

**MINUTES
SHORT TERM RENTAL
IMPACT COMMITTEE MEETING
SEPTEMBER 5, 2023 – 10:00 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

Marcie Bell
Denise Owens
Casey Gates Ward
Carrie Harbarger
Todd Buhr
Ken Wampler
Patti Brown (via teleconference)

Staff Present

Rey Bailey, City Clerk
Troy Williams, Code Compliance Director
Kimberly Kopp, City Attorney
Darlene Lebold, Admin Asst, Code Dept.
Noell Bell, Building Official
Ross Hands, Code Compliant Officer

Visitors

Guy Tadlock - Resident
Alice Tadlock - Resident
Darryl Shelton - Resident
Matthew Ward - Resident
Jala Lambert - Resident
Jason Belcher – Resident/Destin Chamber Board Chairman
Councilmember Torey Geile (arrived: 10:45 AM)

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A. June 23, 2023

Minutes of the June 23, 2023 meeting were approved unanimously, 6-0.

B. June 30, 2023

Minutes of the June 30, 2023 meeting were approved unanimously, 6-0.

C. July 14, 2023

Minutes of the July 14, 2023 meeting were approved unanimously, 6-0.

D. July 25, 2023

Minutes of the July 25, 2023 meeting were approved unanimously, 6-0.

4. NEW BUSINESS

The committee agreed to discuss agenda items 4B thru 4E first before moving on to agenda item 4A.

A. Deliverable of Short-Term Rental Impact Committee – Final Report to Council

Following the discussions of agenda items 4B thru 4E, the committee reached a general consensus to table this item until the next meeting, and for it to be the only item to be discussed at that meeting.

B. Code Compliance Department – Schedule Public Workshop

The City Clerk announced that Councilmember Torey Geile requested that this item be placed on the agenda as he would like to address the possibility of scheduling a community workshop for the citizens to meet with the city's Code Compliance Department and voice their concerns and be educated on the city's policies. Councilmember Geile was not present at this time and so the committee agreed to wait for his arrival before discussing this item any further.

C. Deputizing Code Compliance Officer

Committee Vice-Chair Marcie Bell asked if it would be possible to deputize the city's code enforcement officers to give them the authority to enforce state laws and other regulations that they currently do not have the authority to enforce. It may or may not include issuing them a weapon. She added she was concerned about a situation last year when a code enforcement officer was called upon to respond to a call which could have easily turned into an ugly situation.

The City Attorney stated that it is a possibility, however, the question is whether they ought to be deputized; adding it would be a council decision as it is a big cost and would require some adjustments in the budget.

Code Compliance Director Troy Willams stated that he is always in favor of his officers' safety, and that it makes sense to expand their authority and capabilities; however, it is a larger discussion involving other entities such as the Sheriff's Department. If they are in favor of granting his officers the authority under their purview, then it would result in more responsibilities and liabilities for the officers.

Committee member Ken Wampler pointed out that this issue is way beyond the scope of this committee.

The City Attorney stated that Ms. Bell could make this recommendation to the city council as a citizen and not as a member of this committee.

D. Register Golf Cart with the City

Ms. Bell stated that she previously recommended registering rental golf carts with the city similar to livery vessels. She stated that the city is being overwhelmed with golf carts and they do not have the ability to control them. They are being driven on sidewalks and other

places. It is important for everyone to know the rules for operating a golf cart within the City of Destin, especially the tourists.

The City Attorney pointed out there are rules for Low-Speed Vehicles (LSVs) that are enforceable by the Sheriff's Office. An SLV is a street legal cart that can legally be driven on most roads posted 35 mph or less, except on US Hwy 98, and it is covered in city code.

E. Analysis of Current Short-Term Rental Codes and Potential Changes

The City Attorney reiterated that according to this committee's bylaws, they will not make specific recommendations about the code. Their task at hand is to provide the city council with a report on both the positive and negative impacts of short-term rentals to the community. The council will then decide whether to forward that report to the State Legislature and the League of Cities so they could decide if they wanted to lobby on the city's behalf and to make changes to the legislature to give the city the ability to deal with any impacts.

According to Committee member Todd Buhr, this topic is not for the purpose of making recommendations but for fact-finding to fill any gaps or holes in their code especially in the area of safety, particularly fire safety and the safety of occupants. He stated that he previously provided two examples of regulations from two different municipalities. One in particular is the Walton County ordinance. The ordinance states that any property owner who wishes to rent a residential unit as a short-term vacation rental must first apply for and receive a short-term vacation rental certificate from the county. An affidavit of compliance with the ordinance is required prior to issuance of an initial short-term vacation rental certificate. The affidavit certifies that the applicant acknowledges and agrees that the county shall have the right to reasonably inspect the premises to assure compliance. Inspections may be conducted by any person authorized by the state to enforce the laws and rules of the state for issues pertaining to life safety requirements. The ordinance contains supplemental standards that include, but not limited, to the following:

- Swimming pool, spa, and hot tub safety
- Sleeping rooms meeting the minimum requirements of the Florida Building Code
- Automatic smoke detection requirements.
- Fire extinguisher installation, inspection, and maintenance requirements
- Battery powered emergency lighting of primary exit.

Mr. Buhr also noted that the other sample document, Vacation Rental License Regulation of Hollywood, Florida, talks about the administration, penalties, and enforcement of the short-term rental code, and ways to hold vacation rental properties accountable for non-compliance with the code. It provides a section on Penalties and Enforcement that includes issuance of citation, various enforcement methods and penalties, suspension of license, and revocation of license.

5. NEXT MEETING DATE: September 26, 2023

6. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Ms. Alice Tadlock, a Destin resident, expressed her ongoing concern about short-term rentals in residential neighborhoods, stating that it is getting quite insidious. She wants to make sure all the identified impacts of short-term rentals to residential neighborhoods are documented in the report to the city council.

Mr. Guy Tadlock, a Destin resident, reported that there are only 3,678 homestead exemptions in Destin out of the 14,000-plus total population, adding it is a testament to the fact they are not attracting enough people to want to make Destin their permanent home.

Mr. Troy Williams commented that they are trying to get the city council to approve funding for additional staffing for the Code Compliance Department. He continued that they are planning to conduct a thorough review of their internal processes and find ways to streamline things to better perform their job. They expect a lot of improvements, but it may take some time as they have a lot of new people which would require a lot of training on their part.

ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 11:11 AM.



Marcie Bell, Vice-Chair