

Meeting Minutes STR Subcommittee meeting 08.13.2020

- Elizabeth Craig (EC) greeted participants and called the meeting to order, noting the date and time, 7:09PM August 13.
- Attendance included Elizabeth Craig, Carl Mulert, Linda Reardon, Susan Raymond, Loretta Hoffmann, Cheryl Rogers, Donay Queenan, Carol Rusoff, Linda Swartz and Harriet Shur.
- Minutes of the previous meeting were approved

OLD BUSINESS:

- EC reported on the August 10th Town Board response to updated Mission Statement as follows:
 - The final Mission Statement as approved by the Board, includes a revised Task #1. Revised Task #1 says that the Committee will “Provide an Overview of existing Short-Term/Transient Rentals in the Town of Taghkanic, and an understanding of whether these are primarily home-based businesses or investment properties. Craft clear descriptions of different types of STRs understood to exist in Taghkanic at present”.
- EC noted that she reviewed the various STR listings and made headway with identifying types of STRs including whether or not they are owner operated with a view to ascertain whether the committee can comply with the requirement to craft descriptions of different types of STR’s in Taghkanic.
- Carl Mulert noted that the Town Board has indicated that they are not interested in a data scrape at this time, but that they may authorize one later.
- Loretta Hoffmann noted that Airbnb, VRBO, Expedia and Booking.com are the 4 main Online Travel Agent (OTA) sites to be studied.
- Susan Raymond reported on Hudson’s progress toward developing STR regulations as follows:
 - Susan Attended the Hudson STR meeting via zoom. Rebecca Wolf was their guest speaker. She reported on Hudson’s STR committee findings. Susan’s takeaways were as follows (Susan acknowledged that Hudson and Taghkanic have very little in common):
 - Speakers were predominantly STR owners and did not like the proposed laws.
 - Hudson has a contract with a private company, who would be the enforcer of Hudson’s regulations. The annual cost for their service would be \$28,000/year. Income to STR operators from Hudson STR’s is said to be in the range of \$1m.
 - Susan Wolf’s focus was to preserve the residential nature of Hudson and to prevent property values from becoming more unaffordable.
 - Susan R. noted that the Hudson meetings made it clear that comprehensive outreach with local residents is important to ensure that any regulations crafted reflect the consensus of the broader community.

NEW BUSINESS:

- The Committee began review of the draft regulations that have been prepared by committee members:
 - Carl Mulert presented draft regulations relating to the maximum number of beds permitted in an STR, differentiating between owner-occupied and non-owner occupied STRs, differentiating between whole house rentals and a room in an owner occupied residence.

- Various comments were received, and it was agreed that they would be incorporated into a revised draft for further review by the committee (see revised draft regulations). The following summarizes comments:
 - Loretta H felt that rental of rooms in a private home should be considered a Lodging House/ B&B that falls under Lodging House regulations. Others felt that room rentals in private homes should be considered STRs
 - Linda Swartz said that the Town envisions that the rental of any dwelling or portion of a dwelling for less than 30 days falls under STR regulations
 - It was proposed that the regulations differentiate between owner-occupied STRs and non-owner occupied, and there was general agreement about this idea. It was also proposed that owner occupied STRs be limited to a max of two rooms being rented, to specifically differentiate between these STRs and registered Bed and Breakfast establishments; however, there was not complete agreement about this proposal.
 - For non-owner occupied STRs, other changes or clarifications were proposed relating to maximum number of days/weekends that an STR could be rented, and how to count and classify children.
 - It was discussed that there should be a local host who must be available 24/7 and should reside nearby.
 - It was noted that an STR operator must inform the town when a designated local host is replaced.
 - Susan R suggested that a variance to the max number of days can be applied for-
 - Respondents to the questionnaire that was sent to the Committee all agreed (10 of 10 respondents) that a residency requirement for STR operators will be required per the proposed regulations. The term “residency” was discussed and the revised draft will include committee comments.
 - The Committee agreed that regulations would not permit STR operators to serve meals unless they were registered as a Bed & Breakfast.
- EC to follow up with the committee by email on possibility of an in-person meeting for next meeting which is scheduled for August 27.
- Meeting was adjourned at 9PM