortly before the meeting she had emailed talking points taken from a presentation by Jack North, owner of Mayhurst B&B in Virginia. [Note the subcommittee had received this PPT in its entirety before]. She went over them and in summary made four additional points: (1) She believes that the Town has lost rooms tax revenues from short-term rentals because they are cannibalizing sales from inns, B&Bs and hotels; (2) Professional lodging establishments pay a higher property tax rate than residences; (3) Contrary to what some proponents of short-term rentals have said, STR properties can write off every expense they incur no matter how many days they rent; (4) Inns and B&Bs do a better job of promoting Lenox to people who might be interested in moving here full time – she named one current Lenox homeowner, who now is active in Town, who bought here after staying at the Brookfarm Inn. Ms. Lomanto also said that in both December and January, occupancy rates had been way off a region. During the talking points, the issue of inspections came up. Lomanto pointed out that if visitors have a bad experience [in an uninspected STR unit] they may never want to come to Lenox again. In addition, whether it's a 15-room inn or a 3-bedroom house “a fire's a fire.” Deb pointed out that few dispute inspections and that requirements seem to depend on classifications. Lomanto said, “You have to determine if you want to support existing businesses or if you want to support them – unlicensed illegal operations.” Deb said we want to find objective things that are fair.
- Pam and Deb discussed whether it was possible to determine a method – to set up some sort of rubric -- to assess all the input from the Community Discussions, the online survey, and other citizen correspondence received since the beginning of

this project. They decided there was not a specific method to plan for. Pam will work with Gwen to pull all the materials together in one package to provide to the subcommittee and the advisory group to read, review and think about in advance of the next meeting, which would be to review the material together to decide whether policy changes were called for and if so, what options might include.

- When Ken arrived, he asked if the subcommittee would be moving forward with any proposed regulations. Pam said that as go through all the community inputs we will discuss whether policy changes are called for and if so, what they might be. Ken noted that as things are, we are losing rooms tax revenues because they are not being collected from Short Term Rentals; he said there are many ways for people to come here and that it's important for us to create a middle ground.
- The next meeting will be Friday, Feb. 26 at 10 a.m.
- Pam and Deb approved the meeting minutes for Jan. 5 and Jan. 12.

Respectfully submitted,
Pam Kueber