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Sent: Tuesday, April 19, 2022 11:40:27 AM

Personal information
Full name: Sara Ly
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Job title:
Organization:
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City: Winnipeg
Province or territory: Manitoba
Postal code:

Delegation information
Committee: Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development, Heritage, and Downtown Development
Committee - council: N/A
Committee - other: N/A
Agenda item (number and title): 5 Regulating Short-term rentals

Service inquiry: Submit Comments in writing
Participation preference: N/A
Comments in writing: Dear Executive Policy Committee, My name is Sara Ly. I am a resident in the Daniel McIntyre ward. I have been living in a downtown high-rise condo since 2016. I initially loved living downtown because the ease and convenience to all the amenities. I frequently use public services, such as the Millennium Library and the transit bus system. I patronize local businesses in the downtown and the Exchange like True North Square. However, my desire to live downtown has drastically decreased since the arrival of Short-Term Rentals (STRs) such as Air BnB. The safety and security I felt in my own home are constantly destabilized by the myriad of Air BnB guests that enter and leave my building. On my floor, there are 11 condo units, 5 of which are Air BnBs. In fact, my condo unit is surrounded by 4 of the 5 Air BnBs. Prior to and during the height of the pandemic, my building developed a reputation for being a location where unsavory people could party and conduct criminal activity without any repercussions. I have witnessed violence, such as fighting between Air BnB guests outside my suite resulting in the Winnipeg Police and ambulance services being called. I have on more than one occasion seen Winnipeg police in tactical gear after raiding a suite. There is most certainly a problem with gang activity and human trafficking of very young women, as I have seen people coming in and out of the building wearing gang colours and young women waiting in the lobby to let their johns into the building. I have even been personally threatened by women involved in the sex trade and drug-users who were renting Air BnBs. With this level of criminality, my building has become a target for theft (of bicycles and of personal items in the storage room) and vandalism causing thousands of dollars in damages and loss. On March 15th, an Air BnB guest intentionally tampered with the sprinkler system and ran off causing major flooding in the building from the 3rd floor down. I can only imagine the tens of thousands of dollars that will be needed for these repairs.
For a long time, I used to know my neighbours. I would see the same familiar faces on my floor, in the elevator and in the common rooms. My condo building was beginning to build a community where we

would watch Jets games in the theater and hang out on the rooftop. However, the disturbances and stress caused by STRs has driven many good tenants and responsible owners out of the building. My former neighbour who is a pediatrician at The Children's Hospital was a long-term renter in my building for 2 years until an Air BnB moved into the suite next to hers. The non-stop partying and noise disturbances pushed her into finding a building that was more liveable. Now all I see is a revolving door of strangers, thugs, and people high on drugs.

I believe there are over 50 condo units in my building that are now STRs, which is about a quarter of the total units. When there is a disturbance in the building, I have very few resources to direct my concerns other than with the police. Air BnB makes it incredibly difficult to report any problem suites. For me to file a complaint about a suite to Air BnB, the company requires me to find the exact listing of the suite, which is nearly impossible unless the Air BnB listing includes the suite and floor number. Without the exact listing, Air BnB will not accept a complaint otherwise. I also have no contact information for the owners of STRs and unit managers are not particularly responsive when it comes to issues concerning partying unless the police are involved. Even the response from some owners is negligent. The owners don't live here, and therefore, don't care. They don't have to live through the false fire alarms at 2 AM; they don't have to endure the screaming in the hallway or the partying at all hours of the night.

As more owners try to sell their suites (at much lower prices than their original buying price), buyers are looking to buy suites to turn a profit. My building continues to be taken over by investors who are buying up suites with the intention of renting them out as short-term rentals. To make matters worse, these investors have found a means of controlling the condo by getting elected on my condo board. The condo developer, Urban Capital, owns a substantial amount of units and is able to control the balance of power as each unit they own represents one vote. The consequence is that investors are depriving potential home-owners/condo owners of housing opportunities. Moreover, investors have no interest in community building and they are indifferent to the detriment they are causing to the quality of life and increased cost of living for the condo owners. Overall, the short-term profit minded business model of STRs will have a long-term negative impact on the downtown community, and any efforts to revitalize the downtown as a viable and desirable place to live will be sorely impaired.

I recommend that the Executive Policy Committee consider the following solutions to curtail and regulate the problems of short-term rentals:

- Short-term rentals ought to be banned unless it is the primary residence of the person who is renting it.
- Short-term rentals ought to require permits to rent and there should be a limit of how many permits are given in a building.
- Renters of condo or apartment units should not be able to re-rent their suites as short-term rentals, as this takes away the opportunity and potential to have permanent housing and renting opportunities for others.
- Violations of city by-laws on short-term rentals should be subject to costly fines. Moreover, there should also be by-law officers to ensure the rules are being followed.
- Short-term rentals ought to register with the City of Winnipeg and the city should set up a system where residents can report violations.

Thank you for your time.
Sincerely, Sara Ly

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