

**MINUTES
SHORT TERM RENTAL
IMPACT COMMITTEE MEETING
OCTOBER 10, 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
Casey Gates Ward
Carrie Harbarger
Todd Buhr
Ken Wampler
Patti Brown (via teleconference)

Members Absent

Denise Owens

Staff Present

Rey Bailey, City Clerk
Troy Williams, Code Compliance Director
Kimberly Kopp, City Attorney

Visitors

Councilmember Torey Geile
Guy Tadlock – Resident
Alice Tadlock – Resident
Daryll Shelton - Resident

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A. September 26, 2023

Minutes of September 26, 2023, were unanimously approved 5-0.

4. NEW BUSINESS

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

- Purpose Section
- Background Section
- Economic Benefit Section
- Residential Impacts Section

The City Clerk announced that no revisions to any of the above sections were received for the committee's review and discussion at this meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

There were some discussions as to how funds generated by the Code Compliance Department (i.e., STR registrations, citations, and livery registrations) are spent.

Code Compliance Director Troy Williams stated that through some mechanism some of the funding comes back to support the Code Compliance Department operations.

According to Committee member Todd Buhr, based on previous budget discussions, those funds go into the city's General Fund. There is a code compliance portion, and a portion that supports other city operations. He added that to varying degrees, none of the city's fee structures completely cover all their activities.

Vice Chair Marcie Bell noted that this is the type of data that they have not put into any portions of their council report. She continued that their draft report does not currently contain any hard data numbers which is part of their tasking for fact finding.

Mr. Buhr stated that while data is great, they are not necessarily required to come back with a bunch of tables and graphs. They can render an opinion or draw a reasonable conclusion from factual evidence or based on their perception or experience.

Committee member Casey Ward opined that it would really help to include hard numbers such as how many calls the Code Compliance Department and/or the Sheriff's Department are getting on a daily basis with regards to short-term rental complaints.

According to Ms. Bell, they do not necessarily have to fill in the report with tables and graphs. They could add statements based on the information they collected, such as "Fifty percent of the 1100 calls received by the Code Compliance Department and the Sheriff's Office during the past several months involved short-term rental properties."

Committee member Wampler commented that for the purposes of the city council, the data points are good relative to evaluating each person's perspective on the severity of the issue as it changes from person to person. They can determine how much is truly happening statistically. He added that they need to have a clear representation of both the pros and cons of short-term rentals.

Ms. Bell noted there are other impacts that are not measurable by data such as the things she mentioned earlier regarding lack of fire suppression system and ADA compliance.

Councilmember Geile opined that one very important element of the report is the population descriptive statistics for the City of Destin – the total number of residents, total number of homesteaded residents, and an estimated daily number of tourists – as this has financial impacts on the city. He recommends looking at the financial impacts on citizens both directly and indirectly. He added that the city council may forward findings of this committee to

state legislators, the Florida League of Cities, and other appropriate entities involved with state regulation and so it is very important for this committee to keep the council in mind as they write the report so that the council understand the committee's goal and the full intent of the report.

According to Mr. Buhr, any statistics they provide need to be measurable, quantifiable, and actionable. He stated that direct impacts are sometimes hard to measure and quantify with any degree of accuracy. But indirect impacts are even harder to measure as they are mostly based on gut feelings.

Councilmember Geile informed the committee that he called Representative Maney's office and explained to them that the Destin City Council established a Short-Term Rental Impacts Committee whose sole purpose is fact-finding. The committee will gather facts relating to the impacts of existing short-term rentals in residential areas within the city and provide a report setting forth such facts and findings to the city council. According to Councilmember Geile, he was provided with a point of contact to a couple of sub-committees that would be willing to provide some guidance relative to the committee's goals and the direction they want to go; but that it would be up to this committee to decide how they want to proceed with this information.

Ms. Bell recommends having a committee member and city staff member reach out to these entities together, and that she would be willing to represent the committee.

Ms. Bell also alluded to the Florida Keys Vacation Rental Investigative Report, a copy of which was previously provided to committee members. She stated that there is a particular section in the report called Situation Analysis that talks about Legal Vacation Rental Units and Illegal Vacation Rentals. There is also a section on Oversight and Enforcement. She asked whether the committee is interested in adding similar sections to the report, and if they could provide recommendations on how to incorporate them into the report.

Mr. Buhr stated that he cannot fully support the Economic Development Section as written. There are several direct impacts that seemed to be duplicative to indirect impacts to residents. He continued that simply providing a list of financial benefits that residents receive from the TDC solely because of short-term rental occupancy does not seem accurate as there are other sources of funding other than short-term rentals. He added that funding related items could be covered under a heading that says short-term rental contributed TDC funding which provide funding back to the community.

Mr. Wampler argues that the same thing can be said with the residential impacts. A lot of the problems already exist regardless of the presence of short-term rentals. The level of impact may change because of short-term rentals, but to represent that all the things that are negatively impacting the residents are associated directly or indirectly with short-term vacation rentals is not a fair assessment. He added that the evidence cannot be just once perspective. It has to be accompanied by facts or data points.

Ms. Bell read the following portions of the resolution that established the committee:

“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.

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.

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.

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.”

She stated that these are the obvious impacts they have been talking about over and over, and that her objective when she decided to join the committee was to present the not so obvious impacts. Those that are not quantifiable but negatively affect the lives of residents.

Councilmember Geile explained that the only reason he asked the council to initiate the committee was due to citizen outcry. His own intent is to give the citizens a voice. The idea was to get some volunteers from different parts of the community to find a way to address this issue. He had no preconceived notion on how the facts will be presented. It will be up to this committee as to how they want to approach it.

Mr. Wampler stated that to be fair, they should either revise their particular section based on suggestions from others or leave things as they are. In any event, he still intends to revise his section by adding a caveat that not all the citizens enjoy the listed economic benefits, which is similar to the fact that not all items listed in the residential impacts section are created by short-term rental occupancy as previously discussed. He will also clarify the percentage of funding the TDC receives from short-term rentals.

Ms. Bell agreed to leaving their sections as they are at this time, but with Mr. Wampler to include the disclaimer that he talked about.

There was a consensus to obtain the following information in preparation for the next meeting:

- Population Descriptive Statistics (Total number of residents, total number of homesteaded residents, estimated number of tourists in Destin daily per Councilmember Geiles recommendation
- Get in contact with members of the sub-committees that would be willing to provide some guidance relative to the committee’s goals and the direction they want to go; as provided by Representative Many’s office.

- The amount of money generated by the Code Compliance Department (STR registration, livery registrations, citations, etc.) and how they are spent.
- Include a Data Analysis Section in the report to which to place data points that are collected.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Mr. Guy Tadlock commented that after living in a neighborhood with a lot of short-term rentals for over 20 years, he is quite confident in saying that the quality of guests that are coming to Destin is continuing to deteriorate over the years. He also mentioned that he received information from the Okaloosa County Property Appraiser on the total number of homesteaded residents in Destin the past 20 years. The homesteaded residents in 2023 comprise of only about 25% of the total number of residents.


Ms. Alice Tadlock recommends adding under residential impacts that the number of full-time residents in short-term rental neighborhoods are shrinking.

Mr. Buhr stated that though he agrees with that observation, he does not believe declining demographics is technically a direct impact of short-term rentals unlike trash, parking, and noise.

Mrs. Tadlock argues that residents are choosing to leave because short-term rentals are diminishing their quality of life.

ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 11:35 AM.



Marcie Bell, Vice-Chair