

**TOWN OF WINCHESTER**  
**SHORT TERM RENTAL REVIEW COMMITTEE**  
Town of Winchester Town Hall  
338 Main Street - 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor – Lee Ann LaClaire Room  
March 12, 2018 – 5:00PM  
**Meeting Minutes**

**1. CALL TO ORDER:**

The meeting was called to order at 5:00PM. The following Committee members were present: Planning and Zoning Commissioners George Closson, Jerry Martinez and Barbara Wilkes, Selectman and Planning and Zoning Commission Liaison Jack Bourque, Residents Keith Becker, Nancy Becker, John Herman, and Jay Trevorrow (via Skype) and Town Planner Steve Sadlowski.

**2. AGENDA REVIEW:**

No changes were made to the agenda.

**3. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN:**

Mr. Closson was appointed Chairman of the Committee.

**4. DISCUSSION SHORT TERM RENTAL REGULATIONS:**

The Committee acknowledged receipt of informational materials submitted thus far. Among the materials received were documents that Mr. Sadlowski had provided as gathered from the *American Planners Association* website as well as research material and a sample ordinance generated by Joceyln Ayer from the Northwest Council of Governments (COG). A guidebook for equitable policy published by Sustainable Economics Law Center was provided by Mr. Martinez. Ms. Wilkes noted that Mr. Closson had provided sample materials from Rockland, Maine, too. It was noted that all of the documents received are included on the Town website, under Short Term Rental Review Committee on the Planning and Zoning Commission page.

Those present shared their expectations for the likely product coming out of this committee. Ms. Wilkes thought it best to review all of the submitted materials outside of this meeting and bring forth at the next meeting suggestions to be included for a proposed ordinance. Mr. Closson reminded members the reason for considering an ordinance to address short term rentals rather than regulating through a zoning regulation by the Planning and Zoning Commission. He explained that enforcement would be speedier through an ordinance rather than a regulation as the staff charged with enforcing zoning regulations do not work on the weekends. Mr. Martinez reminded members that the committee should restrict their review to how this issue applies to land use and the Zoning Regulations but not taxation and fines. Mr. Sadlowski clarified that short term rentals are generally considered thirty days or less. He also suggested that the Committee should be reviewing how many people around Highland Lake actively rent their properties on a short-term basis and with what frequency that it's done. He noted that the Committee should first establish that the practice is definitely a perceived problem by people. Mr. Becker relayed the problems he and his wife have encountered with a neighboring property that is rented out on a short term basis, including the frequent strangers encountered on their private beach area. Ms. Becker shared what she cited as the negative consequences of short term rentals including property owners neglecting the condition of their homes. Mr. Trevorrow agreed that the transiency that comes with the practice is one of the reasons that some type of regulation should be considered.

Problems arising from short term rentals, especially with properties that share rights of way, were noted.

Mr. Herman noted that the renting of cottages on Highland Lake has a long history and has always been an assumption of most buyers. He noted that it is cost prohibitive to ever rent his place for less than a week except in some circumstances, for a weekend.

Mr. Bourque questioned whether an ordinance is the only or most appropriate means of regulating these rentals. He also noted that due consideration should be given to whether regulating short term rentals is necessary for all.

Mr. Bourque observed that people are having different experiences with them, noting that while the Beckers are experiencing negative impacts, Mr. Herman has had positive experiences.

Two different lake residents both weighed in why it may not be necessary to ban short term rentals. One lake property owner noted that short term rentals present an enormous boon to the economy in terms of buying groceries and frequenting restaurants. He disagreed that short term rentals are a business any more than typical apartments are. Another lake property owner questioned whether the existing regulations already adopted are being enforced.

It was agreed that a survey should be created to understand whether short term rentals are a problem perceived by most people. Committee members were urged to bring with them suggestions for questions to be included in the survey for the next meeting, scheduled for Monday, March 26, 2018 at 5:00PM.

**5. ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:25PM.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Pamela A. Colombie  
Recording Clerk**