
Planning And Zoning Commission - Contact Form : 4-30-2023 02:03:49 pm

Therese Folsom <theresefolsom@yahoo.com>

Mon, May 1, 2023 at 8:35 PM

To: Patrick Zenner <patrick.zenner@como.gov>

RE: Comments regarding Short-Term Rental Survey Response under New Business at May 4, 2023 Work Session

Planning and Zoning Commission:

After viewing the many documents and time put into this issue, it seems to me that a lot of work is being done to benefit those who have money to invest in additional property and those privileged enough to be able to afford to travel but want to find the least expensive places to stay.

How much time is given to finding housing for the homeless people of our community? How much time and effort do they get from our city deciding where temporary housing or even just basic facilities are available?

While available housing for the less prosperous is being purchased by people who already have a home for Short term rentals, especially in the First Ward, there are many community residents who can't find affordable housing. After reading just a small amount of data collected about the effects of Short Term Rentals on raising rents and affordable home sales, the results are hard to ignore. Short Term Rentals benefit the more affluent and leave the less fortunate with fewer home choices. Some of those less fortunate end up homeless and are then evicted from the only place they can find shelter.

Why can't we just eliminate Short Term Rentals, which I understand are illegal in residential areas in the first place, and start spending more time and effort on how to help the people who live in Columbia and can't find a place to live???

Maybe this isn't the job of the P&Z Commission but whose responsibility is it? Some department in our City needs to start addressing this critical issue of not having affordable housing for people who need it. It seems like it could start here and make more affordable housing available by eliminating Short Term Rentals in our residential areas.

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Short term rental public comment

Pat Fowler <patfowler4firstward@gmail.com>
To: Sharon Geuea Jones <sharon.geuea.jones@gmail.com>
Cc: tim.teddy@como.gov, Patrick.Zenner@como.gov

Thu, May 4, 2023 at 9:17 AM

Dear Planning & Zoning Commissioners,

My apologies for the length of this email, I promise you it is a quick read.

I appreciate your willingness to take public comments and put into their context the 242 pages of comments the staff has provided as part of their staff report. I admire how well organized the property owners, the operators, our grandparents with Columbia-based adult children and grandchildren, have been in bringing their preferences to your attention. Neighbors, with our day-to-day pressures, often do not have the same resources to organize.

To bolster your courage to hold the line on the ordinance you have already drafted (after an exceptional amount of data scraping and hard work) may I reinforce the following information:

- a. The city has little if any staff time to enforce any STR ordinance and the registration fees gathered will not fund a full-time person(s) to inspect and or monitor their compliance; we talked a lot about this during the last round, when violations are apparent after hours and on the weekends and there is no practical remedy for neighbors except calling law enforcement, an organization already under stress;
- b. We, you, the city staff, our community partners, have not made a specific finding, either at the P&Z level or at City Council level, or at the not for profit and emergency shelter level, that we have sufficient housing for our residents who need it, at the price point they can afford. I encourage you to make a single phone call to Love Columbia (Jane Williams) or the Boone County Coalition Against Homelessness (Jessica Macy) or Como Mobile Aid Collective (Catherine Armbrust), and they can summarize in 3 minutes the difficulties they are experiencing in providing shelter to so many, to feeding so many, to comforting so many with nowhere to go except to walk from place to place all day and most of the night. Funding for hotel stays has been cut by a third and for the reduced number of families they are able to serve, will run out before we meet the halfway mark of June 30th. The number of individuals holding housing choice voucher that will expire in 60, 90 days because they cannot find a landlord willing to rent to them has been growing, and then they fall off the list only to have to take additional steps to get back on it. (The availability of vouchers but no housing to match with them feeds the misleading narrative that resources are available and people will not put forth the effort to access them. Hogwash, resources are theoretically available if your life allows you to stand still and wait, and stand still and apply, and stand still and be turned down for the theoretically available-sometime-in-the-future-possibilities. Ask yourselves how many times you would be a willing to stand still and wait, and get in line and wait, and stand still and wait, only to be turned down again and again, before you would determine that your limited bandwidth would be better spent staying alive in the company of others who can comfort you.)
- c. The current, carefully drafted, STR proposal goes a long way to enabling a modest progression towards supporting an industry that has both benefits and perils to our community.
- d. Our current city attorney and community development director take the position, as do the attorneys representing our property owners, that if you give permission for a wider establishment of STRs and then later cut back that permission once the perils and consequences are measurable here (they are already measurable in other cities across the country) cutting back that permission will be considered a TAKING, and as such the property owner is entitled to damages which the city will most

likely not want to pay. So, we already know what will happen, the practical effect is the city will not scale it back. Not then, not in the future.

e. The most prudent way forward is to move incrementally as you have drafted language already, gather real data as we go, use the fees to fund a person to regulate inspect and monitor, a person who works evenings and weekends when the STRs are in use, and continue to revisit the specific availability of housing for the residents who need it, at a price point they can afford.

f. Wait, what about the argument that allowing a house to be purchased by an investor, to renovate it, and then to recoup their investment with vacation like rates, has little to do with our local housing shortage? For years we have pretended our actions can stay in distinct lanes and have no impact on each other. Hogwash again, taking a house out of circulation for the people who need it here, and then another and then another, **encourages other investors to join in this emerging industry**, and then we lose yet another home and then another. I too am delighted that property owners are fixing up their properties. Those interior finishes, many I see on Instagram, are wonderful yet who is our land use policy intended to serve? Our out-of-town guests who travel to Columbia for special events? Or our year-round residents who need a place to get out of the elements, with a functioning kitchen, bathroom plumbing, a sufficient sewer lateral, and a lead-free pipe to carry drinking and bathing water into the home? That's the companion to land use planning that matters for our families.

We can absorb a certain number of short-term rentals and still help our struggling families find and keep stable housing. Your current draft does that beautifully with sensible controls. If a property owner took the risk to expand into an unregulated area of our land use planning after our broadcasting all kinds of notice that regulation was coming, they did so at their own investor risk. We have a shortage of housing for people who can afford a \$350K house too, they will have plenty of owner-occupied buyers for their renovated properties. What we need to slow, through appropriate land use planning, is the removal of additional properties from our inventory of available housing.

Please hold steady and do not make changes to the ordinance you have already drafted.

And finally, I was and remain in awe of the carefulness with which the proposed ordinance was drafted. When Sarah, Sharon and Valerie presented to the pre-council meeting of City Council on December 19th, I felt this sense of connectedness and appreciation that we were collectively moving in the best direction for our families who live here year-round. I have each of you on P&Z to thank for that.

I will quote my friend Barbara Jefferson as I end.
God Bless.

Pat Fowler
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606 N 6th Street
NCCNA member and volunteer

STR Ordinance

Maria Oropallo <maria.oropallo@gmail.com>

Thu, May 4, 2023 at 11:13 AM

To: Sharon Geuea Jones <sharon.geuea.jones@gmail.com>, Timothy Teddy <TTTEDDY@gocolumbiamo.com>, Patrick Zenner <Patrick.Zenner@como.gov>

Dear Chairperson Jones, Mr. Teddy and Mr. Zenner,

Can this email be shared with Planning & Zoning Commissioners?

I do plan to attend tonight's worksession. But I fear my elevator speech would barely touch the urgency I see with loosening the current draft ordinance. Here I will be as brief as I can be.

The current draft ordinance resulted from data analysis, review of comparable cities' ordinances, and the understanding of how STRs affect the local economy. To begin loosening requirements before the City has experienced its effects, is backwards-policy-making.

You can't put the genie back into the bottle. And you already have proof of that since the stay of enforcement has normalized some questionable STR practices.

Global:

The economy, in the wake of our recent pandemic has created two distinct paths to recovery. One is to play catch-up. The other is to get creative. Both paths have raised the stakes for our neighborhoods and local economy.

A) A recent investor's conference has named Missouri as a state to invest in. The goal, for one foreign based investment group, is to buy 800 homes a month. Highest value use is STRs. I don't imagine St. Roberts, as cute as it is, to become a tourist draw. So the question, as absurd as it sounds, is Columbia prepared to give up 800 housing units in favor STRs?

B) The plan, well advertized, includes lessons in how to circumvent local zoning laws. A quick Google search will yield quite a few written plans. All suggestions are legal: create multiple LLCs, hire local estate agents, refer to your paying guests as 'clients,' refer to yourself as a corporate entity providing housing for your 'company,' and finally, don't advertise locally.

Local:

BeHeard is still too young and new for most of our friends and neighbors to utilize effectively. The preponderance of comments against the current draft are highly organized, financially motivated. Inherently there is nothing wrong with that. But are staff and Commissioners confident that the majority of residents understand the unintended consequences of loosening the requirements at this early stage? Before we've had a chance to see it played out?

The STR model is extraordinarily successful. Many of us participate in that business as hosts, and/or paying guests. P&Z, staff, and elected officials can't stop the trend. Council, Neighborhood Associations, your neighbors are struggling to understand the long-term effects on our housing and neighborhoods of a practice many of us indulge in when we travel.

As more of our housing prices grows out of reach for our median income residents, and our City's leaning into tourism as a prime economic driver, the impact will hurt more than it helps.

Final:

The reality is full-time property businesses are way ahead of us. They are on the creative path. We are on the catch-up path.

Respectfully,

Maria Oropallo

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573-639-9696 text or call