SUBMISSION – SYLVESTER GAJDAMOWICZ

ITEM 5 OF THE REPORT OF THE STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON PROPERTY AND DEVELOPMENT, HERITAGE AND DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT DATED APRIL 5, 2022 REGARDING REGULATING SHORT-TERM RENTALS

Good morning,

I am writing in regards to the upcoming regulations for Short Term Rentals.

I am not opposed to regulations coming to the City of Winnipeg for Short Term Rentals. I believe we do need certain regulations such as a business license, lodging tax, provincial tax out of fairness to the hotel industry as well as other reasons.

What I am against is regulating it to being a primary residence, or having minimum stays in place. This will kill the short-term rental industry and the majority many of owners such as myself will have to sell our properties for a loss. I employ cleaners for my suite so this will result in job losses as well. In my experience, the reason a lot of people book on AirBNB is due to the higher number of amenities available such as a kitchen, which hotels do not provide. This way, when you stay for a few days, you can cook your own meals.

The reason my wife and I decided to purchase a STR was due to her losing her job when the pandemic started. We needed the additional income. Had I known the City of Winnipeg was planning to place restrictions such as "primary residence" or "minimum stays", I would not have purchased a STR. Winnipeg does not have a housing crisis due to investors purchasing homes and condos for the purpose of STR. Larger cities such as Vancouver and Toronto do have that issue. We cannot compare our 2 different markets. The typical nightly rate in Winnipeg is $75-100 a night while they can charge significantly more in Toronto or Vancouver. In Winnipeg, houses are the cheapest close to downtown and then go up in value as you get further away from downtown. In Toronto or Vancouver, it is the opposite. Houses in Toronto and Vancouver are the most expensive downtown and get cheaper as you get further away from downtown. Most people using AirBNB want to stay downtown due to its proximity to everything. This is the reason most STR owners in Winnipeg have a condo downtown. It is not feasible to purchase a home further away from downtown for $350-400k and then be able to rent it out for $75-100 a night as you will not be fully occupied being further away from downtown.

I am also an owner of one of the suites at the Glasshouse as a STR (311 Hargrave). I have not had any of the issues that the residents have been spewing and all my guests have been stating that they had a wonderful stay and felt very safe at the Glasshouse. Please look at my AirBNB review history for my listing here:
https://www.airbnb.ca/rooms/52556625?source_impression_id=p3_1651073786_ex9nrDIbrzlsDD9W .
All my guests have been extremely happy, and they felt very safe at the Glasshouse.

Also, most of my guests are from Alberta, Ontario, Quebec, and the USA. I would be more than happy to show my message history on the AirBNB platform to prove that. AirBNB has a great review system so if anyone has an issue with a guest, it is stated in the review. If a guest causes an issue and has that in their review, the likeliness of another host accepting their reservation is slim. This platform is great for getting rid of problematic guests.

I work as a Firefighter/Paramedic with the City of Winnipeg. I currently work at a downtown firehall for the last 1.5 years and have not seen a single medical call there or an overdose there like they state. While I have been working on shift, I can see all the calls going on in the city on the computer and I look through the computer every few hours while I am working to see what is going on in the city. A call at 311 Hargrave would grab my attention. Now, that is not to say it hasn't happened.... I am just saying that I have not seen it while I have been working. I would just say that the residents are blowing it out of proportion to further their plan of removing STR's.

I have been to a few fire alarms at the Glasshouse. However, fire alarms go off everywhere and, in my experience, the number of times the fire alarm has gone off at the Glasshouse is extremely low (almost slim to none) compared to other downtown buildings.

I am writing to please make careful consideration to the regulations in regards primary residence and minimum length stays. I do not agree those 2 regulations should be in place as there is a strong demand for STR's for business professionals and travel purposes.

Thank you

Sylvester Gajdamowicz