

Dianne Boisvert

Subject: FW: Short Term Rental Ordinance

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Cc: Heather Shand; Afroz Khan; bruce@vogelatlarge.com; Jennie Donahue; Constance Preston; Mark Wright; Sean Reardon

Subject: Short Term Rental Ordinance

Hello -

My wife and I own a house on Northern Blvd on Plum Island and we would like to express our concern over the language in the ordinances with Zoning and Licensing regarding Short Term Rentals.

We understand the need for some rules and regulations for these properties, especially as they pertain to safety and the condition of the home. For example, smoke and CO detectors, occupancy limits and some form of contact all make sense. However there are two specific pieces of the ordinance that cause the most concern - the 24/7 emergency contact and the registration process.

Regarding the emergency contact - it does not seem realistic for anyone to be available at all hours in the middle of the night into the early morning. Say there is a noise violation at 3am and the police are called - what am I, the owner, going to do at 3am? If a single property has complaints and the city needs to notify the owner, it seems like that could be done during normal business hours.

If the renter is facing an emergency at the house, it's likely they would reach out to the owner directly. Platforms like AirBnB and VRBO also have 24 hour contacts to assist renters in the case of an emergency or issue at the house. We'd also be curious about the data regarding noise complaints or other issues specifically reported by full time Plum Island residents. Is this an active problem that needs to be addressed with a 24 hour contact?

In terms of the registration process, it feels more like a process for a new build rather than a short term rental. Having to go in front of the Licensing and Zoning boards and provide documentation such as a survey and interior layout seems unreasonable. If there are safety inspections, can they not gather the information they need such as the layout and exits in person? Also, many people have started booking rentals on Plum Island for this coming summer already. Is the suggestion to start this process this year and hope our property is approved by Memorial Day? That doesn't seem possible to do from a resource standpoint.

Everyone we know who has purchased a house on Plum Island for rental

purposes has made huge improvements to the house. Not only cosmetic but also safety and other improvements that extend the life of the house. This rental income is put back into the house which benefits the owner, the neighbors and the tax base as values increase. Many owners also encourage their renters to enjoy the restaurants, shops and other attractions in Newburyport. These dollars support the town for things like a strong school system.

While we understand this is not a ban of short term rentals and there are carve outs for Plum Island, it does still create barriers. If the goal is to improve the quality of life for full time residents, we don't believe all of this ordinance will do that. Problem properties should be addressed, safety should be enforced and owners should be responsible. However these steps, mainly the 24 hour contact and onerous permitting process do not seem to help these goals be achieved.

Thank you for your time. Please send an acknowledgment of receipt of this email.

Mark Realbuto and Megan Gale