Agenda item 7 - Short Term Rental Regulations

Dear Winnipeg City Councillors and Mayor Brian Bowman,

I am writing to voice my concern and opposition to regulations, which may impact my ability to Host. One of the options being discussed is a ban on short term rentals in secondary dwellings, which would restrict hosting to my primary residence. If passed, this regulation would limit economic growth in Winnipeg and harm those who rely on the income earned from their rental to make ends meet.

My wife and I have been short term rental (STR) hosts in Winnipeg since 2017. We rent out our second home in the neighbourhood of River Heights. It is rented year round and we focus on longer stays. Typically with a minimum of one week. Many of our guests stays are longer than this. We have not allowed two, three or four day stays in many years.

Our primary dwelling is also in River Heights. We love this neighbourhood and we are very careful that our second house and its guests don't detract from the neighbourhood or the community at large. I am always very conscious of my neighbours and my guests are always chosen with them in mind. We talk to our neighbours about the house and our guests and they know that if there are ever any issues they can call or email me. They also see me regularly at the property as I do all of the yard maintenance year round. Pre-pandemic I used to meet guests at the house to check them in personally.

We go to great lengths to get to know prospective guests and we don't rent to guests that we feel would not be a good fit for the house. We have never had issues with people partying at the house because we are careful of who we rent to and we do not allow bookings for short stays such as weekends or long weekends.

I would describe our guests as typically being ex-Winnipegers who used to live in or around River Heights or who still have family and friends that live in and around River Heights. Our guests have commented that they would not come as often or stay as long if the only option was Hotels or staying with friends and family.
Short term rentals are also very important for people who are experiencing difficult times in their and their families lives. We have had family members from all over Manitoba come to stay together in the house for funerals and memorial services.
Short term rentals also enable people who are caring for loved ones in end of life situations to spend extended lengths of time living in Winnipeg in comfort and safety.

I am also aware of situations where people who are seeking medical treatment in Winnipeg are able to increase their comfort and quality of life by staying in short term rentals.

By staying longer and within the community our guests spend more money in local businesses than if they were only here for a short time staying in hotels or with friends and family.
I do not think that I am competing with Hotels in Winnipeg. My guests would not stay in a hotel for a week, multiple weeks or months.
I really do think that Hotels should look at short term rentals as an opportunity to change their business model and provide more of what people want when it comes to longer term and more comfortable accommodations.

Capping the number of nights that are available for rent during the year is also very problematic and doesn't make any sense to me. My guests want to visit Winnipeg and their friends and family year round so that they can experience everything that Winnipeg has to offer. From summer restaurant patios and festivals to winter skating on the Red and Assiniboine Rivers. I have some guests that return regularly to attend the Festival du Voyageur. Capping nights would negatively effect Winnipeg's economy, Winnipeg tourism and me personally.

I am constantly recommending local businesses to my guests. I always provide them with an updated list of neighbourhood restaurants that are either within walking distance or a short drive away. I have had a lot of positive feedback from guests about the wonderful restaurants in River Heights. I also always provide Tourism Manitoba pamphlets and info regarding all the best places to visit and enjoy in Winnipeg. People love coming back to Winnipeg and staying in houses that are in the neighbourhoods they grew up in and enjoying time with their friends and family.

The income generated from short term renting out our second home is very important to my family and I and is used to help pay our bills, maintain the home and save for my children's education. If the regulations were to be implemented as suggested and we were not able to short term rent, we would have to rent out the house with a 30 day minimum stay. This would seriously impact the amount of money we make from this property and would also negatively impact Winnipeg's economy.

Hosting a short term rental home in River Heights has benefited me and our community. Personally I have found it amazing to meet and get to know so many interesting people who grew up here in Winnipeg and now return to see family and friends from all over North America. Our short term rental has benefited River Heights by giving people the

opportunity to stay in the neighbourhood that they grew up in. It's a wonderful thing for people to be able to walk to their families homes through our beautiful tree lined streets or have friends and family back to their vacation home to have dinner or visit with them. It's really about creating a space for people to be able to experience being back together with friends and family and we feel privileged to be a part of that.

In conclusion it very much saddens and concerns me to think that the Winnipeg City Council and Mayor Brian Bowman may introduce regulations that limit or bans short term rentals in secondary homes in such a way that we will no longer be able to rent our second house to many of the families that rely on our house as a way to spend time with their friends and families in River Heights and surrounding neighbourhoods. It will negatively effect local restaurants and businesses and it will negatively effect Winnipeg's economy. My guests stay at our rental from anywhere from a week to many months and they spend a lot of money in the local economy. They have told me that they would not stay for anywhere near as long if their only option was to stay in Hotels or with friends or family.
I think the City Council is making a big mistake in considering implementing these types of regulations and I believe that not enough research has been done on the positive aspect of well run short term rentals. They generate a lot of money in the local economy and they can have a very positive impact on local communities. They are also provide important income to those who rely on it

I urge the Winnipeg City Councillors and Mayor Brian Bowman to vote NO on primary-residence restriction for short term rentals.
And
I urge the Winnipeg City Councillors and Mayor Brian Bowman to vote NO on capping the number of nights for short term rentals.

Sincerely
Jude Sanson