

AGENDA
SHORT TERM RENTAL IMPACT COMMITTEE
FRIDAY, JUNE 30, 2023
11:00 AM

- 1. CALL TO ORDER**
- 2. INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBERS**
- 3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
 - A. June 2, 2023**
 - B. June 23, 2023**
- 4. NEW BUSINESS**
 - A. Home Rule - Discussion**
 - B. Misdemeanor Charges - Short-Term Rental Code Violations - Discussion**
 - C. Home Exchange Program - Discussion**
 - D. Funding options to build resources for short-term rental code enforcement - Discussion**
 - E. Input Data Base - Florida Keys (Destin Matrix)**
 - F. Format of Committee's Formal Report to City Council - Discussion**
 - G. Starting time for future meetings - Discussion**
- 5. PUBLIC COMMENTS** (Comments from the public on any matters considered at the meeting, or on any matters not on the agenda)
- 6. NEXT MEETING DATE: Friday, July 14, 2023, 11:00 AM**
- 7. ADJOURNMENT**

Persons with disabilities who require assistance to participate in City meetings are requested to notify the City Clerk's Office at (850) 837-4242 in advance. Hearing Impaired: TTY: 711. Assistance also available through Human Resources, Title VI Coordinator, at (850) 837-4242.

**MINUTES
SHORT TERM RENTAL
IMPACT COMMITTEE
JUNE 2, 2023 – 11:00 AM
CITY HALL BOARDROOM**

1. CALL TO ORDER:

The Short-Term Rental Impact Committee met in regular session with the following members and City staff present:

2. ROLL CALL:

Members Present

Patti Brown
Marcie Bell
Denise Owens
Ken Wampler
Todd Buhr (Via Telephone)

Members Absent

Casey Gates Ward

Staff Present

Rey Bailey, City Clerk
Louis Zunguze, Community Development Director
Troy Williams, Code Compliance Director
Kimberly Kopp, City Land Use Attorney
Billy Morales, Code Compliance Officer
Darlene Lebold, Administrative Assistant. Code Compliance

Visitors

Councilmember Torey Geile
Jeremy Fouquet

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: None

4. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

Committee member Patti Brown was appointed as the Committee Chair by a vote of 4-0.

Committee member Marcie Bell was appointed as the Vice-Chair of the committee by a vote of 4-0.

5. NEW BUSINESS

A) Resolution 23-04 – Establishing the Short-Term Rental Impact Committee – Discussion

Code Compliance Director Troy Williams read the City of Destin Resolution 23-04 in its entirety:

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF DESTIN, FLORIDA, ESTABLISHING THE SHORT-TERM RENTAL IMPACT COMMITTEE, WHICH SHALL BE SUBJECT TO THE SUNSHINE LAW; AUTHORIZING THE COMMITTEE TO DESCRIBE THE IMPACTS OF SHORT-TERM RENTALS ON RESIDENTS IN RESIDENTIAL AREAS; PROVIDING FOR SUNSET; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE

WHEREAS, a home is typically the largest investment a family will make in their lifetime, with the home held sacred in popular culture as the heart and the center of the family unit; and

WHEREAS, local governments apply design standards tailored for residential neighborhoods for their roads, driveways, parking areas, emergency services planning, public shelters, emergency evacuation plans, solid waste collection, utilities, buffers, and are also tailored in assessing their infrastructure impacts; and

WHEREAS, traditional lodging establishments (hotels, motels and bed and breakfasts) are restricted to non-residentially zoned areas where more intense uses are separated from less busy and quieter residential uses; and

WHEREAS, the presence of short-term vacation rentals in established residential neighborhoods can create compatibility impacts, among which may include, but are not limited to, excessive noise, on-street parking, accumulation of trash, and diminished public safety; and

WHEREAS, some short-term vacation rental owners will make investments in upgrading building safety measures of their rental properties whereas other owners will not make such investments; and

WHEREAS, over the past several years, short-term vacation rentals have increased in popularity and it is estimated that there are over 600 short term rentals in the City of Destin, as advertised on various websites;

WHEREAS, some short-term vacation rental owners have now begun advertising their single and multi-family residential properties as destinations for events such as weddings, reunions, and other celebrations that attract large crowds in residential neighborhoods creating noise, traffic, and parking problems; and

WHEREAS, the City of Destin promotes tourism, including appreciation and enjoyment of the City's abundant preserved natural areas, pristine beaches, and walking and bicycling paths that make the City of Destin unique among Florida's coastal municipalities; and

WHEREAS, many local jurisdictions in the State of Florida including the City of Destin, and other local governments across the nation, have standards in place to minimize the impacts caused by short-term vacation rentals; and

WHEREAS, the City desires to encourage short-term vacation rentals that are safe, fit in with the character of the neighborhood, provide positive impacts for tourism, increase property values, and

achieve greater neighborhood compatibility; and

WHEREAS, the City seeks to balance respect for private property rights and incompatibility concerns between the investors/short-term vacation rentals and families/permanent single and multi-family residences in established residential neighborhoods through the use of reasonable development standards; and

WHEREAS, the City Council desires to create a fact-finding committee for the purpose of describing actual and ongoing impacts from short-term rentals in residential areas located within the City of Destin;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF DESTIN, that:

Section 1. Recitals. The foregoing recitals are true and correct, and incorporated into this Resolution.

Section 2. Establishment and Purpose of Short Term Rental Impacts Committee. The City Council of the City of Destin hereby establishes the Short-Term Rental Impacts Committee whose sole purpose is fact-finding. Specifically, the Committee will gather facts relating to the impacts of existing short-term rentals in residential areas within the City of Destin and provide a report setting forth such facts and findings to the City Council. This Committee shall not be responsible for making recommendations to the City Council with respect to additional or modified City regulations. However, upon completion of the Report, the City Council may forward findings of the Committee to legislators of the State of Florida, the Florida League of Cities, and/or other appropriate entities involved with State regulation.

Notwithstanding the Committee's role as a fact-finding Committee, the Committee shall be subject to the Sunshine Law, and all meetings of the Committee will be held in the Sunshine.

Section 3. Make up of Committee: The Committee shall consist of seven (7) residents, each of which shall be appointed by a different member of the City Council, such that every Council Member makes one appointment. The Committee shall choose one member to act as its Chairperson. Although the following individuals are not members of the Committee, the Community Development Director, Code Compliance Director, and City Land Use Attorney are encouraged to attend meetings of the Committee whenever possible.

Section 4. Sunset. The Committee shall automatically be sunsetted on October 1, 2023.

Section 5. Effective Date. This Resolution shall become effective immediately upon its adoption.

PASSED AND ADOPTED BY THE CITY OF DESTIN, FLORIDA THIS 6TH DAY OF MARCH 2023.

B) Introduction

A brief introduction from each committee member and city staff present at the meeting:

- Patti Brown
 - Resident of Crystal Beach since 2005
 - Previously served at both Short-Term Rental Task Force appointed by the Destin City Council and provided recommendations to the council.
 - As member of the task force, personally researched resort areas all over the United States and was able to provide many factual information.

- Ken Wampler
 - Served as member of the previous Short-Term Rental Task Force
 - Served as member of the previous Business Tax Receipt Task Force
 - Member of the Tourist Development Council for Okaloosa County
- Denise Owens
 - Resident of Crystal Beach
 - Nominated to this committee by Councilmember Dewey Destin
 - Very interested to serve on this committee as there are many short-term rental properties on her neighborhood at Crystal Beach
- Marcie Bell
 - Served as member of the previous Short-Term Rental Task Force and attended all meetings of the initial Short-Term Rental Task Force
 - Current member of the city's Local Planning Agency and Public Works/Safety Committee
 - Resident of Holiday Isle
 - When the initial Short-Term Rental Task Force was formed they had 3 short-term rental units in her 20-unit street. Now 50% are short-term rentals.
- Todd Buhr
 - Resident of Crystal Beach
 - City of Destin resident since 2014
 - Owner of several short-term rental and long-term vacation rental condos.
- Jeremy Fouquet – Palm Resort Manager
- Kimberly Kopp – City Land Use Attorney
- Rey Bailey – City Clerk
- Troy Williams – Code Compliance Director
- Louis Zunguze – Community Development Director
- Billy Morales
 - Code Compliance Officer in charge of Short-Term Rental, Long-Term Rental, and Livery registrations.
- Darlene Lebold
 - Code Compliance Department Administrative Assistant
- Torey Geile
 - Member of the council and the legislative sponsor for the Short-Term Rental Impact Committee
 - Formation of this committee was not meant to be regulatory. The committee will research and report on the effect of short-term rentals to the community, both positive and negative, after certain short-term rental regulations were implemented so that the council can take appropriate actions, if necessary.

C) Sunshine Law/Public Records Law

The City Land Use Attorney provided a brief summary of the Florida Sunshine Law highlighting the following information:

- All committee meetings will be open to the public.
- The group cannot discuss committee business with one another, which includes texting and emails to one another, outside of an official meeting.
- Two or more members of the committee can meet in a social setting so long as they do not discuss any matter which could foreseeably come before this committee.
- Do not engage in any discussions or communications with other members of the committee regarding pending matters before the committee or any reasonably foreseeable matter that might come before this committee.
- Any member of the committee can privately communicate with city staff and city attorney regarding any committee business provided there are no other committee members present or copied on the communication.

The City Land Use Attorney provided a brief summary of the Public Records Law highlighting the following information:

- Anything this committee do whether electronic or in writing is subject to public disclosure and will be provided to anyone upon request.
- Any information relating to official business of this committee conveyed either via personal cell phones, social media, text messages, or email, both personal and city email account, is subject to public disclosure.
- Committee members are required to forward to the City Clerk any information relating to the official business of this committee they sent or received other than through their city email account.

DISCUSSION:

The Land Use Attorney advised that Mr. Jeremy Fouquet, who has not been formally appointed to this committee by the city council can fully participate in the discussion but will not be eligible to vote on any motion made by this committee tonight. Likewise, Committee member Todd Buhr, who is joining the meeting telephonically, can fully participate in the discussion but will be unable to vote.

Councilmember Geile inquired as to what extent is he allowed to participate at this meeting.

The Land Use Attorney stated that Councilmember Geile is allowed to participate as much as he wants since this is a public meeting. She advises Councilmember Geile not to make any commitment on behalf of the council until this committee provides a report to the council.

Code Compliance Director Troy Williams advises that each member of this committee conducts individual research on impacts of short-term rentals to the community and to be prepared to share that information with everyone at their scheduled meetings.

Committee Chair Patti Brown stated that they need to brainstorm how they would gather factual information on the impacts of short-term rentals to the community to present to the council. Her understanding of their task was to report how short-term rentals have impacted the community, negatively or positively, over the years. She stated that issues that were primarily covered by previous short-term rental task force included trash, parking, registration, and occupancy standards. She also noted that she has owned her property on Shirah Street since 2005. Out of the 35 houses in that neighborhood, six were short-term rentals. There were long-term renters with a year type lease. There are also owners like herself that lived out of state that do not rent their home. Now, they have only 3 residents on that street that are not short-term renters, which has been a pretty dramatic change to their neighborhood from 2005 to 2023.

Committee member Marcie Bell stated that she has been doing research of other communities which are also trying to figure out the impacts of short-term rentals to their community and which are having this type of discussion. She stated that she is trying to limit her research to the State of Florida because their legislature pretty much control what they can and cannot do. She asked whether a particular legislature on short-term past during this previous session.

According to the Land Use Attorney, she was not aware of any bill on short-term rental that have passed this year, but she will verify and report back. She then explained that the current law states that local governments cannot regulate the frequency or durations of short-term rentals, and they cannot prohibit them in other residential areas; unless they have a code in place that predates the statute which is 2011. Duration means they cannot regulate how long and how often the property can be rented. She continued that there are zoning districts in certain areas of the city, mostly north of US Hwy 98, that existed before 2011 that prohibit short-term rentals, and which are then “grandfathered.” She also noted that Crystal Beach and Holiday Isle are zoning districts on south of US Hwy 98 that have allowed short-term rentals, and so the same restrictions do not apply to them. Also, according to their code, anything less than 180 days is considered a short-term rental. The city currently regulates trash, parking, and noise. Short-term rentals are required to register with the city and pay a fee to the city. They have a maximum occupancy limit in effect of 2 people per bedroom plus 4. However, there are some exemptions to this rule as the city has approved settlement agreements with over 60 private property owners that have been renting beyond that occupancy restrictions for many years and therefore have been “grandfathered in.” She added that new short-term rentals will not have the benefit of exceeding the occupancy ordinance.

Committee member. Bell expressed concern over the lack of fire protection in larger homes which she believes needs to be reported to the state as an issue to have the law change to require some type of fire suppression system in these facilities.

Committee member Wampler agrees this is a big concern, stating that condominiums are having discussions on fire safety measures all the time. He also stated there is nothing much they could do at this point unless they change the building code and require these facilities to retrofit, which is a very hard thing to do.

According to the Land Use Attorney, there is a building code that dictates what fire suppression is required based on the building type and size. When short-term rentals are of a

certain size they are being treated as commercial structures for the purpose of fire suppression. The newer facilities are being sprinkled.

Committee member Buhr noted that during his limited research on this topic, he learned there are different jurisdictions around the state that have addressed this issue, and that there are several different solutions from different municipalities and counties. Some have safety provisions in their short-term rentals, and others even require annual safety inspections.

Councilmember Geile noted there are hotel owners in the area that claim they are being held to a different standard of safety. There are safety criteria they are required to abide by that short-term rental properties are not required to follow, which is impacting their businesses and the way they need to operate.

Councilmember Geile also stated there are pros and cons with regards to short-term rentals and their impact to the community. He continued that the League of Cities have made several attempts to meet with Congress about short-term rentals and how they are impacting different communities. However, their approach is 100 percent home rule or nothing, and Congress is not abiding by it. A lot of people prefer that home rule being population based. If this committee determines that the positive outweighs the negative, then the public needs to be educated on the positive impacts of short-term rentals. However, if they determine that the opposite holds true and that they find there are negative aspects that are overbearing and crippling, and starting to affect people's livelihood, he would be willing to make the stand with the League of Cities for a population-based home rule system.

Committee member Bell commented that there are so many golf carts or Low Speed Vehicles (LSV) on city roads, and that a lot of them are not street legal (i.e., no license plates, no lights), and some are being driven on city sidewalks. She also believes they passed a legislation this past session that operators of these vehicles need to be of legal age and must have a valid driver's license.

Committee member Bell also noted that while the city does not allow electric scooters, visitors are bringing them and riding them on the city's sidewalks, and that she had seen a lot of them on Holiday Isle. She added that a lot of their sidewalks are not wide enough for people who are walking and people riding their bicycles. There are short-term rentals that have bicycles on their property and there are people that are renting them. She stated that there is a state law that requires bicycle lights and a helmet for riders, and none of these items are available on short-term rental bicycles.

Mr. Wampler recommends they come up with a list of the areas on which to conduct their research at their next meeting.

Next, the committee discussed meeting frequency. After a brief discussion the committee agreed to meet every other Fridays at 11:00 AM, at City Hall; with their next meeting scheduled for June 16th.

Committee member Buhr noted that the resolution itself is very much about impacts of short-term rentals on residents. This committee's responsibility is to describe the impact of short-term rentals on residents in residential areas, which can be positive or negative impacts. It

is outside of their charter to describe the impact of short-term to out-of-town owners. He also stated that they need to be careful in describing impacts. There are operators who are not following the rules, and that there are rules that are simply hard to enforce based on the way they are written. For instance, parking is a challenge for their code compliance officers. They do not have enough staff to enforce them, and that there are rules that can only be enforced at certain period of time when no officers are available.

Committee Chair Brown noted there are good operators that follow the rules who really watch their units and provide the right information to their guests. There are those that do not above by the rules and are negatively impacting the community. She continued there need to be some basic guidelines on how short-term rental agents should operate.

Committee member Buhr commented there may be some correlations between the problems areas and repeat offenders to occupancy number and size of the building; adding there may be some way for the Code Compliance Department to statistically point out that as facilities go up in size and occupancy, there is an increase in the amount of attention that is required.

Some members of the committee expressed the need to revisit the short-term rental signs. Some houses are being rented from out of state, and that the contact numbers on the signs are out of state numbers. There is also a request to go over the existing short-term rental ordinances and regulations.

ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 12:10 PM.

Patti Brown, Chair

**MINUTES
SHORT TERM RENTAL
IMPACT COMMITTEE
JUNE 23, 2023 – 11:00 AM
CITY HALL BOARDROOM**

1. CALL TO ORDER:

The Short-Term Rental Impact Committee met in regular session with the following members and City staff present:

2. ROLL CALL:

Members Present

Patti Brown
Marcie Bell
Denise Owens

Members Absent

Ken Wampler
Todd Buhr
Casey Gates Ward
Carrie Harbarger

Staff Present

Rey Bailey, City Clerk
Troy Williams, Code Compliance Director
Noel Bell, Building Official
Kimberly Kopp, City Land Use Attorney
Billy Morales, Code Compliance Officer
Darlene Lebold, Administrative Assistant, Code Compliance

Visitors

Councilmember Torey Geile

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Minutes of the June 2, 2023 Short-Term Rental Impact Committee.

A voting quorum was not in place to be able to approve the minutes.

4. NEW BUSINESS

A. Meeting Ground Rules:

Committee Chair Patti Brown discussed the following ground rules that she would like the committee to establish for their meetings:

- Meeting will start promptly on time.
- Members show respect to one another.

- Regardless of difference in opinions and points of view, they need to maintain that respect.
 - Do not raise voice or interrupt people while they have the floor.
 - Everyone will listen attentively to the person speaking.
 - No side discussions amongst the members during the meeting.
 - Raise hand, and wait to be acknowledged by the chair, before speaking.
- The City Clerk will forward draft copies of the minutes to each member prior to the meeting. Members should review the minutes in advance and get ready to point out any errors and approve the minutes during the meeting.

B. Charter/Goals and expected output from the committee:

Committee Chair Brown asked each member to share their perception as to the role of this committee and how they feel is the best way to move forward to reach their goal. She asked for the Land Use Attorney's view in regard to the mission of this committee.

According to the Land Use Attorney, the committee should review the effectiveness of the existing regulation as well as the impacts of the existing short-term rentals. Try to determine if the regulation is working, whether things are getting better, what are the continued impacts, and then submit a report to the council who will probably provide recommendations to the state based on that report. One probability could be to request more home rule power to have the authority to make decisions based on local needs.

Ms. Brown stated that as a member of the previous Short Term Rental Task Force, she feels that with what this committee recommended to the city council, they should have had a lot of the current issues in this town under control. Unfortunately, many of those recommendations were not implemented. They have issues that they have previously identified that still exist such as parking, noise, over-occupancy, and trash.

The Land Use Attorney pointed out that the city council implemented most of the recommendations presented to them by the initial Short-Term Rental Task Force.

Committee member Marcie Bell noted that she was not a member of the initial task force, but she attended all of their meetings. However, she was a member of the second Short-Term Rental Task Force, and that she does not believe the council accepted any of their recommendations.

Ms. Brown stated that one specific issue the second task force discussed was involving trash, and that a representative from Waste Management who attended one of their meetings told them that a 96-gallon trash can is meant for a household of 4 people. And so, an establishment with more than 4 people would obviously require more than one 96-gallon cans.

Ms. Bell mentioned that in that same conversation they also talked about maybe requiring them to have a third day pickup. At the time, the normal turnover day was usually on a Saturday. Some of the companies did have a smaller version of the Waste Management

truck that came around and picked up trash on Saturdays. She added that the council did not accept it as an amendment to the ordinance.

Ms. Bell stated that another issue they talked about was if someone is not registered as short-term rental and they are functioning as a short-term rental, the rules do not apply to them, and they can have more cars parked in front of their property than what the code allows. For instance, her street is a private road where the city does not enforce parking.

According to the Land Use Attorney, all short-term rentals need to be registered with the city and comply with the rules. When there is a short-term rental that is not registered, staff will investigate and gather evidence to prove that it is a short-term rental. Once they know it is a short-term rental, staff can issue a Notice of Violation for operating without being registered.

Code Compliance Director Troy Williams explained that if a property is registered as short-term rental and they have a violation, they will have the documentation and the property will be cited. If they suspect that a property is a short-term rental and they do not have anything in the system, they have certain steps in the process to prove it.

Committee member Denise Owens commented that she has reached out to the Code Compliance Department recently and reported some short-term rental violations in her neighborhood in regard to occupancy, parking, and trash. She continued that there are 8 houses in her neighborhood that are not registered short-term rentals and that these are the same 8 houses she has reported as far back as 2018. She continued that these houses have outdoor signs to prove they are short-term rentals. She also noted that she has done some research on what other cities do in these kinds of situations including the penalties they impose and compare those with the consequences of committing similar violations in the City of Destin. Some cities impose a fine up to \$10,000 even for a first violation.

According to the Land Use Attorney, the signs outside the properties are enough evidence to prove they are short-term rentals and that they can enforce the code immediately. However, the \$10,000 fine being imposed by other cities is pretty steep and it is not legal under Florida Statutes. Under state law they can only impose a maximum daily fine of \$250 for the first violation and a daily fine of \$500 for a repeat violation, which could subsequently equate to more than \$10,000 if the property does not come into compliance.

The Code Compliance Director stated that when his department is notified about a property being in violation, they go out and investigate and issue the proper citation. But they do not necessarily have the authority to physically force somebody to stop doing what they are doing. They can send them before the Special Magistrate as quickly as the code would allow so that the Special Magistrate can make the final determination and issue the proper order.

Ms. Brown commented that the negative impact of the short-term rentals could be mitigated if they have enough staff that could just enforce the code quickly and consistently. She also stated that home rule is what they really need in Destin to allow them to perform the functions necessary to allow for solutions to local issues and problems.

The Code Compliance Director noted that when he took over the department about two months ago, he put in a budget request for staffing for next year for one full time and two part-time officers. He recently submitted an updated request for 5 full time and 2 part-time officers. He continued that the council has several top priorities, with short-term rentals being one of them.

Councilmember Torey Geile stated that according to the president of the Sterling Shores Condominiums Homeowners Association, there is a fire code that states occupancy must be based on square footage. He asked whether this rule is limited to condominiums.

The Land Use Attorney noted that their short-term rental ordinance applies only to single-family homes currently because during the council's previous discussions, it was determined that the same issues that occur in single-family homes did not occur at the condominiums. With regards to square footage, council went back and forth on this issue because depending on one position, different stakeholders have different opinions on how they measure living space.

Councilmember Geile asked if there is anything in the ordinance that requires a warning for anyone who fails to register, or could they issue a citation after the first offense.

The Land Use Attorney stated that ample warnings have already been given, and that they can legally issue a citation after the first offense, but a Notice of Violation has to be issued to the property owner.

Ms. Bell stated that although parking, trash, and noise are big issues, they have an even bigger problems with short-term rentals such as drugs and domestic violence issues; and that she has had a personal experience with the latter. They need home rule back whatever it takes to accomplish it. They need more code compliance officers. They also need more law enforcement officers, outside of code compliance officers, that can deal directly with those types of issues.

Ms. Brown ask how the property owner is notified when there is a violation.

According to the Land Use Attorney, the state statutes require either a personal service or certified mail. If the green card for certified mail is not signed, and there is no one to which to deliver the notice, the statutes allow posting on the property. A lot of times, the city's code compliance officers send out the certified mail and post the property at the same time.

Ms. Bell recommends the city establishes a department that deals solely with short-term rental issues, in one physical location, with members communicating with each other and knowing exactly everything that needs to be done before someone can operate as a commercial entity in a single-family residential neighborhood, whether it be a BTR from the city and the county, sales tax account with the State of Florida, Florida Public Lodging and Establishment License with DPBR, or change of use if applicable.

The Code Compliance Director stated that he cannot speak about past regime, but his present team works well together. They have streamlined the system and things have gotten

better. Every member of his team is in constant contact with one another. Each one is doing multiple things and a change in physical location is not going to change anything. He also noted there are over 1200 short-term rentals located within the city. They want to be able to do as much as they possibly can, but they have a very limited staff. They need to have more people to be able to accomplish them.

Ms. Bell stated that she absolutely agrees with the Code Compliance Director and pledged her full support in obtaining the appropriate level of staffing for his department.

Ms. Brown would like the home rule topic to be placed on their next meeting agenda and for the Land Use Attorney to discuss it further so they can all understand it.

Councilmember Geile stated that if they get home rule back, they can increase the fines significantly where it can become a deterrent. But they need to focus on things they could present to the State Legislation to achieve home rule if this committee decides that the impact of short-term rentals is mostly negative, such as what every university is reporting that short-term rentals reduce affordable housing and affordable housing inventory, and other things that are killing this community as a whole.

There were some discussions relative to permanent meeting time for this committee. Ms. Brown would like that issue addressed at the next meeting when more members are present.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Guy Tadlock, a resident of Holiday Isle, stated that they have lost about 20 full-time residents in his neighborhood during the past several years due to short-term rentals as things have become quite unbearable. He stated that the quality of some of the short-term renters coming to the city now are quite undesirable as evidenced by the unpleasant sights and vulgarities they are forced to endure around his neighborhood. He stated that the rental management companies are a big source of all the problems. For instance, they advertise that certain properties sleep 40 people when in fact there is a city ordinance against it. He stated there are “party busses” filled with drunk passengers being driven around the city. Bartenders call the party bus to pick up passengers. Most times these passengers do not know where they are going and get off at certain locations. On one occasion, a passenger arrived in his neighborhood. He wondered around knocking at every door thinking it was his home. He ended up collapsing near someone’s house and a sheriff’s deputy had to be called.

Mr. Tadlock also reported that there are short term rentals that are not registered but are not afraid to suffer the consequences because it is a very lucrative business, and they are more than glad to pay the fine. He likes the idea of a home rule so that the city can impose higher fines so that it can become a deterrent. He also urges the city council to get behind the city’s Code Compliance Department and increase their level of staffing to improve their efficiency.

The Land Use Attorney commented that she is seriously thinking about recommending that certain short-term rental violations be considered a misdemeanor offense as there is a code section that gives the city the authority to send someone who committed a misdemeanor act up to 60 days in jail.

Also, according to Mr. Tadlock, there are times when a family goes on vacation and rent their home while they are away, but they are not registered short-term rental; adding it is an issue that may need to be addressed. Some discussions followed about a possible home-sharing whereby families from two different states go on vacation simultaneously and live in each other's home during that period. It may or may not involved any cash payment.

According to the Land Use Attorney, home-sharing is not exempt from registration. If this is actually happening in Destin, and it is being advertised or reported, the parties involved will be required to register.

Ms. Bell reported that as part of their research program, Monroe County TDC had contracted with a firm called Destin Matrix to gather occupancy and rate statistics from Florida Keys vacation companies. The Okaloosa County website shows the county TDC utilizes the program as well. She stated that having this type of information could greatly benefit this committee since their mission is to conduct research and gather statistics on the impact of short-term rentals. However, ordering it may have to be done by a municipality.

The Land Use Attorney recommends requesting the data from Okaloosa County TDC. They may already have the statistics for the City of Destin; otherwise, they can discuss ways to obtain that information.

Ms. Wendy Anderson, a resident of Crystal Beach, stated that she does not feel safe walking around certain neighborhoods due to the influx of homeless people; adding there are always homeless people in their beach walkover using the restroom facility. She also expressed her concern about the illegal immigrants not knowing who are clean and who are on drugs. She stated that the city's problems are not limited to tourists and short-term rentals. They also have society issues they have to solve to keep this town nice and safe.

Ms. Anderson also stated there are families who are fighting to keep their home. Some need to rent out a room to supplement their income and to make ends meet. She also noted that they built certain additions to their home and that they need to rent part of it to be able to afford it. They should be allowed to do this without having to register as short-term rentals. She added that the city needs to maintain that family-friendly atmosphere in order to become a better family- friendly community.

Also, according to Ms. Anderson, there are people that are trying to abide by the city's rules but are not able to because some of them are confusing, contradictory, and at times inconsistent. For instance, certain homes in her neighborhood are allowed certain number of setbacks while others have no setbacks at all. She continued that there have been some discussions about occupancy on some homes being based on square footage while others on the number of bedrooms.

The Land Use Attorney noted that there is currently no exception in the code for someone wanting to rent out a room in their home. They are currently required to register as short-term rental. There are certain rules depending upon when the home is constructed. There are homes that were grandfathered in because they have been in existence before certain codes were adopted. She recommends Ms. Anderson meets with the city's Community Development staff as

well as Code Compliance to discuss these issues so they can advise her on what she can and cannot do.

Some discussion followed regarding items to be placed on the next meeting agenda. The following topics were identified:

- Home rule
- Input Data Base utilized by Florida Keys (Destin Matrix)
- Starting time for future meetings
- Misdemeanor charges – short term rental violations
- Home Exchange Program
- Funding options to build resources for better enforcement of short-term rental regulations.
- Format of committee's formal report to the city council.

ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 12:40 PM.

Patti Brown, Chair