

Short-term rental town hall forum – Sept. 17  
Round-up of public comments

- **Occupancy cap.** Several individuals said the revised occupancy limits in the ordinance are not strong enough and wanted the restoration of a maximum number. These individuals talked of large homes being rented to a dozen to two dozen people and thus creating an enticing environment for parties whether a wedding event or a fraternity on spring break. They said the number of people create additional noise, which is particularly intrusive when outdoors late at night. With the current cap, a 10-bedroom house could have 20 people. They noted that if the tenants then invited others over for a day or night at the pool, the total could increase exponentially. On the other side, one person involved in vacation rentals questioned how occupancy would be defined. She questioned the fairness of having a small baby count toward an occupancy cap.
- **Enforcement.** Several residents said strong and quick enforcement by the city would be key to whether the ordinance works. Some said the Police Department is slow to respond to complaints regarding rentals. Among the comments were: There should be 24/7 city staff devoted to enforcement, the three-strikes provision should be strengthened and there should be a provision to prevent someone from switching ownership between corporate entities in order to avoid suspension/revocation issues. One person said there seemed to be a conflict in the ordinance regarding whether each day constitutes a separate violation. One questioned how noise complaints would be handled in that they said the noise ordinance talks of a warning on the first occasion and felt that instead every proven instance should result in a ticket.
- **Fees.** Several individuals involved in short-term rentals complained the \$750 fee was too high and should be reconsidered. One called it a money-grab, while another complained it would be on top of fees already paid to the state and county. Another comment was that the fee should be set on the size of property.
- **24/7 contact.** Several people spoke about the 24/7 contact requirement. Some in the industry said it was too burdensome, particularly for an individual running their own property rather than using a management company. Residents who mentioned the 24/7 contact, though, thought it was essential that they have someone to call. One manager said he supported the 24/7 contact as a way to ensure there are no problems. One person in the industry complained that the ordinance requires the 24/7 contact to live within 25 miles of the rental and suggested the standard be based on the number of minutes away the person is. One person in the industry said the requirement that the contact respond within an hour was too burdensome of a timeframe. Another said people with complaints should call the police and that a 24/7 contact is unnecessary.
- **Sexual-predator/offender restrictions:** Two residents impacted by short-term rentals wanted the ordinance strengthened in this regard. The ordinance requires the property owner as part of their license to follow current code restrictions that state sex offenders/predators cannot reside within certain distances of parks, schools, etc. However, the two residents were concerned how the city would ensure this requirement is met. On the other hand, some individuals involved in short-term rental business said the mandate was onerous and placed a significant burden on the landlord or manager if it meant that they must conduct background checks on all renters. One questioned how they would undertake conducting such background checks of international guests.
- **City communications.** Several residents said the city needed to establish a special hotline number to take complaints about short-term rentals. One resident said the city should post the collected vacation rental information on the web site and provide it to

HOAs so residents would have access to the 24/7 contact information and know which homes in their neighborhood are rented.

- **Implementation.** A couple people on both sides worried about implementation by November effective date of the ordinance. They noted that less than two months remain and questioned how the city would license hundreds of property in a very short period. They also questioned if property owners must meet requirements that could require major structural changes immediately such as the pool and life-safety requirements. One person involved in the vacation rental business said the effective date is immediately before the Boat Show and said many homes are rented to attendees. She said the city should delay implementation until after the Boat Show. Otherwise, she said there could be problems as the city and industry would be adapting to the new regulations at that moment.
- **Definition of transient:** One person in the short-term rental business disliked the two-pronged definition of a short-term rental. They were somewhat OK with the first definition: renting more than three times in a calendar year for periods of less than 30 days. However, he was concerned about the second definition: a place advertised or held out to the public as a place regularly rented to transient occupants. He said this is far more sweeping than the first definition and is too vague.
- **Pool/life-safety/signage requirements.** A couple people in the short-term rental business said they believed the rules on pools, life-safety equipment and signage went too far. Comments were that there could be less expensive options to interconnected, hard-wired smoke and CO detection and notification system and that posting evacuation maps in each bedroom was unnecessary.
- **Additional registration requirements.** One resident suggested the city require landlords to register each tenant with the city, saying Boca Raton is looking at this requirement.
- **No ordinance.** One individual involved in the short-term rental industry wanted the law scrapped in favor of the city enforcing current ordinances regarding noise, garbage and parking uniformly. She said the law would be too difficult for many to follow.
- **Homesteading.** One person in the short-term rental business said any rental that is attached to a homesteaded property should be exempt from the ordinance as the owner is living right there. However, two residents sought assurance that there would be close cooperation with the Property Appraiser's Office over uncovering homestead fraud.
- **Multi-family properties.** One resident, who is a tenant in an apartment complex, wanted the law broadened to encompass apartment complexes. She said her landlord rents some apartments as vacation rentals and that she has the same problems as neighbors in single-family areas.
- **Annual inspection.** One person involved in the rental business said the annual inspection requirement was extreme.
- **ADA.** One resident said vacation rentals should be subject to handicapped-accessibility requirements.