

Short Term Rental Committee Meeting

April 24, 2017

Meeting Summary

Monday, April 24, 2017

5.30 PM

Lonnie Hamilton, III Public Services Building
Room B-225

Committee members in attendance: Patrick Bell (Chair), Sussan Chavis, Pete Paulatos and Amy Fabri.

Planning Commission members in attendance: Eric Meyer (Commission Chair).

County staff in attendance: Joel Evans, Andrea Pietras, Dan Frazier, Sally Brooks, Andrea Harris-Long, Janine Saab and Austin Bruner (Legal).

ZLDR Amendment Consultants in Attendance: Bret Keast (Kendig Keast), David Baird (Kendig Keast), Mark White (White and Smith), and Kelly Cousino (White and Smith)

Public in attendance: Jacob Lindsey (City of Charleston), Rashaunda Grant (SC Vacation Rental Managers Association), Don Thompson (Goat Island Resident), Patrick Arnold (Charleston Trident Association of Realtors), and Ginger Scofield (SC Vacation Rental Managers Association).

Meeting Presentations:

The meeting began with brief introductions by the Chair of the Committee Members present and by Joel Evans of the members of staff and Consultant Team present. Joel then briefly summarized the lead up events to the meeting which included the Request For Proposals (RFP) and the project kick off phone conference in March. Bret Keast was invited to begin his presentation to the Committee and public.

Bret explained the 3 phases of the Charleston County Zoning and Land Development Regulations Ordinance (ZLDR) amendment process and the work that will be undertaken in each phase. He identified that this trip to the County was a fact finding exercise for the consultants that will help form Short Term Rental (STR) controls. He also illustrated preliminary research that he had done regarding STR controls adopted in certain cities throughout the country.

Next up to speak was Jacob Lindsey from the City of Charleston. Jacob provided an overview of where the City was at in putting together STR controls and the issues they are currently facing regarding pursuing enforcement action against owners/properties who are operating STRs without zoning permits and outside of prescribed accommodation zones, Bed & Breakfast zones, and downtown areas grandfathered in. He stated that the City currently has a STR task force whose members were appointed by the Council, and that as part of the task force, the City was in the middle of undertaking listening sessions in the community to find out what the community thinks about the issue and what controls they would like to see. After the listening sessions are complete the task force and staff will make recommendations to the City Planning Commission who in turn will make recommendations to the City Council. The current proposed time line is for some form of STR controls to go before the Planning Commission and Council in September/October 2017. Jacob also indicated that at this stage, there is potential to add another accommodation layer/overlay type that specifically addresses geographic areas of the City where STRs are permissible, and that the City is trying to figure out the tax impact of allowing STRs, the tools and enforcement that would be needed to implement STR regulations and a database that lists legal and illegal STRs currently operating throughout the City.

Committee Discussion:

- Amy Fabri – Stated that the consultants should look at a tiered structure of application requirements and ZLDR controls to accommodate owners who rent their homes or rooms once or twice a year versus owners who rent their homes or rooms out consistently.
- Sussan Chavis – Stated that the consultants could potentially look at controls based on renting out a room or a few rooms versus renting out an entire home.
- Amy Fabri – Stated that a lot of people throughout the county are currently operating STRs and that there should be incentives in the application process, ZLDR controls and in enforcement to encourage people to register with the County and get any required zoning permits. This includes a potential “Amnesty” provision or a web based application process.

Public Comments:

- Rashaunda Grant (SC Vacation Rental Managers Association (SCVRMA)) – Spoke in favor of STRs. Stated that if the County wants to connect to industry stakeholders the SCVRMA would be happy to help facilitate this and that the industry is willing to work with the County to construct controls for STRs and to provide information on STRs to the County.
- Don Thompson (Goat Island Resident) – Spoke in favor of STRs. Wanted any STR controls to be flexible to reflect the unique character of Goat Island which includes no car parking, boat access only, no on-island fire department, and septic systems only.
- Patrick Arnold (Charleston Trident Association of Realtors) – Spoke in favor of STRs. Stated that the SCVRMA has drafted their own STR ordinance which they provided to the committee and staff on the night.
- Ginger Scofield (SCVRMA) – Spoke in favor of STRs and offered assistance in the process.

Closing Comments:

Joel indicated that any STR ordinance presented to the Planning Commission and Council should be close to the schedule of the City. He also stated that the consultant needs to look at the difference between STRs inside and outside the Urban Growth Boundary as they may require different controls. He also stated that it would be beneficial if the County and the municipalities had similar controls and application processes and perhaps the municipalities could follow the County’s lead.

Joel stated that next up is the Consultant Webex conferences with the Planning Commission, Short Term Rental Committee, and Historic Preservation Committee where they can discuss their progress on this issue.

The meeting adjourned at 6:45PM