

Approved Nov. 1, 2017

Planning Board's Short-Term Rentals Subcommittee

Monday, Oct. 23, 2017

1:30 p.m.

Superintendent's Conference Room, 2nd Floor, Town Hall

Meeting opened at 1:30. Attending: Pam Kueber (PK) and Deborah Rimmner (DR)

In audience: Kelly Brown

Documents used at meeting:

- Agenda
- Host Compliance PDF
- Updated Polling questions
- Video and online draft of poll
- Wall Street Journal article

PK opened meeting. Introduced herself and DR to Mr. Brown and asked why he had come to meeting. He said he was there to share his views and concerns as an owner of home in Lenox who rented out a detached ADU as a Short-Term Rental in the spring and fall. During the summer he rents to Tanglewood. He also came to listen to the meeting in general.

In discussion, he expressed his support for STRs because they bring visitors to Lenox who then spend money at our shops. He also suggested that the subcommittee increase its communication efforts so that people throughout Lenox knew what we were working on. PK and DR explained the status of the subcommittee's effort along with its goal to progress methodically and to solicit a broad range of input from stakeholder groups. PK and DR underscored that no decisions had been made yet on whether and if so how to regulate STRs in the zoning bylaw.

In further discussion including questions from PK and DR, Mr. Brown said he and his partner initially had a year-round tenant in the ADU when they purchased the property years ago. After the tenant left, they rented the ADU to Tanglewood in the summers and to weekenders in the buffer months. Since the advent of Airbnb, doing such buffer-month rentals had become even easier. He said they preferred the STR scenario over long-term rentals because it gave them more control over the unit, which is nicely furnished and cared for. He said that going the STR route also made it possible for them to use the unit to house family guests. He said that making some extra money was another benefit, but not a principal driver. He said that as owners, they were often/usually in the house when the ADU is rented out, because this enables them to provide superior service to visitors.

During the discussion about Forums potentially planned for the week of Nov. 6, Mr. Brown said he could not attend but might send his attorney. DR explained that would be an opinion-

gathering session, not a decision-making session and that if he wanted to avoid that expenditure, we could set up a different time for him to come speak to the subcommittee or Planning Board.

Mr. Brown said he may come to additional meetings. PK suggested he check first in case of cancellations. She will email him with her contact info so that he can check same-day.

There was brief discussion of the Host Compliance report. PK and DR agreed it was adequate to use going forward. DR asked if it included a breakout of ADUs. Pam reviewed the dashboard and said it seemed not. However, looking at listing online oneself, it's fairly easy to identify whether the unit is an ADU because the owner usually mentions that they are in the main home next door or attached.

PK and DR discussed the survey and how it looked online. Both were happy with it, though PK said she would cut video into two parts and re-record the audio using a better device. There are also a few other small fixes. To host the survey we are accessing the school department's Survey Monkey account; GM is the only one able to update the survey for access protection.

DR liked the video and suggested its visual elements would work fine for Forums, delivered live. PK agreed that had been the intent during the PPT's creation.

PK and DR discussed next steps. We will aim to host Forums the week of Nov. 6. The Planning Board already has a meeting scheduled for Nov. 7. Continuing the meeting downstairs with Gwen, Gwen said that either the Monday or Thursday would be best for her.

We will promote the event at Town Meeting on Nov. 2 – handout flyers, etc. We now need to finalize all the details. PK discussed some ideas Gwen had but we agreed we needed to get with her and finalize the plan. Gwen suggested a mid-afternoon start for the afternoon session, such as 3 - 4:30 pm, then a followup session at 6 pm. She said try to keep it to 1.5 hours. Pam will get with Gwen asap to hash out a plan and bring it to the next subcommittee meeting.

PK brought up her recurrent concern whether we should put Forums on hold given that the building code updates are coming soon and that they are expected to clarify issues related to non-owner-occupied dwellings. Gwen said she expects the update in January. She thinks we should move ahead and focus on what Planning Board has responsibility for: STR details like (1) zones, (2) types, (3) duration, (4) calendar months. We should get these all on a chart, it was agreed.

PK will bring this up at 10-24 Planning Board meeting as well, and will update PB on next steps. PB members also will be asked if they can come to one or both session.

Meanwhile, DR will get with the Building Inspector to get more info, in writing, about what's expected re building code updates including how ADUs are handled. It also is our understanding that the 'updates' essentially will make clearer what already is in the building.

Respectfully submitted,
Pam Kueber 10/23/2017