
Fwd: STR Ordinance Citizen Feedback

Sheela Amin <Sheela.Amin@como.gov>

Tue, Dec 20, 2022 at 1:58 PM

To: Timothy Teddy <Timothy.Teddy@como.gov>, "Zenner, Patrick" <Patrick.Zenner@como.gov>

Cc: De'Carlton Seewood <decarlon.seewood@como.gov>, Mike Griggs <Mike.Griggs@como.gov>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Matt Pitzer** <ward5@como.gov>

Date: Tue, Dec 20, 2022 at 1:47 PM

Subject: Fwd: STR Ordinance Citizen Feedback

To: Sheela Amin <sheela.amin@como.gov>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Elizabeth Q. Ball** <Elizabeth.Ball@homevestors.com>

Date: Sun, Dec 18, 2022 at 3:50 PM

Subject: STR Ordinance Citizen Feedback

To: Ward5@CoMo.gov <Ward5@como.gov>

Dear Mr. Pitzer,

I am writing as a property owner in Ward 5 and as an individual who operates both long (LRT) and short-term rentals (SRT) in 4 of the 5 other Wards. I will be in attendance at tomorrow's meeting, but wanted to share a few of opposing thoughts on the proposed regulations on STRs. As a member of the Columbia Board of Realtors and a small group of STR operators, I echo that I am not opposed to regulations, but that the proposed regulations will likely have unintended implications:

1. While STR owners are not opposed to some type of regulation, the current regulations seem unenforceable without significant financial backing to create infrastructure which includes the staff/resources for compliance monitoring and enforcement. Failure to establish this in other "banning" municipalities led to low compliance and inability to enforce. Simple, straightforward regulations that meet the heart of the issue is valuable (similar to occupancy permits for rental compliance).
2. There are many platforms where properties can be and are listed, these do not publicly state number of days a property is occupied. Therefore, I do not see how regulation of days in variety of tiers will be enforceable. With the many platforms, privacy of owner/user information, and unlikelihood that any of those platforms will legally be required to cooperate and provide information, I question how this information will be able to be gathered for regulation.
3. As someone who rents to tenants in more affordable areas of the city (through choice-vouchers, rent assistant programs, and overall lower rent), having STRs allow me to continue to provide affordable rental properties without the need to increase rent as assessments of property, cost of maintenance/repairs, and holding costs (interest rates/ insurance/utilities) all continue to rise. Eliminating the ability to continue to operate in this manner will have a negative effect of our ability to offer lower rent in for long-term rental properties. I am assured that I am not alone and that this will lead to more evictions and the need to increase rent to current market demand (effectively decreasing affordability).

As a final side note -- as I purchased and renovated my first property for STR use, I had several neighbors approach with concerns about our intentions with the property (they absolutely did not want a long-term tenant). However, once they became aware of the STR intention, they were elated that someone would be keeping a constant eye on the property and caring for the external and internal maintenance.

I hope you will take my thoughts into consideration as you discuss the proposal and look at it from all angles. I sincerely hope this does not turn into another trash debacle, where we implement a change in policy only to learn a year or two down the road that associated cost significantly outweighed any intended benefit.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Ball

--

Thank you.

Matt Pitzer
Ward 5 Council Member
Columbia, MO

Dec 19th, 2022

Attn: Mayor of City of Columbia and City Council Members

City of Columbia Missouri

PO Box 6015

Columbia, MO 65202-6015

Re: Amendments to the UDC for Short-Term Rentals

Dear Mayor and Members of the City Council,

I am writing this letter in response to the UDC on regulating Short Term Rentals in Columbia, Missouri. I am a recent graduate from The University of Missouri in Columbia, and I had established myself in the STR market within the City of Columbia soon after. I manage and operate three vacation properties as my own business, and additionally manage around a hundred long term rentals - separate from my business. From this, I have been able to conclude a few important points to note about real estate and vacation rentals in the City of Columbia.

I must preface that what you are proposing with STR's in the City of Columbia would entirely eradicate my business. I am a very young and bright individual who understands the needed accommodations in this city, and you clearly do not see the importance of availability with STR's in this city. With that, I dove into the opportunity of helping travelers with their temporary housing.

Over the past year, directly involving myself in this market and establishing my career, I have concluded that vacation rentals are needed here and the restrictions you are proposing would wipe out most of the temporary housing provided by short term rentals.

First, we must examine the reasonings for traveling to or through the City of Columbia and why travelers choose short term rentals (Airbnb, Vrbo, etc) over hotels. One important reason that we cannot disregard is traveling nurses. What differentiates the standard hotel experience from the vacation rental experience from their perspective is purely a closeness in proximity to their destination, and a less expensive option for a more personable experience. Testimonials from previous traveling nurses who have booked with me can attest for preferring a vacation rental over a hotel or other service.

Christian, a traveling nurse from Arizona says, *"My main reason for booking through Airbnb versus a hotel is having access to a kitchen and a full-size refrigerator. It usually ends up being the same price or a few dollars cheaper for more space and accommodations"*.

Tess, a recent graduate in need of temporary housing says, *"Oh! I love Airbnb's because are more affordable and I have had better experiences as opposed to hotels"*.

Roger, a young male from Springfield who travels for work says, *"Hotels are substantially more expensive than Airbnb's in this location. I hardly ever choose hotels"*.

Second, we must look out how these proposed changes will directly affect these individuals in this city. This year, The University of Missouri hired over 400 nurses with stipends for housing. If this number is translated to 2023, these individuals would be left without housing (or very limited housing). You would be decreasing the jobs provided by The University Hospital as less nurses will be hired due to lack of housing. Do you really want to do that for this city?

Lastly, we must evaluate the actual importance on putting regulations on STR's. I believe it is valid to instill regulations, but the ones proposed will eradicate around 75% of all the STR's in the City of Columbia. Restricting STR's in R-1, R-2, R-MF zoning to 30- or 120-day rental caps is just ridiculous and unnecessary. STR's should be treated like long term rentals. Why are you suggesting putting such a strict cap on short term rentals when they realistically consume a fraction of the total rentals in Columbia? There are about 377 active STR's in this city. The restrictions you are proposing would make STR's impossible to achieve profitability due to rental time caps, type of property, ownership, zoning regulations and permits. I would have to forfeit all my accomplishments with short term rentals in this city, including many others like me. *Taxing us for lodging is reasonable; putting caps on zoning, longevity of rentals, ownership, and permits is not.* We are not the threat.

Happy Holidays,

Rachael Ferguson

Ferguson Hosting LLC

314-570-4575

rachaelferguson24@gmail.com

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rachael Ferguson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Bruce and Debbie Polansky
400 Clinkscales Road
Columbia, MO 65203
brucepolansky@msn.com
703-929-1214**

December 18, 2022

Mayor and Members of City Council
City of Columbia
PO Box 6015
Columbia, MO 65202

VIA: EMAIL

Re: Short-Term Rentals

Dear Mayor and Members of City Council:

Our son and his family live in the City of Columbia. With the arrival of our first grandson, we wanted to spend more time in Columbia. However, financially there was no way that we could afford to spend the additional time visiting Columbia, as we would have to stay in hotels. In February of 2022, we purchased a rundown vacant house across from West Middle School. We invested a significant (to us) amount of money and time renovating the property turning it from a neighborhood blight into one of the nicer homes on the block.

We live in North Carolina and when we come for a visit, we stay for three or four weeks at a time. The short-term rental of this home allows us to be able to afford the home. It also keeps the home occupied when we are not in town. We are constantly keeping the home looking its best as to attract potential STR's, which is a major upside to the neighborhood and community.

When we purchased the house, most houses were on the market for a period of only hours before multiple bids were received by the seller. Our house on Clinkscales languished on the market for over a month. There were deals that fell through after a home inspection was performed. In other words, this was not a desirable house to an investor or an affordable house to someone with limited income due to the repairs that were needed to get the house in good shape.

Since we don't live in Columbia full time, we pay local people to manage the property, clean the house, and maintain the yard. In addition, we pay for repairs, pest control, and other services, all provided by locals. Please be aware that not all short-term rentals are owned by commercial investors.

We agree that there should be regulations to make sure that short-term rentals are safe and give the city the ability to collect lodging taxes. There should be minimum standards to ensure this without infringing on property owner's rights. The proposed restrictions, specifically the tier system, number of days, and separate approval process are overly restrictive and infringe on property owner's rights.

Sincerely,

Bruce and Deborah Polansky

Bruce and Deborah Polansky
City of Columbia Homeowners