Sent: Sunday, October 15, 2023 8:51:39 PM

Personal information
Full name:
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Address:
City: Winnipeg
Province or territory: Manitoba
Postal code:

Delegation information
Committee: Executive Policy Committee
Committee - council: N/A
Committee - other: N/A
Agenda item (number and title): 2

Service inquiry: Submit Comments in writing
Participation preference: N/A
Comments in writing: Presentation to the City of Winnipeg Executive Policy Committee October 17, 2023
Re: Agenda Item #2: Regulating Short-Term Rentals I'm appearing before you today as a resident of the Daniel McIntyre ward with concern about Agenda Item #2 on regulating short term rental accommodations.
While the proposed by-law will increase accountability in some ways, I remain against the proposed framework as I don't think it goes far enough.
The reason I don't think it goes far enough is that the proposed bylaw is missing a key element, and I'm going to tell you why it's a problem. The by-law is missing a primary residence requirement. If we had a primary residence requirement, that would mean that short term rental operators could only rent out their primary residences and only for a certain number of nights a year.
We always hear that Winnipeg wants to become a "world class city". Let me tell you which world class cities have a primary residence requirement or a restriction on the number of nights per year you can rent out your primary residence: New York City, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Amsterdam, the entire country of Japan, New Orleans, Copenhagen, Paris, Vienna, Vancouver, Toronto, etc. You can make the argument that Winnipeg is not on the same level as some of these places, but many other smaller cities like Mississauga, Quebec City, Ottawa, and Vaughan all restrict short term rentals to primary residences. There is absolutely no excuse not to, and the positives of adding this requirement far outweigh the negatives.
Companies like Airbnb started off as a place where you could rent out a room in your home, but now you see investors buying entire homes and taking them off the market to convert to short term rentals. I would love nothing more to see our city council propose an amendment to the proposed by-law to only allow short term rentals in someone's primary residence. One of the issues many people have with short term rentals is that it affects the quality of life for the residents who live around them, especially in multi-unit residential buildings like the one I live in, which has become overrun with short term rentals. If you had a primary residence requirement, you would see a lot less issues, because people would never let the kinds of things we've seen happen in short term rentals to happen in their own homes. I

believe this would help the City of Winnipeg save money on enforcement, as you'd simply have fewer issues to contend with from a livability perspective. The police are a fixture in our building as a result of short term rental owners who fail to take responsibility for their units. They offload responsibility for dealing with problems with their units and use the police and our building's security for that purpose. Restricting short term rentals to primary residences would also force short term rental owners to return all but one of their properties back to Winnipeg's conventional rental market. In our building alone, it would return approximately 60 units back to the rental market. Winnipeg's current rental vacancy rate is currently around 2.9%. Renters need those units more than the short term rental operators do.

You will hear many stories today from short term rental owners where they will use absurd emotional appeals about how much they contribute to society because they rent their units to refugees or people travelling from remote communities to access medical care. As someone who has actually worked in social services for the last 20 years, I can assure you there are many other services that are in a better position to provide supports to refugees and people seeking medical care. If these short term rental owners are the entrepreneurial geniuses they claim to be, they shouldn't be worried about a primary residence rule and will find other ways to monetize their units if such a rule is implemented, such as converting them to long term rentals.

It seems like until now, city council has given equal weight to the arguments by short term rental operators and the people that are impacted by them. But as I just alluded to, short term rental operators can do something else with their other units if a primary residence requirement is added today. On the other hand, if I have decided I've had enough of living in a building that's become overrun with short term rentals, as my building has, my only option is to sell the home I love. I love living downtown and with our city council trying very hard to attract people to live downtown, the by-law you're voting on, if it is sent to council without a primary residence rule, is exactly the kind of by-law that will prioritize short term rentals over residents in many neighbourhoods, not just downtown. One thing that I'll add here is that the developer of our building, Urban Capital received $4.5 million through the city/provincial Live Downtown Rental Development Program, which was launched in late 2014. I can honestly say the money that was contributed by the city through that program was a complete waste, as it helped build a building that has become the poster child for issues with the short term rental industry. It shouldn't come down to me selling the home I love to get away from a nuisance business that is literally operating right beside me. You may hear short term rental operators claim it will ruin their livelihood. To that I say too bad, find a way to make an honest living that won't destroy peoples' quality of life. When people use their property as an investment rather than a home, there is some inherent risk in that. When you buy other forms of investments, an investment advisor will often go over the risk involved. However, short term rental owners seem to think there should be no risk to their real estate investments. These people claim to be entrepreneurs or people who have picked themselves up by their bootstraps or whatever, but they are only able to do that because the game is currently rigged in their favour. And it will still be rigged in their favour if the by-law goes through without a primary residence rule. Again, we need to prioritize residents' quality of life over the profits of short-term rental operators. Before you proceed with voting on this today and sending it to the full council, I implore you to prioritize the people who actually live in the neighbourhoods impacted by short term rentals over the profits of short-term rental operators and amend the proposed by-law to include a primary residence only rule.

Sincerely,

Allen Mankewich

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