

Town of Wolfeboro  
Planning Board  
Short Term Rental Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
February 22, 2021  
Virtual meeting

Members present: Peter Cooke, Cindy Melanson, Geordy Hutchinson, Paul O'Brien, Susan Replier, John Thurston, Kathy Barnard, Planning and Development Director Tavis Austin, several members of the public.

The virtual meeting was called to order at 10:00 AM. There was a roll call vote of the committee members. All of the committee members were present and, in a room, alone.

The 2/24/2020 meeting minutes were reviewed. A motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes as presented. By a roll call vote all members voted in favor of the motion except for Paul who abstained.

Kathy asked the Committee if they felt short-term should be defined. There was a suggestion that less than 30 days could be considered. It was brought to the attention of the committee that RSA 78-A (Tax on Meals and Rooms) defines short-term rental (78-A:3) as a rental of one or more rooms in a residential unit for occupancy for tourist or transient use for less than 185 consecutive days. All rental properties are required to register with NHDRA (NH Department of Revenue Administration).

A member of the public stated that Inns, Bed and Breakfast establishments and other similar business are heavily taxed and need to follow specific regulations and codes, while short term rentals do not seem to be regulated in a similar manner. This puts an unfair burden on business owners. Another member of the public described the unfair burden that exists in some residential neighborhoods due to over use of (too many tenants, illegally parked vehicles, over burdened septic systems, noise concerns) some residential properties used as short-term rentals.

It was mentioned that North Conway has a proposed warrant article that would regulate short term rentals. They would be allowed in commercial zones.

Tavis mentioned that the Town can adopt regulations that are more restrictive than the State.

Some of the benefits of short-term rentals are as follows: it is a potential source of income for property owners; the Town has a long history of renting private properties; rental properties bring a larger pool of visitors to Town and this is a benefit to the business community; the Town of Wolfeboro is "tourist driven" and this is very important to the business community.

Some of the challenges are as follows: absentee landlords (investors) do not adequately control the use of their properties; transient use of residential properties affects the “character” of residential neighborhoods; there is a loss of long-term rental housing (this is a problem since employers have reported their employees can not find affordable housing); Town utilities are over-burdened; negative impact to septic systems due to over-crowding of some residential properties; weekend “party houses” are a problem in some residential areas; parking problems in some residential areas; lack of quiet enjoyment of properties in some neighborhoods; short-term rentals are a commercial use in a residential area.

It was mentioned there are some enforceable issues (noise and other safety issues) by the police. The committee needs more information about the specific complaints received by the Police and how the complaints are addressed.

It was mentioned that enforcement of codes and regulations is not consistent and this is not fair to businesses who are following the rules.

A possible solution was mentioned. A local license could be required for all properties used as short-term rentals. It was clarified that the only issue the committee is reviewing is the use of properties as short-term rentals (for income); not the use of residential properties for extended family/ personal uses. Consideration needs to be given to how any regulation of short-term rentals would be enforced.

The committee decide to invite the Police, Fire and Code officer to the next meeting. The Police will be asked to report on the specific number of complaints received about short-term rentals and how the issues are resolved. The Fire Department and Code officer will be asked to discuss Fire and Life Safety issues as they relate to short-term rentals with the committee.

The next meeting will be scheduled once a convenient meeting date is established with Police, Fire and Codes.

Meeting adjourned at 11:09 AM.

Submitted by  
Kathy Barnard