

Marblehead Planning Board

Workshop /Discussion

Abbot Public Library

November 29 2018.

Minutes of Meeting

Members present, Robert Schaeffner, Edward Nilsson, Rossana Ferrante, Steven Leverone, and Barton Hyte

A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order. The chairman explained to the audience that the board is interested in studying short term rental regulations. Because there has been a rise in these in the town, it seemed that this contemporary and increasing land use deserved study to determine what makes sense for Marblehead, in addition to looking at what other communities are doing, the board invited comments and is holding this public meeting tonight. The purpose is to gather information on what the issues are with this use from operators, abutters and other interested persons. The board is looking at the issue through land use perspective only not taxation or other regulations. The chair then asked if anyone in the audience wished to speak.

Robert Zarrelli – Lee Street felt that the use is not permitted in the bylaws and therefore was a change in use and also concerned that there are many building code violations; fire, window egress, stairs. He has been negatively impacted by loud parties and transient tenants and parking problems

An audience member asked what short term rental was, what the length of stay was and did not like that it was not defined. Was also angry that this is the first people are hearing about this and if something is not broken it doesn't need fixing.

After some discussion the town planner stated for the purpose of this study short term rentals are rental units that use site such as, Airbnb, Homestay, VRBO and others. The length of stay is not defined. She stated that there are presently over 60 short term rentals in Marblehead listed on sites such as this. Also this is the first meeting to gain input and therefore the board is happy people have attended. The purpose is to find out if anything is needed or not. It is a study.

Henry Hammond – stated that has had positive experiences and uses all mention sites to advertise and screens heartily and inform tenants of expectations. He knows of no complaints.

John McIver uses VRBO for short term and real-estate agent for long term. The realtor screens clients and VRBO has some screening, no one under 25, no complaints yet. He mentioned Marblehead has limited lodging options and there is definitely a need he thinks there is an advantage in spending but not using town services.

Amy Hirschcron – 3 Abbot Court – she uses Airbnb when she wants to rent out a room

Brain O'Sullivan rents house out in summer people can't find hotels with kids and pets. Asked what sort of complaints have been received

The town planner reported that the complaints received including party atmosphere, noise, trash, parking.

Robert Zarrelli said he wants rules and regulations related to building code for safety

Henry Hammond stated that the town has had a long history of short term rentals no and it is not a new issue it is just gaining popularity

Judy Anderson - Orne Street – commented that landlords have strict laws to adhere to. This is a big issue in Salem and less of an issue here. She wondered if the town website could list best practices

Bob Zarrelli asked what happens if an unsupervised house has large party

The chairman reminded people to speak through the chair and avoid back and forth discussion.

Lou & Skip Ziegler stated they own an Inn and really wants tourists. Summers better now with more rentals.

Cathy m Michael rents out and is owner occupied and screens clients and needs the income loves referring local business to clients which is a positive for the town

Chery Patten also has an owner occupied two family and thinks if regulated they should tie specifically to short term rental noise and partying and issues. The money she brings in from rental helps her maintain her property.

John Eisenhower State St - he stated has an Airbnb on both sides of him no problems. Maybe a way to register people so someone could be contacted in an emergency would be enough.

Sarah Milson Jersey Street said she met with building commissioner to get feedback.

Peter Barnett 11 Hibbard St has a unit on prospect used vrbo etc. and has no problems. He does screening and would support a registration or rules and communication he does not want arbitrary things like "nothing less than a week"

Michael Vevager raised the point that tenants don't always have cars so parking is less of an issue than might be thought.

Blair Nelson appreciates the flexibility short term rentals offer.

Donald Rousseau – Orne Street stated concern for people buying from out of town and operating many like a business

The planning board thanked people for participating and vote unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

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