

From: Christina Nigrelli <cnigrelli@me.com>
Sent: Monday, January 15, 2024 6:54 PM
To: CityClerk <CityClerk@longbeach.gov>
Subject: Short Term Rentals - public comment

-EXTERNAL-

Dear Council,

I'll begin with my recommendations and then share a summary of what I have tried to communicate to the entire council since June 2023.

Recommendations:

- Require all Short Term Rentals be hosted. Non-hosted STRs are the problem.
- Provide the necessary infrastructure that provides oversight and management of all STRs.
- Collect data on STR activity. (e.g. tracking of all complaints regardless of the level of the complaint)
- Enact a policy that revokes STR permits for 3 valid complaints
 - Enact a policy that suspends STR permits for 1-3 complaints while an investigation is completed.
- Alert existing residents and community members when a STR permit application has been received. Also inform the community when the permit has been approved.
 - Consider a policy that allows community members an opportunity to oppose STRs in their immediate community during the permit application process rather than after.

Summary:

In June 2023 I learned that the home next to me sold to an LLC with the sole purpose of becoming a STR. I started to look online and see where other STRs were located in my community and connecting with neighbors to learn about their experience and what they knew. The experiences have not been entirely negative BUT the issue is you never know what will show up to rent the STR. So you may have 1 good experience to every 5+ bad. The scale of bad experiences are from moderate to severe.

I have learned that many cities in the Los Angeles area have completely banned STRs because the impact to community members was terrible; if the cities have not banned STRs completely they are instituting a policy that all STRs must be hosted requiring homeowners to be onsite. Even in Los Angeles County where the County Board of Supervisors have jurisdiction (unincorporated areas) STRs have been banned. The city of Lakewood in May also voted to ban STRs because of the adverse impact on community members.

Currently the existing ordinance in Long Beach places the burden of oversight on the community members. Complaints are not documented or tallied so that accurate data could be captured and examined. In addition most community members living next to or near STRs are not even aware of a city number to call to report complaints/concerns.

It's easy to get a permit to operate a STR but if the community members are opposed, the process is time consuming, expensive and the burden is on the community members to ensure the petition process is successful. To date 3 communities have tried to petition to oppose STRs in their immediate census tract but have been unsuccessful. In addition you can receive a permit to operate a STR anytime of the year but the petition to oppose is only available during a particular time period. If successful, existing permits are allowed until they expire even if there are complaints against an existing STR.

Short Term Rentals (STRs) Community Concerns

- Safety:
 - Short term renters are not neighbors, they are strangers who visit the city.
 - Anyone can rent a short term rental; no background checks are conducted. Example if a registered sex offender wants to move to the neighborhood and rent a home they would have to report their new residence. But if that same individual rents a STR they do not have to report this address as it's not considered a residence. This is dangerous to communities that are located like my residence by 3 elementary schools, a middle school and a high school all within less than 1 mile.
 - The burden falls on the community members living next to or near STRs - we have to call and file complaints. In essence we are the monitors. The burden should be on the city to monitor STRs. There is no oversight or accountability.
 - Community members are not informed that a STR has been approved on their block. We only find out on accident or when the problems begin. Community members should be notified and have an opportunity to oppose the application.
 - Complaints are not appropriately monitored or dealt with. Even with a pile up of complaints on one short term rental property, the city contacts the manager or property owner of the Short Term Rental and decides if the complaints were addressed or not. Public/community input or experiences are not accounted for.
 - I've talked with residents living next to and near existing STRs and they did not even know there was a number at the city to call and complain to. If they've called the police they did not know to request a report be filed. Police come listen to the complaint, maybe break up a fight or two and then leave. No one knows what happened.
- Housing Crisis:
 - Lack of available homes for purchase or long term rentals: investor groups are purchasing homes faster than individuals with the sole purpose of creating short term rentals.
 - STRs do not contribute to the vitality of the city - they generate revenue but that's all and at the expense to the existing community members.
- Decline in enrollment of our public schools because the homes are not residences; they are occupied by short term renters.

- Decline of revenue for small businesses across the city; short term renters are not community members who contribute to the vitality of the city.
- Decline of revenue for the hotels across the city.
- Existing Ordinance:
 - The current city ordinance is not written to protect existing members of the Long Beach community. The ordinance is in favor of those who wish to have short term rentals and those who stay at the rentals. There is a provision for opposing or petitioning to restrict short term rentals but was not equitably designed.
 - The cost of the application to operate/have a STR is a couple hundred dollars while the cost to petition to oppose STRs in your community is over \$1000.
 - The petition to oppose STR requires more than 50% of the home owners in the census block to return the petition to the city. With a number of long term rentals in the communities there is no guarantee the actual homeowner will receive the petition and/or return it.
 - 3 communities have completed the petition process and all 3 failed due to a lack of returned petitions. Our community members have been trying to walk the community and talk to neighbors to gauge interest in the petition process. The burden of the petition to oppose process falls on community members and without grass roots advocacy the petition will likely fail like the 3 other attempts.
 - The public was asked for input in 2018 regarding short term rentals, prior to an ordinance being enacted. It's time for this City Council to open a public comment period, to hear directly from the community about their experiences and to re-examine the existing ordinance. Clearly it's not going well.

If council members can actually connect with community members living next to or near STRs they will learn that their quality of life has diminished. Their feelings of safety are compromised. They want neighbors and not a revolving door of strangers. **A good compromise is for the City to require all STRs are hosted.** Requiring the homeowner to be onsite! It's not "fair" that the homeowner of the STR lives comfortably somewhere else why the next door and nearby neighbors have to live next to chaos. Equity should be at the forefront of all decisions the City Council is making. Equity should also be the lens that is used to examine existing ordinances in light of current problems. The ordinance was a good first step but now that STRs exist and chaos has ensued it's time to do better! Do right by the residents - the actual community members that vote and pay taxes and shop local and love their city!

The house next to me has applied to be a STR - when they started to furnish the home, the game tables, hot tub and other items to entice parties and loud guests started to arrive. It's been furnished to attract high paying short term renters coming to the city for a party. That's not what I paid to live next to. Imagine a loud party going on that started at 8pm. The party continues and continues while the neighbor tries to sleep and live thinking any minute the party will end. By the time the neighbor starts to figure out who to call to complain to they've lost an entire night's sleep. Community members work and go to school - Short term renters are here to party and visit. It's not a good match. Short term renters belong in hotels.

Sincerely,

Christina Nigrelli