

Town of Wolfboro
Short Term Rental Subcommittee
Planning Board
Meeting Minutes
October 18, 2021

Present: Geordy Hutchinson, John Thurston, Cindy Melanson, Peter Cooke, Tavis Austin (Town Planner), Kathy Barnard

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 AM.

The minutes of September 20, 2021 were reviewed. A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes. All present voted in favor of approving the minutes with one abstention.

John Thurston then reported that we had information from Madison. Madison is looking at the use of accessory building as the use for short-term rentals. Thus far, it is only being discussed. This then led to a discussion about why Wolfboro does not allow detached accessory buildings as dwellings. Kathy and John said this has been in place for a long time and no one has asked to change it. Further, in many times it cuts down on the coverage on a lot. If, in the future, there is an interest, then the Planning Board will consider the issue.

The Committee then considered the Purpose statement for the committee.

Differentiate between short-term and long-term rental – This was discussed by the committee and it was determined that a maximum of 31 days seemed to make sense. The majority of the committee agreed with this statement, with one member not in favor.

Determine the impact short-term rentals may have on Town Government, the community and property owner. It was agreed that it didn't seem to be a problem based on the meeting with Town officials. The community seem to thrive over the summer with many tourists. Meetings with property owners were split. There was testimony about the disruption in residential neighborhood by some short-term rentals. Others mentioned they rented their properties in the summer to help pay the taxes.

Determine if this leads to commercialism of residential neighborhood. The committee agreed that the memo from our attorney indicating that residential property owners have a right to rental their residential property. There was a member that did not agree with this statement and felt it did lead to commercialism of the neighborhood.

Has the integrity of the zoning ordinance been upheld?

Bed and Breakfast are allowed in many residential zones with a special exception.

Boarding Houses are not allowed.

Inns and motels are allowed in commercial zones and some preexisted the ordinance requirement.

Dormitories are allowed in the VR.

It seems that the regulations are in place and should be followed.

It was mentioned that all complaints are investigated and there are many obstacles in doing this.

The issue of the need for people to follow the fire code is important and does not seem to be in place.

It was stated that due to the split in the committee it was difficult to make progress.

Tavis mentioned that he had to talk to the attorney who said this is a land use issue and it is difficult to enforce. The attorney also mentioned that if someone has done this in the past no enforcement can be taken against the property owner. It was also mentioned that grandfathering is difficult to prove. There is no sunset provision for this issue.

Tavis also mentioned that the police are using their enforcement techniques in the best interest of the Town,

The committee all agree that Wolfeboro has a housing issue. This is an issue that requires some attention by Town officials.

Further it was agreed that the committee needs to disbanding until we have a better idea of how some of the approaches taken by other communities are working for them.

Therefore, the committee has disbanded for up to a year.

Submitted by Kathy Barnard