



December 7, 2020

The Virginia Beach Mayor and City Council
2401 Courthouse Drive
City Hall, Building #1, Room 281
Municipal Center
Virginia Beach, VA 23456

Subject: Short Term Rentals

Dear Mr. Mayor and Members of the City Council:

A Letter to the Editor (Attachment 1) the *Virginian Pilot* published on November 16, criticized the Vice City Manager and a City Council member for near-sightedness in failing to see the economic benefits of Short-Term Rentals (STRs) and eliminating new STRs outside of overlay districts.

Contrary to that opinion, the Croatan Civic League (CCL) feels STRs are a bane to our small community that has worsened with the advent of Airbnb and Vrbo. Regrettably, the letter's author only focused on the economic impact limiting STRs would have on Oceanfront businesses and STR owners, investors and managers. The author, however, glossed over the negative impact STRs have on the quality of life, safety, sanitation, environment and, most importantly, the sense of community that characterize neighborhoods like Croatan.

Some STR landlords advertise, for example, that their properties offer renters an idyllic experience in a quiet, residential, oceanside family setting. During "the season," these properties are likely to generate haphazard parking and street congestion that interfere with mail delivery and trash removal as well as late-night, loud parties that disturb the peace and disrupt the neighbors' sleep. Contrary to the author's assertion, we do not see STR owners as, "committed to being responsible caring neighbors".

STRs have proliferated unchecked and unregistered, despite City Zoning Regulation prohibiting such activity in residentially zoned neighborhoods. They have become intrusive businesses in medium density residential zoned neighborhoods like Croatan, where many homes are situated on 50' x 100' sized lots, separated by narrow lanes serviced by narrow roads, absent sidewalks and access limited to a single road in and out. Added to that, Croatan's principal attraction, its public beach, which is awaiting dune and berm replenishment and restoration, is being subjected to added pressure from visitors, who crowd the shore with little regard for the environment and beach etiquette.

City Council is well aware of the overall issues associated with STRs and are continuing to seek the best solutions for the citizens of Virginia Beach. We hope you will also recognize Croatan's unique circumstance on our small, tightly knit, coastal community lying near major attractions and events which make it attractive to potential STR owners, real estate investors and property managers. We hope that this will not sway your intent to regulate and limit STR expansion.

Again, thank you for your kind consideration and efforts to help.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Kelly', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michael Kelly
President, Croatan Civic League

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Letters for Nov. 16: Proposal to limit short-term rentals in Virginia Beach lacks balance

The Virginian-Pilot |
Nov 15, 2020 at 6:00 PM

Short-term rentals

Short-term rentals in Virginia Beach benefit tourism, local businesses and our economy as a whole. More guests mean more revenue for the local shops, restaurants and businesses hit hard by COVID-19. Notably, short-term rental property owners continue to be responsible partners by adopting enhanced cleanliness measures to protect both guests and staff.

Unfortunately, certain members of the Virginia Beach City Council don't understand the economic value of short-term rentals. The council is considering an extremely unfair proposal that would phase out operating permits outside overlay districts. Property owners like myself did not make such a significant financial investment with the expectation of uprooting due to misguided regulations.

It's not just property owners who would suffer under Councilman Louis Jones and Vice Mayor Jim Woods' proposal. The businesses that depend on and partner with short-term rentals would see revenue streams shrink. Removing short-term rentals from non-overlay districts would place an existential threat on hundreds of Virginia Beach small businesses.

I imagine some or all of the council have utilized short-term rentals in the past; I'm disappointed that some members don't see the value of them. Myself and my fellow property owners are committed to being responsible, caring neighbors. If the city grandfathers in existing permit holders, short-term rentals can continue operating in cooperation with city officials. If there are valid complaints against a property after one year, the city can revoke the conditional use permit. We want to see fair, balanced regulation governing our businesses and an opportunity to showcase our partnership.

Kim Barker, Virginia Beach