



TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND

SHORT-TERM RENTAL INITIATIVE

Focus Group: Open House Webinar

02/03/2022

2:30 p.m.

Participant Questions/Comments After Presentation

Own home in N. Forest Beach, rent out in summer. What is process for revoking or suspending a license? Live out of state and want to make sure they are aware. Pool fences required for STRs but not other residences? If a safety concern, then everyone should have one. Needs to be uniform across the Island. Limit the number of guests, what did that have to do with any issues if property managed? A small group can make just as much noise as a small group. Grandfathering current owners, awkward to buy a property and put money into it just to have the use change. For posting properties, the auditor in Ohio has a database where you can enter an address and get contact info for a person or company.

Lives in N. Forest Beach. If a neighbor complains, is the town prepared to verify the complaint is real? What do we do about neighbors who continue to call? How do we deal with complaints after hours and on weekends, when code enforcement is not working? Is there a penalty to a management company that does not enforce the rules? There should be penalty on the business of the management company, not the individual owner. Property managers are the problem. They do not monitor or even drive by the unit. They just wait for a complaint. Why is Town not looking at their license is they are not following the rules?

Responsibility of property management people, they should be held accountable, and it has been totally left out. Pool fencing, in plantation not allowed to put fence around property, may be able to put around pool but that cuts off rest of property.

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On Marshland Road, currently under development, no one realized they were destined to all be STRs. Has Town considered a moratorium on these types of developments to ensure they fit in the neighborhood? On mega houses and houses retrofitted to maximize number of people, how does fire department feel about that? Are our codes up to speed with this, is this an issue? People worry more about the income rather than safety. Sprinklers should be required in these bigger units.

Lives in Shorewood on S. Forest Beach, resort community, president of HOA of Summer House. Been on all calls and talked to staff or management companies and owners. This is happening mostly in Tamara Becker's ward where there are not HOAs. Most of this from house hotels. Vacasa local property management company has many properties that sleep 20 or more. Others do as well, and they keep up their units. VRBO and Airbnb has hundreds of units on the Island that are not managed locally that sleep 16 or more. We are taking each STR unit and treating is the same. Small units with responsible owners and mega houses that fit 20+ people are regulated the same. Parking and infrastructure not built to handle the number of people going into these homes.

Nothing proposed in first phase is not taking away any property rights and good first look at it. Why not just give this time to work before we move to phase 2? Worried about sending a property manager to a site at 3am with 18 people, worried about their safety, could be a dangerous situation. Does not want property management to end up being the police department. STR is regulated the same as long term when it comes to eviction, it takes 2 months. Landlord and tenant act requires them to give them 24 hours' notice before entering the property. Causes a problem to deal with complaints. Managers not trained in conflict resolution to deal with these issues and will not be effective. Maybe create a Town hotline and have staff with training to deal with these kinds of issues. People's personal information should not be posted on their house.

We see a lot of passing the buck, that no one wants to deal with the nuisance calls. There are no metrics in the rental companies to keep problem renters out. Would be interested to know when someone speaks at meetings to know if they are a resident, rental company, or a renter who lives local or away. Wanted to make sure concerns of residents are addressed/heard.

Rents half of year and lives here half the year. Has Town done any research on the number of drownings or near drownings? Not fair to subject STR owners to that. PD does not allow them to put up fences. There are canals and ponds all over to wander to and drown. Unless there is a study on drownings, this will be arbitrary and not address the problem. This needs to be applied uniformly and if there is not a problem let's not create one.

There are long term residents near STRs that don't want them there and continue to call and complain. Guests can only be vetted so much, there is no guarantee that there will be no disturbance. If you are the unlucky owner to have 2-3 complaints, you could lose your license. It should be based on how the owner responds not just the fact that there was a complaint.

What qualifies as a response within an hour? Property rights, we don't want to infringe on them. We have heard a lot about investor's rights but not a lot about property owner's rights. People buy a lot of homes with the intent to rent them out. What about the people who bought homes to live in a quiet neighborhood and have a quality of life? Auto-response would not be considered a response, correct?

Seems like a lot of redundancy behind the gates where there is security to deal with issues. Did staff talk to any of the associations, like CSA?

Resident in NFB, condo in SFB – both interests as a resident and STR owner with management company. If complaints are not verified in real time, how are they enforceable?

Is there a number of drownings that have been tracked related to STRs to require this?

Question & Answer Log (Live Chat during webinar)

q. Are fences for pools for permanent residents not required? Shouldn't all pools be safe. Any child can wonder into a pool inadvertently.

A. Fences are not required for pools for single family residential properties. Some HOA's might require it.

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Q. In instances where a property is not managed directly by an owner, if they are paying/subcontracting that activity to a management company, the owner should not be penalized for poor management; the management company should be. The owner will never recover the lost revenue caused by poor management. The management companies, if found responsible, they should be penalized by losing their business licenses, rather than the property owner. The owner is forever impacted, but the management company is not, under your current proposal.

A. Thank you for your comments

Q. Additionally, the idea that only short-term rental pools must be fence seems illogical, given that these properties are nearby canals, beaches, creeks, filled with alligators and other dangers. Focusing on pools, doesn't seem reasonable. The argument that parents are less focused on monitoring their children, because they are on vacation and excited is also illogical. Does that mean that parents will not watch their children while at the beach either, or while walking along canals and waterways, which exist everywhere in HHI? Additionally, I would like to see a record of how many drownings have occurred. It seems like this concern is based out of fear, and not a concern validated by historical data of actual increased risk. This is a situation of perceived danger, which may not be a real danger.

A. Thank you for your comments, they will be taken into consideration as we move forward with this effort.

Q. Since you're discussing pool safety, I'd like to know how many drownings or near drownings have been reported? And what about ARB guidelines that prevent any type of fencing?

A. Thank you for your comments and questions. We will work to get answers to these and try to provide them within the Q and A that will be posted on the short-term rental initiative page on the Town's website. <https://hiltonheadislandsc.gov/short-termrentals/>

Q. Requiring Pool Alarms in short term rentals will likely create a significant ongoing noise nuisance with unfamiliar users of these devices - i.e., the short-term renters. This is just adding hassles for the entire community. I've seen no data that suggest this is a problem anyway.

A. Thank you for your comments, we will consider this as we move forward with this initiative.

Q. Will the meetings be virtual so that if one is not in the state you can attend.

A. Are you asking about the Public Planning Committee and Town Council meetings? Currently we are only having public meetings virtually, but that can change at any time.

Q. Is it anticipated that there will be a limit on the number of business licenses that will be issued for short term rentals?

A. That is not what is being considered at this time.

Q. During the creation of the ordinance, I hope you have invited the Sheriff's Office to your meetings so that the Town has a better understanding of what police can and can't do. I keep hearing code enforcement, however, some of the things described in these meetings are really a matter for the Sheriff, especially when it's after hours. Especially when it comes to noise disturbances and parking complaints.

A. The Town has been in touch with Sheriff's Office as part of this initiative and we will continue to work with them as we move forward with this effort.

Q. Not sure what the pool rules have to do with the nuisances this ordinance is supposedly looking to address

Q. With the pool alarms - what about kids jumping in the pool while monitored, will the alarms go off then? Will the PM companies be notified? What kind of support is the Town going to offer the PM companies or owners monitoring these alarms?