EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE - APRIL 20, 2022
Report - Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development, Heritage and Downtown Development
Item No. 5 Regulating Short-Term Rentals

I wanted to thank the committee for acknowledging the need for regulations of short-term rentals in our city. I agree with the proposed by-laws, however I would strongly encourage to add primary residence and minimum stay requirements to the by-laws. I find the recommended by-laws to be insufficient to ensure the safety and well-being of our communities.

Reasons for primary residency requirement:

1. Enhanced security

Security cameras and noise detectors in short-term rental units do nothing to enhance the safety in those units unless they are **monitored**. There has been an incident in my building where a woman got assaulted in a short-term rental unit and yelled for help (this unit was equipped with security cameras and a noise detector). A resident of a neighbouring unit heard her plea for help and called security. When the resident contacted the manager of the short-term rental unit to inform her of what had just occurred in her unit she claimed that the noise detectors didn't even go off and she was completely unaware of the assault. Currently, there is no incentive for owners to monitor their short-term rental units as they are simply an investment for them. If the owners were to be limited to renting out their primary residence they would be incentivized to take greater care of monitoring their units.

2. Disturbances curbed before neighbours are involved

3. Proper screening of guests

The short-term rental operators who presented to City Council on this matter spoke about their vetting process and how they are selective about who they rent their units out to. While that may be the case for those operators it has most definitely not been case for some short-term rental unit operators in my building. This again underlines the fact that operators need to be held accountable and without the proper regulations in place to weed out the bad actors in the STR industry we'd be completely missing the point here.

Reasons for 30-day-minimum stay requirement:

1. Easier to regulate

In the proposed by-law it requires STR owners to inform all immediate neighbours of the short term rental schedule for each new arrival and their stay duration. This will be very difficult to monitor if there is no minimum stay requirement in place as bookings can be made within a short timeframe and if guests are allowed to book 1-night stays then it can get overwhelming to keep track of the schedule.

2. Ensures STR isn't used as party unit/house

I want to assure everyone that STR units are frequently rented out for 1-night stays. There have been many incidents where STR owners had to evict guests multiple times in one week because they were being disruptive to the neighbouring units. I myself had to call the owner of a neighbouring STR unit on **3 separate occasions** over one long weekend to evict the guests for partying. After that horrendous weekend I had asked the owner to implement a 3-night-minimum stay requirement which he agreed to do. Only a few weeks later we were right back

to the same issue with guests booking 1-night stays to have a party and when confronted the owner claimed he had no idea how that could've happened.

3. Shorter stays are booked with hotels

A 30-day-minimum stay requirement will also greatly benefit the hotel industry as guests who wish to stay downtown for short visits such as for concerts or jets games will be limited to book those stays with hotels. The hotel industry has been supporting our communities for many decades and have done a lot of good for our city including the employment of many locals. They are also by far better equipped to deal with disruptive behaviours that may occur from intoxicated concert goers.

Note: All short-term rental unit operators were **in favour** of a 30-day-minimum stay requirement when asked at the April 5, 2022 City Council meeting.

It is vital that these additional requirements are added to the by-law to ensure the effective regulations of short-term rentals. Currently condo boards can only amend their condo by-laws with a majority vote and if the condo building has a high percentage of investors it is impossible to implement by-laws that don't appeal to those investors such as a ban on short-term rentals or minimum stay requirements. On the other hand even with appropriate condo by-laws in place management can only fine $100/violation up to a maximum of 12 times a year which isn't much of a deterrent and allows for irresponsible short-term rental condo owners to continue their bad practices without major repercussions. This lack of enforcement has come at a detriment to the neighbours of those short-term rental units.

I trust that you will put appropriate regulations in place to protect the well being and enhance the safety of our communities.

Jasmin D