Dear members of the council.

Good day. I am writing today regarding Short Term Rental Regulations. My name is Nardia Mckoy. Prior to becoming an owner/ operator in this business I was a Financial Planner. After a Cancer diagnosis and subsequent surgery my husband and I decided that it would be a good idea for me to retire from that business and spend more time closer to home. We already had a few long term rental properties and I agreed to spend my time managing them. We also decided to purchase a home in a great neighborhood as a project. The house was very run down and in dire need of repairs. The curb appeal was non existent and infact, i am not ashamed to say, this was most definitely the ugly ducking on the block. After extensive renovations to the property we listed it. After 30 days on the market we did not have a sale and things were slowing down for the season so we decided to try something different by offering it as furnished short term accomodations. It was a bit scary because after spending upwards of $50000 to renovate the property, we were afraid of having people come there to party, wreck things, cause trouble for our neighbors or conduct shading business dealings in our house. We were very surprised by the amount of interest we received and had our first booking in 1 to 2 days. Our neighbors have been a big help in keeping an eye out for us. A group of young people tried to have an unauthorized party at the house once. We saw this happening on the security cameras just before receiving a phone call from one of our neighbors and so we were able to go and clear out everyone…including the guests because the house rules had been broken. They left without incident and I then submitted a do not recommend review to the booking platform they had used. This means that any other hosts receiving a booking request from this group would most likely decline to host them. Their profile was removed by the booking platform soon after meaning that they were no longer able to use that platform what so ever. So, this review process serves as a way for us to Police ourselves and our guests. Bad hosts get no bookings and bad guests are removed from the community. That event prompted us to set a minimum booking age of 25 and a minimum stay of at least 3 nights. Our neighbors know how to get in touch with us and are privy to a neighbor discount when renting the property themselves for visiting relatives. A few have visited us during and after the renovations were completed. All have expressed how happy they are that something was done with that property.

Based on my experience as a host and as a landlord to long term tenants, I am of the opinion that a lot of the issues one would try to associate with Short term rentals are actually long term rental issues. The partying, smoking inside, human trafficking, drug dealing and even manufacturing does not happen in a 3 day visit. These things have been occurring in hotels and long term rental properties forever..and so it is unfair to cast blame onto the short term rental industry. Nefarious activities do not typically take place in a house that is under surveillance not only from cameras but also from multiple neighbors and the host. This person would be asking to get caught, reported and banned from the platform!

Covid had a big negative impact on most industries. This one is no different and in my opinion, as a landlord and a host during covid I consider myself to be a front line worker though I got no benefits or stimulus to offset the losses. It is a fact that we as landlords were expected to continue to provide housing in the face of an eviction freeze where some tenants were unable to afford their rent. Had it not been for the income provided by our short term properties, we would have had to either sell or lose some properties to the bank. So it is also a fact that the income venerated from my short term rentals kept the lights and heat on in an extremely cold winter as well as kept the roof over the heads of these families.

Regulation is necessary in order to maintain order and to set some standards in this rapidly growing area of the economy. There are so many forgotten homes left to overgrown bushes and rotting exteriors…much like the property we first started with. These homes are not only eye sores but also safety Hazzards. They need investors like me to step in and do something. But that won't happen if I am restricted as to what I can do with the property once I have sunk time and money into the rehabilitation. Oftern times, these homes cannot be rented at a rate whi h would make sense for long term tenancy. My 4 bedroom house in St. Vital with an overhead of more than $2200 per month could not be rented for much more than that on a long term basis. So the idea that we can somehow be forced to convert to long term tenancy would just not work out for most of these homes. They would sit empty until sold.

I agree that there needs to be standards to help guide new hosts and homeowners in order to prevent partying and other unsavory things from happening at the property but we must be careful. A minimum booking age, a reasonable minimum length of stay (3 or 4 nights), licensing, maximum occupancy, security system requirements, collection of tax…these things coupled with the current city of Winnipeg Livability bylaws would be appropriate in my opinion. There is really no need to spend time and money recreating a document that already exists. There are far more urgent issues needing attention and resources in the city.

I anxiously await this decision as it will determine whether I am selling in order to relocate or investing more time and money into building both long and short term here in Winnipeg. Currently we are in a holding pattern as our family's future hangs in the balance.

Sincerely,

Nardia Mckoy STR Owner/Operator/Host

St. Vital