

Alma Community Meeting 10/16/24: STR Ordinance Discussion

Eligibility:

- Minimum distance:
 - Questionable relevance due to lot sizes
 - Too hard to manage/control
- Size of the property:
 - # of guests could determine the level of the license fee, eg anything over 6-8ppl requires a higher fee.
 - Could open the county to lawsuits
- Proximity of neighbors:
 - Not considered important as long as noise ordinance is enforced.
- Incidence of complaints
 - Responsible agent available 24/7, response within 1 hour
- Percentage of housing stock owned by locals
 - Felt it's not appropriate
- Percentage of housing stock with existing STR license
 - Felt limiting licenses would just encourage people to run STR without a license
 - Some feel a cap is needed, others feel it's not necessary
- Other:
 - If we want Park County to be a destination, do we need to keep costs/taxes low to encourage?
 - Properties should meet safety & building codes to qualify
 - # of licenses capped – if not renewed it goes to the next person in line
 - Surprise reviews for listings – make sure property is following original listing
 - 100 houses added each year
 - Higher rates should produce better renters
 - 3 strikes you lose your license, increase fines with each strike
 - Change zoning/plat sizes for easier building/cheaper costs
 - Owner-occupied STR license should be a lower cost
 - 2% is way too low, minimum 6%, 4%?
 - Determine license cost by number of bedrooms/size of rental, less discriminatory
 - If not limited, all available housing will be sold or converted to STR

- Single owner large land chunks – limits expansion
- Need developer incentives
- Require owner-occupied – prove residency
- Regulation that a home must be lived in by full-time residents (long-term rental or own) for a period of time before the home can be an STR
- Complaint portal/anonymous report line
- Citation tipline/website to report complaints
- Aware of many unlicensed STRs in area, have been reported – could they be required to pull their listings from Airbnb & VRBO until they acquire a license
- Follow through on complaints, track and report

Management Questions:

- Who is responsible?
 - Unanimously feel owners are ultimately responsible
 - 24/7 availability, 1 hr or less response time
- Other:
 - Properties in violation resulting in a lost license must pay a higher fee if they re-apply.
 - 3+ violations within 6 months should result in loss of license
 - To deter over-occupancy, in Italy (city of Florence) they charge an occupancy tax in STRs that is a per person, per night rate paid to the city.

Zoning Mechanisms:

- Commercial/mixed use: 100% support
- Agricultural: 100% support
- Create new overlay or impact zones? 100% opposed
- Limitations or caps: more controversial:
 - Density of STRs will affect acceptability
 - Many in favor of limiting based on type of owner
- Other:
 - Incentivize LTRs
 - Support for enforcement: summons to ensure prop. Owner
 - What is the cost for a sheriff call out?
 - Regulate through business licenses
 - Permitting fees by number of bedrooms or zone
 - Business tax or road & bridge fee

- Can HOAs be leveraged to enforce or establish expectations?
- Increase compliance through communication & increased fines
- Single-family dwelling vs multi-family dwelling if owner-occupied
- Require letter of approval from HOA if applicable prior to license.

Owner-Occupied vs Non Owner:

- Limitations to residential zones:
 - 100% opposed to acreage or spacing limitations
- Exceptions (permanent residence/ADUs):
 - ADU's used as STRs should require a license
 - 2 tiered system for owners vs. off-site
 - Suggested car registration of owner
 - Lot of consensus that out-of-state owners should pay at least double versus owner-occupied.
- Other:
 - Define owner-occupied – can be part of the community without being here – how to quantify if based on time period?
 - Cap the # of STRs a single entity can own
 - Fence for pets
 - Agreed to a fee scale based on owner-occupancy, suggested 60-90 days out of the year.

Future Growth of STRs:

- Reduce, maintain, or increase?
 - Capping or limiting = complex and possibly unfair
 - Better for fees and taxes by Park County to be a limiting entity, based on % of revenue is more fair than a flat fee
 - 1 in 20 properties in a subdivision as STR
 - Why aren't STRs taxed as a business?
 - Can we pass lodging fee onto renters?
 - 5 acre minimum for STRs
 - Emergency services additional fee
 - Some suggested \$10 or \$20, others stated it should be much, much higher, suggesting \$500.
 - Want a number to call for complaints
 - 3 strike rule
 - Consider higher capacity with septic pumped regularly
 - Easy license with 3 year renewal

Parking Lot:

- Enforcement idea from Tahoe – owners' phone numbers are publicly published
- Daycare in county
- Website is not clear, hard to find information about where to file complaints
- Licensing process is problematic, no responses from county when trying to proactively renew, emails and phone calls were not returned.