



Committee on Community Resources and the Northampton City Council

Committee Members:

Chair: Councilor Gina Louise Sciarra

Vice-Chair: Councilor Dennis P. Bidwell

Councilor Alisa F. Klein

Councilor James Nash

Meeting Minutes

Date: March 18, 2019

Time: 7:00 pm

Location: Council Chambers, 212 Main St., Northampton, Massachusetts

1. **Meeting Called to Order and Roll Call.** At 7:01 p.m. Councilor Sciarra called the meeting to order. Present on roll call were Councilors Gina-Louise Sciarra, Alisa F. Klein and James Nash. Councilor Dennis Bidwell was absent. Also present were Mayor David Narkewicz and City Councilor Marianne LaBarge
2. **Announcement of Audio/Video Recording**
Councilor Sciarra announced that the meeting was being audio and video recorded.
3. **Public Comment**
Although people were present for the discussion of short-term rentals, there was no general public comment.
4. **Community Forum on Proposal to Adopt 'Community Impact Fee' on Short-Term Rental Units**
Councilor Sciarra announced that she would read the two orders then turn the meeting over to Mayor **Community Impact Fee on Short-Term Rentals** and **18.235 An Order to Accept M.G.L. 64G, 3D(b) to Narkewicz**. Councilor Sciarra read the text of **18.234 An Order to Accept M.G.L. 64G, 3D(a) to Impose Community Impact Fee on Short-Term Rentals Within Two- and Three-Family Dwellings.**
 - A. **Brief Presentation by Mayor Narkewicz**
By way of background, Mayor Narkewicz noted that, as some may know, literally in the final days of the last legislative session, a compromise was reached between the governor and legislature on a short-term rental bill that would basically close the loophole that had existed prior to that in M.G.L. Chapter 64G, which up to that point had governed different types of lodging. The amendment added short-term rentals to the types of occupancies governed by that statute.

The legislation imposed a number of things that are beyond the scope of the City Council that have been accepted by the legislature, he confirmed.

The bill provided two local options: first, the local option tax on hotels/motels which the City of Northampton first accepted back in 1988 would automatically be applied to short-term rentals. Any city or town which had accepted that statute was deemed to have automatically accepted it for short-term rentals.

The other local option, or opt-in provision, is this community impact fee. The legislature spent a great deal of time talking about this, hearing from both sides of the issue but particularly hearing from folks who were concerned about the impact of Airbnb on housing affordability and rental availability. Citylab posted a really good article on this issue and some of the research that has been done.

The Mayor cited a couple of paragraphs from the article: 'Since Airbnb helps homeowners take existing housing stock and turns some of it into short-term units, its biggest measured effect so far has been on housing prices – by repurposing units that might otherwise be long-term housing, it's straining an already supply-short market. Rents rise in the process. The cities researchers have analyzed happen to be already-pricey coastal metros, meaning Airbnb is just one of the many factors at play. But, researchers say it's a powerful one. "I was surprised at how early in the process of Airbnb expanding into cities that it has measurable impacts on housing costs," one researcher stated.

"In Boston, one working paper from the University of Massachusetts Boston (UMass Boston) Department of Economics found a causal relationship between Airbnb proliferation and housing prices: with every 12 Airbnb listings per census tract, asking rents increased by .4%," Mayor Narkewicz read.

Another working paper found that with each 10% increase in Airbnb listings in a U.S. zip code, there was a .42% increase in rental prices and .76% increase in house prices. At McGill University, folks in the Urban Planning Department found that in New York City, Airbnb was associated with a 1.4% increase in NYC rents from 2015 to 2017, Mayor Narkewicz related.

As to the concern, Mayor Narkewicz noted that they understand and recognize that this is a new sharing economy that is creating a new income stream for some people and providing a new type of short-term lodging, but state law also recognizes that there can be some negative impacts, most notably the impact on rents and the availability of rental units.

The law envisioned a two-part community impact fee that communities could adopt on a very narrow category of short-term rentals, Mayor Narkewicz elaborated.

He read the definition of short-term rental as follows: "An owner-occupied, tenant-occupied or non-owner occupied property including, but not limited to, an apartment, house, cottage, condominium or a furnished accommodation that is not a hotel, motel, lodging house or bed and breakfast establishment, where: (i) at least 1 room or unit is rented to an occupant or sub-occupant and; (ii) all accommodations are reserved in advance; provided, however, that a private owner-occupied property shall be considered a single unit if leased or rented as such."

Mayor Narkewicz referred to the two subsections of law required to be accepted – M.G.L. Chapter 64G 3D(a) and 3D(b). The reason for the awkward language in the first order referring to the previous order is that it is necessary to have affirmatively accepted Part (a) to even consider Part (b), he explained.

Part (a) applies to operators renting or transferring occupancy of a 'professionally-managed unit,' which is defined as one of two or more short-term rentals (STR's) located in the same city or town and operated by

the same operator. The definition of 'professionally-managed unit' specifically excludes units located within one-, two- or three-family dwellings that include the operator's primary residence. An owner-occupied, one-, two- or three-family home would not fall within the purview of this subsection, he confirmed.

If accepted, a person operating two or more 'professionally-managed units' in the city would pay a 3% 'community impact fee' on those transactions directly to the city or town. That fee would go into a special 'receipts reserved' fund to be put toward advancing affordable housing projects in Northampton.

Going back to the earlier policy rationale of trying to mitigate impacts on affordability, as councilors know, the city has used resources like Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to support affordable housing and to maintain an adequate stock of affordable housing. This would be another source of funds he would have to come to City Council to appropriate and that could only be used for affordable housing.

Subsection 3D (b) has the same basic construct but it eliminates the owner-occupied exemption for two- and three-family dwellings, Mayor Narkewicz continued. If both subsections are adopted, the community impact fee would be on 'professionally-managed units' (two or more in the same city) and would not apply to an owner-occupied single-family home. If someone has just one home in the city and is doing Airbnb out of that home or renting a spare bedroom, none of that applies because he or she would not have two or more units, he stressed. In the example of a three-family home with the owner living in one of the units, the rental would be exempt under part (a), but subject to the community impact fee under part (b), since it gets a little stricter.

If the City Council adopts both sections, someone living in a three-family home and Airbnb'ing the other two units would be subject to the community impact fee on the two other units. Again, those would be two rental units that would be taken out of the city's long-term rental stock.

Mayor Narkewicz expressed his awareness that the City Council follows the issue of housing affordability. The city is in the middle of a major fair access to housing study right now in which administrators are looking at various barriers and hurdles. One thing they hear about Northampton is that it is an attractive place with a strong economy; people want to come here but that has driven up housing costs and in some cases made it more challenging for people to afford to live here. That's the backdrop against which he brings this forward. The legislature only requires that up to 35% of the community impact fee be strictly dedicated to affordable housing, however, he is proposing that 100% be applied.

As far as how much that will be, a lot of it is a little unclear. One of the things the law does is require everyone operating a short-term rental to register with the Department of Revenue (DOR). The law exempts the first 14 days of rental charges from state sales tax. But even if operators don't plan to rent for 14 days they still have to file a declaration with the DOR. They can then file a declaration of exemption attesting that they do not intend to exceed the 14-day threshold.

One of the issues with Airbnb generally is that there is not a lot of specific information on where each unit is located, what type of home it is in, who the owner is, etc. Municipalities don't have that data right now. That would be part of the implementation of the new law that takes effect July 1st.

He knows people have a lot of other questions about the Airbnb law generally; DOR and other private agencies have a lot of information on line, he shared. In terms of collection, the law envisions that the fee

would be collected at the local level on a monthly basis. They are waiting for DOR to provide them with a little more detail on its regulations. How the short-term rental platform will report and how DOR will collect that information has yet to be worked out.

Councilor Nash expressed his understanding that a person who owns a single-family home and wants to Airbnb will not be subject to the fee while someone who owns a three-family and turns the other two units into short-term rentals would be.

Councilor Nash asked what determines if a property is owner-occupied; is that defined? He expressed his understanding that if an owner goes away for a month it would be owner-occupied but what if the owner goes away for a longer time?

Mayor Narkewicz said he would look for a definition in the course of the meeting.

With regard to the collection piece, Councilor Klein said she read on the DOR website that collection would be done by the state.

That is for the local option occupancy tax, Mayor Narkewicz clarified. The community impact fee would be collected locally, he reiterated.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Craig Della Penna of 62 Chestnut Street said he's been looking forward to this for years. He and Dee [Clapp] are the last real B&B operators in the City of Northampton. He has been doing this since 2003 and then saw the phenomenon of Airbnb come in. He was a member of Airbnb but they fired him after a while because, 'he's not a guy who likes to give money to 3,000-mile-away organizations.' He referred to a handout circulated to members.

As a realtor, he gets between five and nine transactions a year from people who love this place so much that they want to relocate here. "You can be sure that none of my money leaves to go 3,000 miles away."

National companies that are here in any realm; they survive, but they don't thrive, and the same is true of Airbnb's, he asserted. "Airbnb's are hidden. They cannot be a member of the chamber or a local tourism entity," he contended. He said he knows there are over 100 Airbnb's within the confines of Northampton. He would love for them to become a part of the chamber. He is also a member of the Hampshire County tourism board, which Airbnb's are not allowed to join. If Airbnb's were to become known (and once DOR has that information they will become known, he assured), he would love to see them become part of a Northampton B&B association. Wouldn't it be great to have a centralized calendar of room availability? He asked rhetorically.

Northampton has completely functioning village centers with preserved farmland just outside, something not seen in a lot of places. "But we take it for granted to such a degree that we don't even notice it," he claimed. Visitors notice it and it's why they want to come here.

He was a little disappointed by the Mayor's presentation, he said. What is a professionally managed place? We haven't heard that answer, he asserted.

Nothing heard tonight affects him except that he's going to be paying a tax now because B&B's are being folded into the hotels. B&B's with three or fewer rooms never paid taxes. Now they are going to be paying a state tax, local tax and 3% fee. He took his first price decrease. He doesn't care; he wants Airbnb's folded into something local and treasurable rather than being sinister and hidden monies leaving town. He thanked members for holding the forum.

Mayor Narkewicz noted that he did read the definition of a professionally managed unit. A short-term rental by definition cannot be within a B&B establishment, so a licensed B&B establishment is not a short-term rental. By definition, his B&B would be exempt from this law entirely, he informed Mr. Della Penna.

Mr. Della Penna described two Airbnb establishments in his neighborhood. Across the street from his legal B&B is a four-family house with two Airbnb units; one owned by a woman who puts her son through private school and camps at the DAR state forest during good weather weekends so she can Airbnb her house; the other operated by the building owner who decided it was such a good idea that he turned one of his other units into an Airbnb and rents it out at double the rent of the monthly rental, Mr. Della Penna shared.

Those examples would clearly trigger the community impact fee, unlike his B&B, Mayor Narkewicz advised.

Diana (Dee) Boyle-Clapp of 940 Chesterfield Road said she owns another B&B and has been in operation for 10 years. She and her husband are really conflicted about this, she shared. On the one hand, she believes in the sharing economy and recognizes that everybody has to make a living; on the other hand, this has really hurt all of them. One of her issues is that the processes have been unequal and unfair. At her B&B, nobody is allowed to cook in the house except her and her husband. In Airbnb's people are allowed to cook. In her B&B, guests are not allowed to eat off the same forks as they do, even though they are required by law to put their forks in a dishwasher that reaches a certain temperature. Pets have to be out of the kitchen when people are eating. There are a list of things that are different and she would love to see some of it become equal. Either they should no longer be required to do it or everybody else should be required to do it too because, if it's safe for one it should be safe for everybody. Another thing that concerns her is how Northampton is going to find out about all these Airbnb's. "I think there's a lot of stuff that needs to be ironed out here," she observed.

She is also concerned about the 3% fee going solely to low-income housing. Other cities like Houston have a special tax, a percentage of which goes to supporting the arts, which does a lot for the community and brings in more tourism. It actually might be a really good consideration to have a percentage go to the arts. This isn't going to affect her a whole lot but she does feel like there are so many people in town who haven't been participating in paying taxes, etc. They've sort of been carrying that burden. Also, as chamber members, they have been advertising and helping to grow the city as much as humanly possible. She feels the city needs more support and, in particular, the downtown needs more support for artists. She wished members good luck.

Councilor Sciarra stressed that all Airbnb operators will be required to register with the state under the new regulation. They won't be able to rent thru Airbnb or VRBO unless they are registered.

Rebecca Muller of 193 Nonotuck Street said she has lived in the same house in Florence for 40 years as of July. She has an old duplex and a small part of the house has been converted to a mother-in-law apartment that she currently rents occasionally through VRBO. She doesn't consider herself a 'professionally-managed unit.' The supplemental income is part of her retirement plan in the hope that it'll pay her property

taxes and water and sewer bills and allow her as a single person to survive in this economy, having worked for a lifetime in human services. She is in favor of the use of the community impact fee for affordable housing. She sought to clarify whether she would be considered a professional with only one small unit.

Mayor Narkewicz confirmed that the community impact fee would not apply to her because she's staying under the 'two or more' threshold.

She also asked how they define owner-occupied.

Mayor Narkewicz said he would check with DOR. His sense is that the owner has to be actually residing in and occupying the home. There is not a stand-alone definition for owner-occupied, he reported.

Ms. Muller asked if the city would start a webpage and Mayor Narkewicz said that, depending on how this turns out, they would definitely be creating a short-term rental page on the city website. State law also allows the city to enact its own regulations which they are looking at. They may create a low-cost registry at the local level as well. They will definitely try to put information on line, he assured.

The state law was passed December 28, 2018 by voice vote in the final waning days of the session, Mayor Narkewicz observed. It probably helped that Airbnb had filed suit against the City of Boston a couple of months earlier.

David Arbeitman of 357 North Farms Road said he and Rachael Naismith run an Airbnb on North Farms Road in Florence. In response to the 'diatribe' of the first gentleman (Mr. Della Penna), in terms of money they collect, most of it does stay in the local economy, he affirmed. Corporate Airbnb does get a cut, he acknowledged. But to be clear, most of it is income to them and their Airbnb also brings in people that go to local restaurants, go to local concerts, go downtown, buy things, etc. that stimulate the local economy. To describe Airbnb as sinister and something that's just headquartered in San Francisco he thinks does an injustice to the fact that it does help the local economy.

Joanna Campe of 152 South Street said she also wanted to defend Airbnb a little. She thinks the 3% fee for affordable housing is great. When she turned 65 she started to hear from realtors that she had to sell her house, where she has lived since 1981. One of the things she does with Airbnb is provide a chemical-free, fragrance-free place to stay. This is very important because there are so many chemically-sensitive people who can't take the harsh chemicals in hotels. Also, there is a great need for what she would call medium-length stays in Northampton. There are researchers that come to study at the library for a couple of weeks, visiting professors who come for a semester, etc. She considers this as filling a need for Northampton because these are not people who want to stay in a B&B or hotel for that length of time, they want to be able to fix a meal and live in a comfortable surrounding.

She has a list of recommended restaurants, and she feels like an ambassador, Ms. Campe continued. She did try to rent a room and have housemates but it was challenging. On the other hand she loves hosting. She has had visitors from China visiting children at college, etc. It provides her with a very interesting, back and forth cultural exchange and is what is allowing her to stay in her house in this period of time.

State law defines 'occupancy' as use or possession of any room or rooms in a bed and breakfast establishment, hotel, lodging house or motel designed and used for sleeping and living purposes. . . for a period of

not more than 90 days, Mayor Narkewicz advised. Short-term rental occupancy is not more than 31 days. Apparently if you are renting for longer than that, you are not really 'short-term' renting, he conjectured.

She wants to pay her fair share but also wants to say she thinks it provides something really wonderful to the community, Ms. Campe concluded.

Mayor Narkewicz said she'd be exempt from this under any scenario although she would still have to pay the occupancy tax. The governor was concerned it would be prohibitive for people doing it occasionally and that's why the compromise was reached of operators renting for fewer than 14 days not having to pay tax.

Patrick Boughan, a resident of Ward 5 and vice chair of the Northampton Housing Partnership, said he wanted to speak on behalf of the partnership, which works to insure Northampton stays above the ten percent (10%) subsidized housing threshold and seeks to maintain general affordability across the city for low and moderate incomes. The housing partnership supports the adoption of the community impact fee, he confirmed. He went on to describe what the housing situation looks like in Northampton and why taking this money and applying it to affordable housing makes sense.

As far as statistics, since 2013, home prices have increased about 33%, he reported. 50% of renters are cost-burdened, meaning they are paying at least 30% of their gross income towards housing, and half of that number - or 25% - are severely cost-burdened, meaning spending 30% or more. Since he got those figures two years ago, the situation is slight worse; now the percentage is slightly above 50%. For owners, twenty percent (20%) are cost-burdened and half of those are severely cost-burdened as well.

He looked at American Community Surveys (ACS) data for what's happening in the rental market and found that, over the last five years, 600 rentals have crossed over from being \$300 to \$1,000 to being \$1,000 to \$2,400 and nine percent (9%) of rental households with incomes below \$50,000 have left the city. (There was a 9% decrease in the number of people with incomes below \$50,000 in rental units and the occupants were largely replaced by people with incomes over \$75,000 or \$100,000, leading to the assumption that low-income renters left rather than earning substantially more money, he clarified.) Four percent (4%) of households with incomes under \$20,000 just left the city entirely (208 households).

Looking at funding for affordable housing, two major funding sources - the Community Preservation Act (CPA) and the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit - have been reduced. The CPA used to have a 100% state match, it's now down to 12%, so it is dramatically less than it used to be. The bigger impact on affordable housing is the reduction in the Low-income Housing Tax Credit, which accounts for about 40% of affordable housing projects. Developers got a discount on taxes by putting money into low-income housing. It is now not nearly as lucrative for them to do so, so this funding is reduced. It is estimated across the state that 200,000 fewer affordable housing units will be built because of this change.

Within the city, developers have built the Lumberyard affordable housing project, a mixed income project and Live 155, altogether totaling about 100 units. Since Live 155 replaces an older site the net gain is about 60 units. As of 2017, Airbnb had 150 different units within the city and about 100 were 'whole' units, an entire apartment or house. Therefore, in the time it took them to build these new projects, they had an equal or greater amount of units leave the long-term rental market. Given how difficult it is to build affordable housing, losing rentals to short-term rentals can have a really big impact. When the Mayor said 12 Airbnb's in a census tract would increase rent by .4%, they know that in Northampton they have at least 100 Airbnb units.

Looking at the city's broader goals, such as taking action to address climate change and be sustainable; one of the things they talk about is having people live closer to work so they don't have to drive. One way to accomplish this is not to lose the housing they have for long-term renters. He is encouraged to see this both for lessening the proliferation of short-term units and for providing additional funds to help offset the loss of affordable housing. He is really appreciative to the Mayor for bringing this forward and would like to ask that the Community Resources Committee recommend its adoption.

Robin Barber of 18 Vernon Street said his only comment about Craig Della Penna's speech is that Airbnb is not hidden. All its listings are public. He and his wife Carol have never made any attempt to hide their participation in Airbnb. He was puzzled by that comment because it would have been quite easy for him to take a look at people who open their homes. Their Airbnb does not take a unit out of the rental stream because it's used as an office other times of the week, something he thinks is true of many of the Airbnb's.

Mr. Della Penna mentioned all the benefits to the city of the B&B's and he just wanted to agree that the amazing variety of people who have stayed with them are all here to enjoy Northampton and they've had three who have visited them buy homes. It seems to him that the sharing economy, while it has its problems, is part of the extremely vibrant local economy.

Mayor Narkewicz reminded those present that in his opening remarks he acknowledged that Airbnb is part of the sharing economy with some positive effects. They are just going after a small sub-segment of people who are professionalizing it. He mentioned the decimating effect Airbnb is having on the hotel/motel industry in Hawaii where foreign investors are buying buildings and turning them into STR's and the unintended consequence of Uber in putting more cars on the road in Boston. There are some side effects that maybe weren't anticipated and the city is trying to mitigate those, he stressed.

Joanna Campe said she thinks maybe 20% of the people who've stayed with her are people who've lived in Northampton in the past and want to move back or are considering moving here. [Staying in an Airbnb] is an opportunity for them to experience life in the community that they wouldn't have in a hotel.

Brett Constantine of 82 Willow Street said he and his wife live in Florence and have an STR in their two-family home. They are taking one unit out of circulation and it has always bothered him to an extent. Since it is the only they unit have, they will not be subject to the fee. He has mixed feelings. He would be happy to pay his share as well. He asked if the city is considering anything beyond 3D (a) and (b).

This is the full extent of what they can do on the local level, Mayor Narkewicz said. They aren't allowed to impose things that aren't allowed by the legislature. As to his second point, they do accept donations, he quipped.

Maybe it's obvious, but some STR's bring in tourists and some don't, Mr. Constantine observed; he wants to make sure that's clear. While he is fully supportive of the short-term rental market, he doesn't have any illusions that he's bringing Northampton lots of dollars; he doesn't think that's the case. He is not convinced after reading some studies that it's bringing in money. Likewise, only some STR's are taking stock out of circulation. He is curious to see how much money this will raise.

Speaking to Mr. Della Penna's comments about 'hidden' versus open, it has always bothered him that Airbnb folks can't contact each other, he added.

Rachel Naismith informed those present that Mr. Constantine took the initiative to put a sign-up sheet at the back so that Airbnb folks that are here can start to communicate with each other. She said she likes to think of them not as competitors but as people who are trying to help each other out and enjoy this wonderful experience. She encouraged people to sign up before leaving.

She works in the arts and is also listed on Airbnb, Ms. Clapp advised. There is a group working together to create what is known as the 'Arts Hub,' a new website that will include rental listings, she related. If people are interested, she will put her name on the list and is willing to share information. She underscored that she's not opposed to this, she is listed on Airbnb. It's just that the inequities that have always bothered her. "I don't want to take away anybody's livelihood," she assured. The B&B is her husband's retirement job, she pointed out.

With regard to Mr. Della Penna's comments, the piece about Airbnb that is hidden is that, when users go to a site, they can't tell where someone lives, the property is just shown as being within a circle.

He also thinks the inequities should be resolved, at least to some degree, Mr. Constantine agreed. He expressed the opinion that B&B regulations are far and above what is practical and far and above what is needed to keep people safe.

Andrew Fabin said his community is looking to prohibit multi-family homes from being STR's. Addressing himself to the Mayor, he asked if this is allowed under the new law.

The new law is totally separate from local zoning regulations, Mayor Narkewicz clarified. Theoretically, the city could craft zoning to only allow STR's in certain parts of the city. Local communities can make zoning laws for STR's just like right now they can zone where hotels can be. It could be that his community is looking at how to use zoning to limit where STR's can be located, he suggested.

Mr. Fabin expressed his understanding that the proposal is to allow STR's in all zoning districts in single-family homes but not to allow STR's in multi-family homes.

That would be a question for the town attorney, Mayor Narkewicz said. Communities can enact zoning, he confirmed. Northampton hasn't looked into any zoning changes relative to this.

The community is Williamsburg, Mr. Fabin shared.

The proposal will have to go before Town Meeting and be approved by the Attorney General (AG) in advance, so the AG would tell the town if it were illegal, Mayor Narkewicz noted.

Councilor Sciarra thanked the public for coming.

Councilor Nash moved to forward the orders as a group with a positive recommendation. Councilor Klein seconded.

Councilor Nash expressed his understanding that a mother-in-law apartment in a single-family home would not be subject to the community impact fee, and Mayor Narkewicz confirmed that is the case. The scenario where the STR is an office most of the week also doesn't trigger the fee, he said.

Members discussed whether renting multiple bedrooms in a single-family home or an office and a back bedroom would trigger the fee.

Mayor Narkewicz said he would try to get clarification but his understanding is that STR's within a single-family home are exempt. The question is whether operators are taking rental stock out of the market, and he doesn't think anyone could argue that units are being taken off the market in that case. The only thing that would be left untouched by what he is proposing is the single-family scenario, he suggested.

Councilor Sciarra said it would be good to get a definition of 'owner-occupied.' Certainly in big cities there are plenty of people who might stay with a boyfriend or girlfriend and Airbnb their property. Would the 'owner-occupied' condition be met if the owner spends 50% of his time somewhere else?

Mayor Narkewicz said he would try to get clarification. At the end of the day, this was never targeted at somebody living in a single-family home who is just renting a back bedroom because that is not taking units out of the rental market.

Councilor Nash said he would like to get clarification around the mother-in-law suite. Per zoning, it is considered part of a single-family home, he pointed out. He thinks it is one of the gray areas.

Mayor Narkewicz said he would find out if there's any distinction.

Councilor Klein asked about the definitions of 'occupancy' for hotel/motels and short-term rentals. She questioned the fact that hotel/motel occupancy is said to be limited to 90 days and short-term rental occupancy is defined as not being more than 31 days. Mayor Narkewicz agreed the definitions raised further questions, such as whether someone hosting a professor on sabbatical for a semester would be considered a short-term rental.

Mr. Broughan noted that there is a type of occupancy called 'sabbatical rentals' which is more like a traditional month-to-month tenancy than a short-term rental.

Councilor Klein asked about people advertising rental units through alumni associations, etc. and not using Airbnb or another conventional website.

The law says STR operators have to register regardless of the platform they are using, Mayor Narkewicz clarified. Enforcement would probably be complaint-driven, he acknowledged. "We're not going to send people out to knock on people's doors and look for Airbnb's," he noted.

The motion to forward the orders with a positive recommendation passed unanimously 3:0 with one absent (Councilor Bidwell).

5. New Business

Members discussed that the next regular meeting falls on Monday, April 15th – Patriot's Day. They rescheduled the meeting for Monday, April 8th at 4 p.m.

6. **Adjourn.** At 8:32 p.m., Councilor Klein moved to adjourn the meeting; Councilor Nash seconded. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 3 Yes, 0 No (Bidwell absent).

Prepared By:

Laura Krutzler, Administrative Assistant
(413) 587-1210