Where do we go from here?

Our mission, as the newly formed Manitoba Association of Short-Term Rental Owners Inc., is to educate our community's residents, public officials and tourists on the role of Short-Term Rentals and how they fit into the fabric of the community while preserving Manitoba's unique charm, economic vitality and tax base. We seek to ensure that local officials approve permitting and operations of Short-Term Rentals in a way that is fair to all property owners.

Now that we are an organized single entity and an equal partner in the tourism industry we would appreciate being part of the discussion on all aspects of the drafting of these regulations. We are as serious about the future of tourism in our city and province as we are about neighborhood livability.

Benefits:

Holiday and short-term rentals favor economic development, both urban and rural, in a de-centralized way so that tourism is not just concentrated in areas with the more well-known attractions.

Waste reduction and sustainability are core values of the short-term rental sector, running through from the renovation of buildings and imaginative restoration of interiors, to careful maintenance of the property and its environment and energy efficiency. Very often these are heritage buildings which would otherwise be torn down and replaced with a hideous square box dwelling, voted most likely to clash with the surrounding area.

Hosting offers job opportunities to people who are not otherwise strong candidates in the labor market - frequently women with young families, retired couples, widowed people whose income has reduced while their bills remain the same. I hire a lot of students, newcomers, and single Moms.

Airbnb hosting spreads knowledge and experience of different cultures and ethnic groups, eliminating prejudices and fear of the "different". We as hosts renew and spread the age-old tradition of hospitality, which is so much a part of our Canadian culture.

Hosting encourages family members to pull together creating a powerful element of resilience. This has never been more important than it is now. My own team consists of myself, my husband, my mother and my step-father as well as occasional assistance from some of my extended family. This group effort gives a sense of worth to each person for their contribution, fostering family unity. This practice of hospitality becomes a vital part of the local economy while embracing new ideas.

A progressive city benefits from a vast array of temporary, permanent and semi-permanent housing offerings. Most short-term rental hosts are also open to renting these furnished suites for longer term stays and are able to pivot easily. I LOVE when I get a 3 or 6 month booking! A year in the furnished rental would be fine by me too, but these contracts do not come along every day. The longer contracts also don't cater to tourism, they are more geared toward the people

here on work contracts. I like to welcome both groups of guests and hope I will not be pushed into having to choose.

We have been called on more than once by council regarding our suggestions for regulation. I don't think we need dozens of fine print rules that the city has no means to enforce. Too intricate and none of the groups they apply to will fully understands how to comply with them. We have the Neighbourhood Livability Act to get more specific on a situation if the occasion warrants.

Five (and only 5) Simple Recommendations for Regulation:

1-Tax: Bring in the accommodation taxes! (That kinda sounds like a teenager telling their parents to ground them for their own good, doesn't it?) Taxes brings a higher awareness to what we offer in tourism for our area. This is badly needed money funneling into our city! We are happy to help fix the road we all drove in here on today.

2-Licensing: A license should be required to operate a short-term rental in Winnipeg and this license number be visible on all advertisements and inside the residence to anyone entering the building. License should not be transferrable from person to person or property to property. One license per house. License be $100 per year for a primary residence listing and $200 per property for a secondary residence listing. $1000 fine for operating a short term rental without a valid or current license. No cap on the number of listings to be held as secondary residences, nor cap on number of nights rented either for primary residence listings or secondary residence listings.

3-Fire Prevention Inspection: Hard-wired inter-connected smoke alarms and a carbon monoxide detectors. This should be to the same standard that is expected in a long-term rental.

4-Neighbourhood Harmony: Provision of (1) off-street parking space for each 4 guests the listing accommodates will be required. Establish clear "house rules" for guests such as quiet hours to avoid noise and disruptions, especially at night. Mine and many other properties use a noise decibel monitoring system. All short-term rentals should be equipped with video surveillance systems at all entrances.

5-Criminal Background Check (including Child Abuse Registry) – should be standard for all hosts.

Summary:

How do your mortgage rates look right now? My guess is they look about as coco-bananas as mine do. I will be 117 years old by the time one of them matures, I hope at that time they are not still wheeling me in here to talk to your grand-children sitting in those seats about STR regulations. That's it from middle-aged Melanie for today!

We support and will collaborate in all efforts to craft sensibly policy to further increase safety and harmony in our neighbourhoods. Looking forward to getting started working with you on this from a fresh perspective with new leadership. Thank you in advance for your anticipated guidance, fairness and understanding.