

CITY OF ROCKLAND, MAINE



***270 Pleasant Street
Rockland, Maine 04841***

CITY CLERK'S OFFICE

March 20, 2015

***YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED THAT A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE
ROCKLAND CITY COUNCIL WILL BE HELD IN CITY COUNCIL
CHAMBERS AT ROCKLAND CITY HALL, 270 PLEASANT STREET,
ROCKLAND, MAINE ON MONDAY, MARCH 23, 2015 AT 5:30 P.M. FOR
THE FOLLOWING PURPOSE(S):***

[Please Note Starting Time and Date]

Order #10 Authorizing Reserve Funds – Audio/Video Repairs (Postponed 3/9/15)

Workshop: Transient Housing

***YOUR PUNCTUAL ATTENDANCE IS REQUESTED
PER ORDER OF THE MAYOR OF THE CITY OF ROCKLAND***



**STUART H. SYLVESTER
CITY CLERK**

CITY OF ROCKLAND, MAINE

ORDER #10

IN CITY COUNCIL

February 9, 2015

ORDER Authorizing Reserve Fund Expenditure – Audio/Visual Equipment

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED BY THE CITY COUNCIL AS FOLLOWS:

THAT the City Manager is hereby authorized to expend up to \$1,100 from the Audio Visual Reserve Account (#70000-01771) for the following audio visual equipment repairs and/or upgrades:

- Three pan/tilt controllers
- Used Mackie audio mixer
- Two long goose neck microphones
- Repair/replace microphone cable/connection at Mayor's desk

Sponsor: City Manager

Originator: City Clerk

Postponed 2/9/15 to 3/9/15

Postponed 3/9/15 to 3/23/15

CITY OF ROCKLAND, MAINE

ORDINANCE AMENDMENT #___

IN CITY COUNCIL

_____, 2015

**ORDINANCE AMENDMENT: Licensing of Lodging Houses and
 Transient Residential Accommodations**

WHEREAS, Title 30-A, Maine Revised Statutes, Section 3811, provides that no person may serve as a common innkeeper or tavernkeeper without a license; and

WHEREAS, the Rockland Code of Ordinances does not currently provide for the licensure of innkeepers of transient accommodations,

NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY OF ROCKLAND HEREBY ORDAINS THAT CHAPTER 11, Licenses, Permits and Franchises, ARTICLE II, Licenses, When Required, SECTION 11-210, Lodging Houses, BE AMENDED AS FOLLOWS:

Sec. 11-210 Lodging Houses And Transient Residential Accommodations

1. License Required. No person shall operate a Lodging Hhouse_ for five (5) lodgers or more; without first obtaining annually a one-year license therefor from the City Council, and no person shall operate a Transient Residential Accommodation without first obtaining annually a one-year license therefor from the City Clerk.

2. Definitions. For the purposes of this ordinance:

A. "Lodging house" means a house or other residential structure where lodgings for five or more persons not within the 2nd degree of kindred to the person operating the lodging house are offered for rent. "Lodging house" does not include dormitories of charitable, educational or philanthropic institutions, or the emergency use of private dwellings at the time of conventions or similar public gatherings.

B. "Transient Residential Accommodation" ("TRA") means either:

(1) An owner- or lessee-occupied dwelling unit where not more than one bedroom is rented or offered for rent for periods of less than a month ("TRA-1"); or

(2) A non-owner- or lessee-occupied single-family dwelling unit that is rented or offered for rent to a person or family for periods of less than one month ("TRA-2").

3. Certifications; Public Hearing. Such licenses shall not be granted except upon the certification of the Police Chief, Fire Chief, Code Enforcement Officer (Building Inspector), and Plumbing Inspector pursuant to this Section andas per Section 11-106 of this Ordinance.

A. Lodging Houses. The City Council may condition, deny, suspend, or revoke any Lodging House license upon the basis of the applicant's compliance or failure to comply with the criteria set forth herein, in Section 11-106 – Certifications, and/or any other applicable law, ordinance, or regulation.

Prior to granting a Lodging Houses license, the City Council shall hold a public hearing, notice of which shall be posted in ~~at two~~ public locations/ and advertised at least seven days before the hearing meeting. There shall be a non-refundable application ~~an annual~~ license fee for the Lodging House and Transient Residential Accommodations Licenses, which shall be set by Order of the City Council, and the Council may establish a graduated fee schedule therefor on the basis of the number of rooms of the facility and/or other criteria.

B. Transient Residential Accommodations. Upon receipt of a complete application for a Transient Residential Accommodation license, the City Clerk shall, by U.S. Mail, First Class, provide notice of such application to the owner(s) of record of abutting parcels at least seven (7) days prior to issuing such license. Notice is effective upon mailing. The City Clerk shall deny an application for a Transient Residential Accommodation license if the application is not certified by either the Police Chief, Fire Chief, Code Enforcement Officer, or Plumbing Inspector. The decision of the City Clerk granting or denying an application for a Transient Residential Accommodation may be appealed within thirty (30) days to the City Council, who shall review and act upon such application *de novo*. The City Council may, *sua sponte*, hold a public hearing on a Transient Residential Accommodation license at any time during the term of the license and impose conditions on, suspend, or revoke such license on the basis of the licensee's non-compliance with any applicable law, ordinance, or regulation, or license certification, condition, or criteria.

4. Review Criteria. In addition to the standards set forth in Section 11-106 and other applicable law, ordinance, or regulations, the following criteria shall apply to applications for Transient Residential Accommodations:

- A. The TRA is located in a zone where new dwelling units are a permitted use;
- B. Off-street, on-site parking shall be provided in conformance with the Table of Parking Requirements in Section 19-307(7)(J), for both the principal use of the structure and, for TRA-1 accommodations, one additional parking space for each bedroom offered for rent;
- C. The use of a dwelling unit as a TRA does not violate any applicable lease, rental agreement, condition of municipal approval, covenant, or other lawful restriction on the use of the parcel;
- D. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in Section 19-315, signage identifying, advertising, providing wayfinding, or otherwise relating to the use of a dwelling as a TRA is not permitted, either on- or off-site;

- E. Meals may be served to TRA guests in the TRA, subject to applicable food service regulations, but not to the general public;
- F. The TRA meets all applicable requirements of the NFPA 101 Life Safety and IPMC Property Maintenance Codes; and
- G. The operator of the TRA must maintain accurate, up-to-date records of all rental transactions in the TRA, including the number of guests and the duration of their stays. Such records must be available for review by the Code Enforcement Officer upon request.

State Law Reference: 30-A M.R.S. § 3801 & § 3811.

Sponsor: Mayor Isganitis
Originator: Code Enforcement Officer

CITY OF ROCKLAND, MAINE

ORDINANCE AMENDMENT #___

IN CITY COUNCIL

_____, 2015

ORDINANCE AMENDMENT: Authorizing Limited Transient Residential Accommodations

THE CITY OF ROCKLAND HEREBY ORDAINS THAT CHAPTER 19, Zoning And Planning, ARTICLE III, Zoning Ordinance, BE AMENDED AS FOLLOWS:

Sec. 19-302 Words And Phrases Defined

For the purpose of this Article certain words and phrases are defined as follows:

* * *

_____ Dwelling Unit: A room or suite of rooms that are arranged, designed, used, or intended for use that is used habitation as a self-contained housekeeping unit, which is separated from other such rooms or suites of rooms, and which contains living, kitchen cooking, and sleeping facilities for one person, or one family, including single-family homeshouses, and the separated units in a duplex, apartment house, multi-family dwellings, and residential condominiums.

_____ Dwelling, One-Family or Dwelling, Single-Family: A building containing not more than one (1) dwelling unit in which the dwelling unit is occupied by members of a single family with not more than three (3) outsiders, if any, accommodated in rented rooms, with exceptions as otherwise provided undermandated in Title 30-A, Maine Revised Statutes, Section 4357-A – Community Living Arrangements, as amended, and occupied as a residence by its owner or, if rented, as a tenancy with a term of at least one month.

_____ Dwelling, Two-Family: A building containing not more than two (2) dwelling units occupied by their owners or, if rented, as tenancies of at least one month in which each dwelling unit is occupied by members of a single family with not more than three (3) outsiders, if any, accommodated in rented rooms.

_____ Dwelling, Multi-Familyple. A “multiple dwelling” means a building or portion thereof consisting of used or intended to be used or occupied as a permanent residence, more or less, by three (3) or more dwelling units occupied by their owners or, if rented, as tenancies of at least one month families living independently of each other, including apartment houses and apartment hotels, but excluding boarding houses, inns, lodging houses, hotels, and motels, and other transient accommodations. Where one or more dwelling units in a multi-family dwelling are rented to a tenant for fewer than 30 days, those dwelling units are subject to zoning provisions for Residential

~~Transient Accommodations, and licensing requirements for innkeepers / lodging houses. The latter terms shall mean a building or buildings divided into individual rooms or suites of rooms which are rented or used or designed to be used primarily for sleeping purposes where the building(s) has only general kitchen and dining facilities or where the rooms which are rented contain no extensive cooking facilities.~~

~~_____ **Family.** "Family" means one (1) or more persons living, sleeping, cooking and eating on the same premises as a single house-keeping unit, Two or more persons related by blood, marriage, civil union, or adoption who reside together as a single housekeeping unit, such as by sharing common kitchen and bathroom facilities. A "family" for zoning purposes may also consist of (1) two or more persons related by blood, marriage, civil union, or adoption and no more than three additional persons who are not so related, or (2) no more than five unrelated persons, who as distinguished from a group occupying a boarding house, lodging house, or hotel, occupy a dwelling unit as a single housekeeping unit, sharing common kitchen and bathroom facilities.~~

* * *

~~_____ **Hotel:** A commercial establishment offering sleeping accommodations for 17 or more travelers and others on a transient or semi-permanent basis, sometimes including varying levels of accessory services for occupants and/or the general public such as restaurants, shops, and meeting rooms. A building or groups of buildings under the same management in which there are sleeping accommodations for more than sixteen (16) persons and primarily used by transients for lodging with or without meals.~~

* * *

~~_____ **Kitchen Facility(ies).** "Kitchen Facility," both in its singular or plural form, shall mean an area that contains any, some, or all of the following facilities for food preparation, storage, and/or sanitation: a stove, oven, convection oven, microwave, hotplate or other cooking or food warming equipment; any size refrigerator or freezer; and/or any type of sink, including a bar sink or wet-bar but not including a bathroom sink.~~

~~_____ **Lodging Facilities.** A facility that offers accommodations for a fee.~~

~~**Lodging, or Rooming, or Boarding House:** Buildings other than single-, two-, or multi-family dwellings or transient residential accommodations that provide, for a fee, sleeping accommodations for sixteen (16) or fewer persons on either a transient or permanent basis, with or without meals served to occupants only, but without separate kitchen~~e~~ooking facilities for individual occupants, provided however that the building may include a separate, additional dwelling unit occupied by the owner or manager.~~

* * *

~~_____ **Transient Residential Accommodation ("TRA").** The use of all or part of a legally-existing dwelling or dwelling unit for short-term rental to a person or persons unrelated to the owner or occupant of the unit, for consideration, for periods of less than one month.~~

Sec. 19-309 Special Use Classes Exceptions and Exemptions

* * *

2. Transient Residential Accommodations.

A. Purpose. The purpose of this subsection is to permit the use of legally-existing dwellings for the accommodation of transient guests for compensation, while ensuring the safety of the occupants and minimizing the impact of such use on the surrounding neighborhood. If not properly regulated, the use of residential properties for transient accommodations may create adverse impacts on surrounding residential uses including, without limitation, increased levels of traffic, parking demand, light and glare, and noise. Such impacts are deleterious to the public health, safety, and welfare of the neighborhood and the City because they impair the livability and desirability of Rockland neighborhoods for year-round residential uses.

B. Prohibited Transient Residential Accommodations (“TRA”).

Except as otherwise permitted herein, the rental of single-family homes and other dwelling units that are not part of a hotel or similar establishment for less than at least one month are prohibited, including, without limitation, the rental or offer to rent of:

(1) A single family home for fewer than seven consecutive nights;

(2) More than one bedroom in a single-family dwelling that has not been licensed as a bed and breakfast establishment or lodging house, for less than one month;

(3) Any dwelling unit in a multi-family dwelling for less than a month unless one of the dwelling units in the building is occupied by an owner of the building during the period of such rental;

(4) Accessory apartments for less than a month; and

(5) Campers, recreational vehicles, trailers, tents, other mobile residential equipment, or accessory buildings for occupancy, or land for the placement and occupancy of one or more campers, recreational vehicles, trailers, tents, other mobile residential equipment, or accessory buildings, except duly authorized trailer parks and similar establishments.

C. Permitted Transient Residential Accommodations.

The following forms of transient residential accommodations may be licensed to operate by the City Clerk subject to the requirements and limitations set forth in Chapter 11, Article II, Section 11-210:

- (1) “TRA-1”: an owner- or lessee-occupied dwelling unit where not more than one (1) bedroom is rented or offered for rent, for periods of less than a month;
- (2) “TRA-2”: a non-owner- or lessee-occupied single-family dwelling or one unit of an owner- or lessee-occupied two-family or multi-family dwelling that is rented or offered for rent to a person or family for periods of not less than seven (7) consecutive nights and less than one month (“TRA-2”).

No dwelling unit may be rented or offered for rent for periods of less than seven (7) nights if not owner- or lessee-occupied during such rental period(s). The rental of two or more rooms in a dwelling unit for periods of less than seven (7) consecutive nights must comply with regulations for bed and breakfast establishments, lodging houses, or hotels as may be applicable.

Sponsor: Mayor Isganitis
Originator: Code Enforcement Officer

Transient Housing Letters to the City 2015

Updated
03/20/15

<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Date Received</u>
Alicia Steffan	Hill Street and VA	02/21/15
Elizabeth Burrell & Gary Swanson	25 Clarendon Street	02/21/15
Neighbors for Overnight Oversight		02/25/15
Seth Thompson	Rockland	02/26/15
Harold Ellis		02/26/15
Historic Inns of Rockland	Limerock Inn, Berry Manor, Granite Inn	03/01/15
Kathryn Fogg Hill	84 Grace Street	03/02/15
Megan Phelan	Rockland	03/02/15
Sandra Dillon/Ripples Inn	16 Pleasant Street	03/02/15
Leila Murphy	Rockland	03/02/15
Don and Sue Bates	17 Payson Lane	03/02/15
Dee Peppe	Rockland	03/02/15
Benjamin St. Cyr	148 N. Main St., Apt 3	03/02/15
VRPO Maine		03/02/15
Kathryn Fogg-Hill	84 Grace Street	03/08/15
Mayor Frank Isganitis	96 Limerock Street	03/09/15
Alicia Steffan	Hill Street and VA	03/10/15
Carol Eliassen	57 Main Street	03/14/15
Josh Hixson	3 Crow Restaurant	03/16/15
Erin Darnell	Rockland	03/18/15
Nicole Fuller	21 Holmes Street	03/18/15
VRPOMe		03/18/15
Kathryn Fogg-Hill	84 Grace Street	03/19/15

Alicia Steffann
43908 Eagle Harbor Terrace
Ashburn, VA 2014

February 21, 2015

Dear Members of the Council:

I'm writing to respectfully give my input on the proposed ordinance that would place restrictions on the numerous vacation rental home owners in Rockland. My husband and I own a house on Hill Street that we have successfully operated as a rental home for the past eight months, and we were very distressed to hear about the proposed limitations that could be placed on us. Primarily, I understand that the current draft of the ordinance prohibits homeowners from renting more than one bedroom for less than seven days, unless they are a bed and breakfast establishment.

Let me first say that some of the opponents of the rental home owners seem to characterize us as a lax and disruptive lot. Far from it, we take great care to make sure that we are very conscientious in the insurance, maintenance, and operation of our home. We certainly do not consider ourselves to be a disruption to our neighbors, nor are we a fly-by-night business of opportunity.

Because of our three bedrooms and two full baths, we attract mainly families with children. In the summer we are mostly rented for weeklong stays. However, in the fall, nearly all of our rentals were for long weekends or, in the case of Thanksgiving, for five days. The simple fact is that hotel rooms are not pleasant for families with children. Our guests chose it was not feasible to cram their families of four or five into a hotel or inn room. They needed our comfortable living space and conveniences like laundry facilities in order to enjoy Rockland with their families. As anyone with children knows, you cannot go on vacation for a week when children are in school. Should the ordinance be enacted, we would lose all that beneficial weekender business. Furthermore, the broader implication for the city is that families would have nowhere suitable to stay in Rockland unless they came for a full week.

Nobody wants Rockland to be a summer vacation town. These partial-week visitors are bringing commerce to Rockland businesses in a season that should be busier and more profitable for the city's merchants. We frequently urge our guests not to miss places like The Home Kitchen Café, Hill's Seafood, Planet Toys, the Thorndike Creamery, and Rock City Coffee. If inns are the only option for accommodations, why would these families not spend their getaways and their money elsewhere? Meanwhile, for those of us who cannot yet live year round in our Rockland homes,

those homes will simply stand empty and the off-season business our guests bring even to our cleaning staff and the local laundry will evaporate.

I would also like to point out that pet-friendly inns and hotels rooms are in very limited supply in Rockland. A number of Rockland vacation homes accept pets, which is a very important benefit to travelers who prefer to bring their dogs with them. Shutting down shorter stays at these vacation homes would also be a blow to business from pet-centric travelers.

In conclusion, please consider that enacting this ordinance will limit, rather than expand, visitors' exposure to the incredible benefits of a Rockland stay, even as it limits the ability of its ordinary homeowners to earn a decent income to support their properties. This ordinance would be a lose-lose situation for rental home owners, business owners on Main Street, and anyone who benefits from the tax dollars generated by those businesses.

To support my case about the unique benefits of vacation homes, I've attached some words from my guests about why our house was just right for their Rockland stay. The themes I would like to highlight are

- need for extra space and child-friendly features
- patronage of Rockland shops and restaurants (on our recommendation)
- overall satisfaction with both our house and with their visit to Rockland

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Alicia Steffann

alicia.steffann@gmail.com

703-729-4787

GUEST TESTIMONY

"The house was within easy walking distance to town and everyone we encountered in Rockland was so friendly and eager to share their favorite things about their town. We got to enjoy some great views, great meals, and were so glad to have a great place to come back to every night. **We personally really enjoyed having all the comforts of home, without the chaos of a hotel lobby. Great weekend trip and can't wait to go back!**"

"The house was beautiful. Extremely clean (**even the comforters were washed between guests**) and perfectly decorated. **As a family with allergies, we loved the hardwood floors throughout (no dusty carpets!)** Alicia was a wonderful host and gave us great tips on things to do, shortcuts, and even left us an awesome welcome basket. The house is in a perfect location for exploring the midcoast region..."

"Since the home sits just a short walk from downtown Rockland, we were able to enjoy each of the shops without the hassle of parking in town. **We followed their recommendations and visited Snowdrop Confections, Thorndike Creamery, Cone Home, Home Kitchen Cafe, Planet Toys, Archers on the Pier and a few other wonderful places.**"

"I recently rented this property for my family for a wedding in Maine. **Loved the house....lots of room and toys for my 5 year old grandson to play with...**Everything was clean. It was close to the downtown area. The beds were very comfortable and...**the yard was very inviting with shade trees and chairs.**"

"Alicia and Dan have added some small touches to the house that made us feel not only welcome, but made it comfortable and fun for our kids. **We had 3 toddlers with us, and they absolutely loved the bunk beds, the bins of toys, and of course the huge fenced-in backyard. The moms loved the touches like the coffeemaker, high tech washer dryer and also the backyard for summer cocktails after the little ones went to bed!** The house is a quick walk from Main St where there are tons of family-friendly shops and restaurants. Alicia and Dan also put together a "welcome book" that had a wealth of knowledge and We were **recommendations which made every meal and activity out even easier to plan.**there the week of the Maine Lobster Festival and the town was buzzing with activity that was all a quick walk away. **We had a fantastic trip and would recommend this house as a rental for any families looking for a fun and comfortable vacation home.**"

Stuart Sylvester

To: burrellswan@myfairpoint.net
Subject: RE: RE: Short term rentals.

Date: Sat, 21 Feb 2015 09:39:34 -0500

From: burrellswan@myfairpoint.net

Reply-To: burrellswan@myfairpoint.net

Subject: RE: Short term rentals.

To: jroot@ci.rockland.me.us

Cc: frankisganitis@gmail.com, LarryPritchett.Council@GMail.Com, louisemaclellanruf@gmail.com,
Valli.CityCouncil@GMail.Com, williamclayton79@gmail.com

25 Clarendon St, Rockland, ME 04841 2/21/15 Dear Mr.Root, We are writing in reference to the City Council s decision to limit city residents who chose to share this town through AirBnB and rent out a room in their house to short term visitors.

We rented out a room in our house last summer, from June to October 2014 and plan to continue this again for next summer. We do it to share this town and area with visitors who want a simpler, homey experience and who choose to travel slow and get to know the locals and their recommendations. All of our guests chose AirBnB because they wanted to get to know the locals, want to be in a neighborhood and some because they needed access to kitchen facilities due to diet restrictions. All make a conscious choice to use AirBnB over other options.

As Hosts we spend time with guests, chat on the deck and enjoy each other s company. As we live within walking distance of town all our guests walk in to town to eat and enjoy the museums downtown. As locals we spend a great deal of time making suggestions that fit their interests and encourage them to enjoy Rockland to the fullest. Prior to their arrival we share information and make suggestions should they need to plan ahead? We act as amazing ambassadors for this area.

In voting this new ordinance to allowing only 7 night rentals or more you are losing those guests who are driving through on their way to Acadia or Canada and are here for 1-3 nights. You are pushing away those guests who want a simpler experience and are embracing the shared economy concept. We do not compete with the other local lodging options and we believe we encourage more visitors to this town. Our guests over the last year have been all ages, all economic levels and from the US and Europe, many who only travel if they can stay in AirBnB. By choosing this option they stay local and live like a local keeping the revenue in the town. As hosts we pay income tax and lodging tax.

There is room for everyone, and the new hotels planned in Rockland will not cater to this style of traveler. Personally we think they are more competition to the local bed and breakfast establishments. Let s welcome all visitors to Rockland and give them many options. We hope you choose to allow us to continue using AirBnB as hosts, it would be shame if Rockland is known as unfriendly to visitors who are embracing living as a local thus probably keeping more tourist dollars in the town.

We look forward to hearing from you and intend to come to the Council meeting if our schedule allows.

Yours Sincerely,

Elizabeth Burrell and Gary Swanson

----- End forwarded message -----

Rec'd 2/25/15



To the Members of the Rockland City Council:

As you analyze and debate short-term online rentals, Neighbors for Overnight Oversight wants to bring to your attention growing concerns with these rentals, both in Rockland and nationwide. The fact is short-term online rental companies are operating outside of the law and making billions of dollars with little regard for the long-term health and safety of consumers and neighborhoods.

We believe with no oversight, these companies pose a significant threat to our homes, neighborhoods, and communities—as well as the guests who use their services. As a coalition of concerned residents, community leaders, businesses and policymakers committed to protecting neighborhoods nationwide, we believe sensible regulation of this industry is desperately needed.

Furthermore, the unchecked expansion of short-term rentals often has a disastrous impact on communities. Many predatory landlords have seen the growth of regulation-free short-term online rentals as a way to make more money than they would renting out apartments to locals. That has led to some buying up entire properties to lease on the short-term rental market—even evicting long-term residents to make some extra cash. Currently, most jurisdictions have no law in place to stop this kind of unscrupulous behavior.

Right now, short-term online rentals don't abide by basic health and safety regulations such as fire extinguishers, smoke alarms and liability insurance. Without these guarantees, are the people coming in and out of our neighborhoods, and current residents, safe?

Would you want to live next door to what is essentially a revolving door of strangers coming in and out of your neighborhood at any hour of the night? That's certainly not what most people look for in a neighborhood. We believe the unchecked expansion of the short-term rental market will continue to put consumers and neighborhoods at risk via the hands of illegal hoteliers. Like any other industry and any other business, the short-term online rental market needs to play by the rules to protect consumer safety as well as the integrity of communities throughout Rockland and across the country.

We hope that you consider this issue closely and weigh the negative effects illegal hotels are bringing to neighborhoods across the country. For more information, please visit www.overnightoversight.com.

Sincerely,

Neighbors for Overnight Oversight

For more information, please visit www.overnightoversight.com.

Stuart Sylvester

From: Seth Thompson <seth.thompson.media@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 26, 2015 10:05 AM
To: ssylvester@ci.rockland.me.us
Cc: jroot@ci.rockland.me.us
Subject: Proposed ordinance revisions due to influx of short-term rentals in the Rockland area.

Dear Mr. Stuart Sylvester,

Please add this email to the Rockland City Council agenda packet, as it pertains to the proposed ordinance revisions due to the influx of short-term rentals in the Rockland area.

I am a Rockland homeowner who resides next to a single family home that has been used to accommodate transient short-term renters. This property has been a disruption to both my wife and my own quality of life, primarily due to the parking issues it has caused in respect to our property. Evidence of these difficulties has been well documented with the Rockland Code Office.

I am in full support of clarifying the city ordinance in order to maintain the fabric and safety of Rockland's neighborhoods—specifically resulting in the current upsurge of short-term rentals of rooms and whole houses in Rockland due to opportunities available through such websites as Airbnb. While I do not object to the idea of short-term rentals, I feel that the ordinance needs to be further clarified in order to ensure: 1. renter's safety; 2. maintain and secure the fabric of Rockland's residential neighborhoods; and 3. enforce fair competition among the lodging businesses.

I have learned a great deal about the city of Rockland's ordinance through this ordeal that has been going on for over a year and a half and feel that the intention of a single family dwelling and related items such as parking needs to be further clarified, as they inadvertently and unintentionally benefit those seeking to turn homes into commercial properties for the sole purpose of economic gains and not the person who wishes to create a home in a neighborhood. Furthermore, I believe that these ordinance revisions fall closer in line with the National Fire Protection Association's Life Safety Code, which is considered the standard for safety by the Rockland Fire Department.

From what I have learned from John Root, not only do the proposed revisions help protect the homeowner, but they further clarify the intentions of a single family dwelling so those seeking to engage in providing short-term lodging facilities to transient guests may understand the laws and regulations necessary to engage in such practices for the safety and well-being of the renter, neighborhood and community as a whole.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you.

Best Regards,
Seth Thompson

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Seth Thompson
Media Artist, Writer and Educator
<http://www.seththompson.info>

Stuart Sylvester

To: Tom Luttrell
Subject: RE: Rentals in Rockland

From: Dean Ellis [<mailto:hdeanellis@gmail.com>]
Sent: Thursday, February 26, 2015 4:20 PM
To: jroot@ci.rockland.me.us
Subject: Fwd: Rentals in Rockland

Mr. Root, Would you please share my comments with the Rockland city council members. I appreciate this opportunity to share my experiences as a vacation home renter.....Thank you....Harold Ellis

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Dean Ellis <hdeanellis@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, Feb 26, 2015 at 2:47 PM
Subject: Rentals in Rockland
To: jroot@ci.rockland.me.us

Mr. Root, Thank you for asking for comments on rental concerns in Rockland. This may not seem like much of an issue for some, but it could have a very negative impact on the health of a city. It has been my experience that having home rentals has a very positive effect on a city in the long term, yet the people as a whole may not be aware of it. People who rent out there homes provide revenue for a city through the remodeling trades such as painters, plumbers, electricians etc. Creates business for hardware stores, department stores, furniture stores, house keepers, lawn maintenace, etc. Then it provides business to restaurants (vacationing people like to eat out when on vacation) and of coarse who is going to go back home without some sort of remembrance from Maine from one of our great downtown stores. I have said it before and I will say it again, Rockland is one the prettiest spots in the whole country and the foods is the best on this planet. I think these rentals effects everyone and is a positive effect in one way or another. The 8% tax goes to the state, people out of state have to file with the state income tax on the revenues, plus the state requires and additional 2 1/2% on out of state owners when they sell and have to file a personal tax return to have any chance to get any of it back. It has also been my experience that rental property owners do a better job of keeping their homes in great shape or the renters will write bad reviews and they will eventually be ran out of business it they don't provide a good living environment.

Owners also don't have the luxury of repairing things when they get around to it like regular home owners can do. It is obvious from the idea of allowing renters to come 2 weeks a year that the festivals needs renters. I see Rockland as a festival all summer long as do most vacationing people that come here. I think the right approach is to deal with the actual problems and not the symptoms..... Limit the amount of rooms someone can rent by the amount of designated parking spaces they provide. Make it a requirement to have a parking space for each room rented by different family guest. No parking space no renter. Next have the owners sign a document that says that they will be responsible for the action of their guest and place fines on the owners for noise, base the amount by the quantity of offensives. Nothing will get the attention of a owner quicker than that. If a city has it's homes looking great and well manicured and provides revenues for people all over the city what could be better than that? Positive out comes needs well thought out positive solutions.....Thank you....Harold Ellis

Stuart Sylvester

From: Berry Manor Inn <info@berrymanorinn.com>
Sent: Sunday, March 01, 2015 5:05 PM
To: frankisganitis@gmail.com; larrypritchett.council@gmail.com;
louisemaclellanruf@gmail.com; williamclayton79@gmail.com;
Valli.CityCouncil@GMail.Com; ssylvester@ci.rockland.me.us
Cc: 'PJ Walter'; 'Granite Inn'; 'Joan Hantz'; 'Berry Manor Inn'
Subject: Email in Support of Short-Term Rental Lodging Ordinance
Attachments: VacationRentals-codecomplianceHIOR6.doc

Importance: High

Good Afternoon -

This email is being sent on behalf of the Historic Inns of Rockland in support of the upcoming Short-Term Rental Ordinance. What is happening in Rockland is happening nationwide. The short term rental phenomenon is positively impacting a small group of homeowners and it is negatively affecting communities, businesses and neighborhoods alike. We applaud you for taking on this complicated issue and putting Rockland in the driver seat for determining its future as it relates to the new "sharing economy" and not just letting the future happen. We look forward to being a part of the conversation in making the necessary changes required to updated Rockland's lodging regulations to ensure visitor safety and a level playing field within the industry.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Regards,
Members of the Historic Inns of Rockland
Edwin and Joan Hantz, Granite Inn
Mike LaPosta and Cheryl Michaelsen, Berry Manor Inn
PJ Walter, LimeRock Inn

Date: March 1, 2015

To: Members of Rockland's City Council
City Clerk

From: Edwin and Joan Hantz of Granite Inn
Cheryl Michaelsen and Mike LaPosta of Berry Manor Inn
PJ Walter of LimeRock Inn
Representing the Historic Inns of Rockland

Subject: Email in Support of Short-Term Rental Lodging Ordinance

We support the new lodging ordinance and applaud the City and the Code Office for trying to address these evolving issues NOW before another busy tourist season begins and before the situation spirals even more out of control. The discussion at hand is about equal treatment under the law and equal responsibility to protect the traveling public.

Twenty years ago there were only hotels and motels that provided overnight rentals for Rockland's visitors. Then the first bed and breakfast opened. The City had to review and expand its overnight lodging ordinances and in fact developed a specific license and life safety codes that a B&B needed to meet to operate in Rockland. Were the regulations exactly the same as those for the existing larger motels and hotels? No, they were not. But there were certain parities and thresholds put in place to ensure the safety of overnight guests. The issue today is really no different. There is a new type of short-term rental business operating in Rockland and again there needs to be clarifications and updates made to the City's regulations. Certain parities and thresholds need to be put in place to continue to provide safe options to the traveling public and to minimize the impact of home businesses in residential neighborhoods.

Airbnb is NOT the issue. Airbnb is just an internet directory. It is however the world's largest directory for short term rentals and is slated to hit over one million rentals by the end of March, 2015 with nearly 12,000 new listings being added daily. The accessibility and mobility that listing on an Airbnb-type directory provides to both the property owner and the guest are unlike anything that has ever existed before. These types of directories and their rental opportunities are not only here to stay but are in fact only going to grow exponentially. There are even books offered on how to make a 6-figure salary as an Airbnb host and a website that provides monthly analysis of Airbnb listings, occupancy, average room rate, etc... At issue today is NOT the existence of Airbnb, the issue today IS that within Rockland there are unlicensed short-term rental properties providing overnight lodging without complying with existing City regulations. Existing regulations require properties that offer overnight accommodations to be licensed and inspected whether you offer one room in your house or eight rooms.

Competition with the licensed B&Bs operating in Rockland is not the issue at hand. If you want to open a LICENSED B&B in Rockland, we welcome you. The Historic Inns of Rockland have built their entire association's existence on working cooperatively and supportively with our competition. The need for lower rental options in Rockland is also not the issue at hand as fair competition in a fair marketplace will account for this also. The issue is if you are renting one room or more to the public for transient overnight

lodging than you should have to follow the City's regulations for this type of business. Sharing economy or not is irrelevant. Homesharing or not is irrelevant. Needing to raise monies to alleviate the burden of one's property tax is irrelevant. Not being able to meet life safety codes WHEN required but still operating a B&B is illegal and not acceptable. Serving food to the public and not being certified in food protection is illegal in the State of Maine and not acceptable. In addition to being ambassadors to our wonderful City and all it has to offer, everyone operating a lodging business, including homeshares, must also take responsibility for meeting food certification requirements and basic life safety codes including but not limited to hard-wired smoke detectors, egress, emergency lighting and safety signage, etc. to protect the traveling public as required by the law. Additionally, all lodging businesses operating in residential neighborhoods should also meet the existing City's approval and regulation process for change of use, parking, landscape screening and owner occupancy that are specifically in place to protect the integrity of the neighborhood and the quality of life for abutters.

After public safety, the next most compelling issue with the new breed of short-term rentals in Rockland is why should one set of businesses providing overnight lodging have to follow one set of rules and other similar businesses that provide the same overnight lodging not have to follow the same rules? We contend that not only does the inequity of code enforcement speak of unfair play, but more importantly the lack of attention to safety codes puts visitors to the City of Rockland in jeopardy.

This needs to change and it needs to change now.

In summary, this is what this discussion IS and is NOT about:

- 1.) This discussion is NOT about adding more regulations for businesses that provide lodging for overnight guests as these regulations already exist.
- 2.) This discussion IS ABOUT ensuring that regulations that are in place are updated to adequately cover this new category of lodging to protect both travelers and neighbors.
- 3.) This discussion is NOT about telling property owners that they cannot rent their property but it IS about determining at what point offering your property out to rent is operating a commercial entity in a residential zone.
- 4.) This discussion IS about protecting neighbors and neighborhoods from home based businesses being operated without being licensed and following appropriate regulations for lodging businesses in residential zones.
- 5.) This discussion is NOT about trying to squelch low cost overnight rental options or competition in Rockland. It IS about restoring equity within the overnight lodging business.

About the New "Sharing Economy":

Many of you may think that the current discussion taking place in front of the City Council is only about unlicensed short-term rentals and it has nothing to do with any other businesses. But the “Sharing Economy” is making its presence in lodging, taxi service, and restaurants now with others sure to follow. The new “sharing economy” is morphing in front of us not only in Rockland but throughout the country. It is spreading at a speed we have never encountered in all of business history and it is happening now. The concept in its simplest form is “I have something to offer and someone out there needs it, so let me post it on the internet and find a buyer”. This is the translation.

- a.) I have a car and a license; you need a ride. I will operate a driving service (websites: Uber and Lyftshare).
- b.) I have an empty room in my house; you need a place to stay when traveling. I will homeshare (websites: Airbnb, VBRO, HomeAway, FlipKeyetc.).
- c.) I can cook and people need to eat so I will start offering Sunday brunch, lobster bakes or dinner parties for strangers in my house. No big names yet but this is happening in larger urban areas and one is sure to emerge soon.

Technology and the mobile world we live in allow anyone to get into any business with a very low barrier to entry. Don’t get us wrong there are some great positive things that have evolved and will continue to evolve from this new business model but also there are some things that we feel need to be addressed that are becoming apparent in the lodging sector. At this point, Rockland’s current code definitions and regulations do not adequately address short-term lodging for Homeshare-like properties nor do they address the concept of “Homeshare” meals being offered to the public. It is our understanding that the City has already defined driving services to mitigate the effect of Uber-like services.

We are asking the City to continue to be pro-active and review the City’s ordinances to understand how and where these types of businesses fit into the long term viability for the City. We are not asking the City to stop these types of businesses from existing but rather to define the rules that we all have to play by as it relates to the following issues so as not to be caught of guard:

- a.) At what point is the “sharing economy” concept a business and thus needs to follow existing business regulations for similar traditional brick and mortar businesses? These regulations include but are not limited to getting a license to operate, inspecting for stated life safety codes or other codes in existence, collecting and paying appropriate taxes, requiring certifications for operations such as food preparation, and having appropriate business and liability insurance.
- b.) At what point does a “Homeshare” type business that operates in a residential neighborhood need to be regulated to protect the nature of the residential neighborhood? This has immediate effects in terms of the day to day wear and tear on a neighborhood but also if the growth of short term rentals specifically goes uncapped it can mean that affordable year round housing opportunities are severely depleted. This is happening in many urban areas now across the country.
- c.) At what point is it an unfair playing field if a certain type of business model is able to operate essentially providing the same service or product as existing more traditional brick and mortar businesses but not have to comply with the same regulations and rules?

- d.) Competition should be fought with everyone playing by the same rules and the winners determined as those that offer the right service or product at the right time and place for the right price. It is an unfair competitive field when one party can re-label their business as a "Homeshare" and thinks therefore they do not have to install the required sprinkler system or the required commercial range hood or get certified in safe food handling procedures or a hack license because they are not a traditional B&B or a restaurant or a taxi. The existing regulations and definitions need to be altered to include the "Homeshare" type businesses so at the very least competition for business is determined by all players at least playing by the same rules.

There are many types of businesses operating in both Rockland's downtown area and in residential neighborhoods that are required to meet very specific regulations by both the City of Rockland and the State of Maine who operate within these stated regulations; who pay and collect appropriate sales and lodging taxes to the State; and who are required to be licensed by the City of Rockland and in fact are licensed and reviewed annually. We are asking you to not only support these businesses but also the neighborhoods they reside in and determine clearly who can provide what type of overnight lodging; and who can provide what meals for the traveling public and where can they both be offered.

We urge you to please continue the dialogue about the issue of short-term rentals. As difficult as it may be, we want Rockland to be a trend setter in shaping its future rather than just having the shared economy happen.

Stuart Sylvester

Subject: FW: Short term rentals

From: Kathryn Fogg [<mailto:iringa67@yahoo.com>]

Sent: Monday, March 02, 2015 10:58 AM

To: ssylvester@ci.rockland.me.us; frankisganitis@gmail.com; larrypritchett.council@gmail.com; louisemaclellanruf@gmail.com; williamclayton79@gmail.com; Valli.CityCouncil@GMail.Com

Subject: Short term rentals

TO THE ROCKLAND CITY COUNCIL

I think the few (the Inns) are trying to overcome the rights of the many (the privacy of Rockland homeowners) too enjoy their homes and to invite those they wish into their homes.

I have heard charges against these homeowners that are either untrue or unfounded in fact. At a Midcoast Planning Meeting in Belfast in October, I heard Mayor Isganitis make the following statements.

- 1) He objected to the name airbnb as it was encroaching on his territory. **My note: (While airbnb is the name of one service, very few homeowners offer breakfast.)**
- 2) He objected that airbnb had a valuation of 38 billion after only 6 years. **My note: (This is his figure. I do not know this but it has been so popular it has spread world wide since two young men put an air mattress on their floor and rented it to a visitor in California.)**
- 3) He said there were 37 airbnb hosts in Rockland. **My note: (At the time I counted and only found 16 including Berry Manor Inn.)**
- 4) He told the group that the State was losing taxes from Airbnb Hosts. **My note: (How would he know this? I pay 8% lodging tax and have a registration number to prove it.)**
5. He said that we were operating without insurance as companies would not cover us and that one day we would have a ruinous lawsuit for which we would rue the day. **My note: (Again how does he know we don't have insurance? There are insurance companies that do cover.)**
- 6) At the same time he was angry that airbnb covered its hosts with a million dollar insurance policy if anything should happen. **My note: (This is true.)**
- 7) Mayor Isganitis explained that he Was only concerned for the greater good. **My note: (No comment).**

I believe much has been said that is inflammatory and untrue. I will speak at the public comment session tonight with additional concerns.

Kathryn Fogg Hill
84 Grace St
Rockland, Maine
596-0117
airbnb host

Stuart Sylvester

From: Megan Phelan <mphelan01@me.com>
Sent: Monday, March 02, 2015 12:42 PM
To: ssylvester@ci.rockland.me.us
Subject: Rockland Home Owner - comments

Dear members of the City Council,

I have been a Rockland resident for 10 years until fairly recently when I moved to NY. Although I am not living full time in Rockland, I still consider Maine-and specifically Rockland- home. I feel incredibly fortunate to own a home in Rockland, a place that I think offers such a great way of life. I plan to return in a few years, but until then, I visit as frequently as I can. With that said, I am considering renting out our house periodically throughout the year, particularly in the summer months, would make a huge difference in my ability to pay my taxes, heat, etc. I don't consider this a huge money making proposition, but rather an opportunity to help me hold onto my home. In a state where it can often be challenging to find well-paying work, where taxes are relatively high by comparison to other places, I hope that the city doesn't add yet one more challenge to people's ability to either live or own a home in Rockland. I believe that by opening up some of our homes to people who wish to visit Rockland it's a great addition to and complement of what is here and already being offered. We all see how the world is changing in both big and small ways. In our small part of the world I believe we are seeing different kinds of travelers these days, ones who are looking for different types of places to stay. It doesn't mean that existing offerings are not needed, but rather that some of these new travelers are looking for something that isn't being offered. When sites like Airbnb, VRBO and HomeAway have shown such clear success around the world, to me it shows that people are looking for and asking for this type of arrangement. I would love to think that the city would be glad to see these services as a way to support Rockland home owners and in turn the City of Rockland by bringing different people to the city, who may well stay longer than they would in a hotel or inn. Mainers are known for their creative ingenuity and I would like to see the city continue to support this quality, especially when it comes to supporting homeowners who are contributing to the vibrancy of the community in their individual ways.

Many thanks for your consideration.

Best,
Megan

Megan Phelan
2074416118

Sent from my iPhone

Ripples Inn- 16 Pleasant Street, Rockland, Me- Sandi Dillon owner Mar 2, 2015

To the mayor and council from Ripples Inn 16 Pleasant Street

Thank you for acknowledging my views and my support of Air B and B.

I have operated a successful albeit small European style B and B here in the South End of Rockland for the past 9 years.

I chose this town because of it's vibrancy and artistic history and future. It continues to satisfy me and a long long list of guests who fall in love with the charms of the town. In the past 10 years the Chamber of Commerce and Historic Inns have played a huge role in shining a light on these wonderful things and I thank them.

Now a rising tide raises all boats as we see this happen in the form of two new high end hotels and another art museum develop here. The affluent and older locals have set their stakes in the harbor properties as well they should. Restaurants and galleries are thriving and the creative arts in all forms are popping up.

Regarding the character of the "Air BNB guest";

But this booming local economy also draws the younger and more adventurous people with their "sharing" networks and their creative ability to get what they need and want in their lives at a more affordable price. They are not the ones that would ever go to a more elegant BnB.

The majority of the visitors I've have through the Air BNB website has been at the highest level. Most are college educated, worldly and bright and thoughtful and appreciative. They are here to enjoy the food (I would say at least 75% dine at Primo) and the nightlife and the kayaking and/or biking or boating and the arts!

FYI -The Air BNB site actually gives me reviews from other hosts in the event I think someone is not right for my establishment. It gives me a bit more security than even a regular reservation would give me. All Air BNB rentals have this choice as well.

Now I personally believe that we need lots of young people with great ideas to keep this ball rolling and fixing up those charming old houses that are here in the south end filled with new life.

Dare I say this is NOT the Jersey shore and not likely will ever be, but I can speak to the fact that I have some long term renters in my neighborhood that are less than stellar ALL YEAR LONG in terms of drinking and partying and cars etc etc. and other landlords who will will not put a dime into their rental property to make their property look decent.

I see AIR BNB as a good thing for our town. Not that there should not be some reasonable regulation like smoke detectors etc, but lets not penalize these young entrepreneurs or turn away their visitors and potential new voices to spread the word.

Leila Murphy

From: Leila Murphy <leilamurph@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, March 02, 2015 10:01
To: ssylvester@ci.rockland.me.us; frankisganitis@gmail.com;
larrypritchett.council@gmail.com; louisemacIellanruf@gmail.com; williamclayton79@gmail.com; Valli.CityCouncil@GMail.Com
Subject: Letter in support of short term rentals

Dear members of the Rockland City Council,

I have been a Rockland resident for 11 years until fairly recently when I moved to NH. Although I have crossed the State line, I still consider Maine-and specifically Rockland- home. I feel incredibly fortunate to own a home in Rockland, a place that I think offers such a great way of life. I plan to return in a few years, but until then, I visit as frequently as I can. With that said, having the opportunity to rent my home periodically throughout the year, particularly in the summer months, would make a huge difference in my ability to pay my taxes, heat, etc. I don't consider this a huge money making proposition, but rather an opportunity to help me hold onto my home. In a state where it can often be challenging to find well-paying work, where taxes are relatively high by comparison to other places, I hope that the city doesn't add yet one more challenge to people's ability to either live or own a home in Rockland. I believe that by opening up some of our homes to people who wish to visit Rockland it's a great addition to and complement of what is here and already being offered. We all see how the world is changing in both big and small ways. In our small part of the world I believe we are seeing different kinds of travelers these days, ones who are looking for different types of places to stay. It doesn't mean that existing offerings are not needed, but rather that some of these new travelers are looking for something that isn't being offered. When sites like Airbnb, VRBO and HomeAway have shown such clear success around the world, to me it shows that people are looking for and asking for this type of arrangement. I would love to think that the city would be glad to see these services as a way to support Rockland home owners and in turn the City of Rockland by bringing different people to the city, who may well stay longer than they would in a hotel or inn. Mainers are known for their creative ingenuity and I would like to see the city continue to support this quality, especially when it comes to supporting homeowners who are contributing to the vibrancy of the community in their individual ways.

Many thanks for your consideration.

Best,
Leila

Leila Murphy
mobile: 207-701-1666

Stuart Sylvester

To: jroot@ci.rockland.me.us
Subject: RE: Opinions on the new rental issues

-----Original Message-----

From: susan bates <hirmsueb@gmail.com>
To: jroot <jroot@ci.rockland.me.us>
Date: Sat, 28 Feb 2015 12:27:44 -0500
Subject: Opinions on the new rental issues

Hi Mr. Root,

We read the articles in the paper about the issues regarding the rentals in town. We have had experience with this issue as across the street from us is a rental house where there was quite a bit of upheaval including police visits regarding domestic issues. It appeared that the one renter was renting out rooms to different people as there was a constant change over, some stayed a few days and some a few weeks. We have no idea if the landlord, who is a builder out of Rockport was aware of this or not as he was hardly ever around. We can only assume that the reason behind the rental of these rooms was to help make the rent - and while we understand that there are procedures in place for landlords to check the financial well-being of potential renters - things can and do change in a person's life.

We are very much opposed to individuals renting out rooms in their homes as it brings in a different element to your neighborhood. One important question that bothers us - is how do the people who are renting the rooms out know who exactly they are renting to ??? The Bed and Breakfast's are a legitimate business and charge accordingly - but for someone to rent a room for \$20-30 a night - how do you know that they are there for legitimate reasons and are the type of people that you would want in your neighborhood.

The other issue that should concern the business community is that this takes away from the legitimate businesses like the hotels and motels that have been here struggling for years.

People buy in a certain neighborhood for all different reasons - but most will tell you that safety and a sense of community are extremely important.

We have been very lucky as we have very nice neighbors and even with the two homes that were recently sold - we have visited and welcomed the families and we all watch out for each other - we all let each other know when we are going to be away - even if it's only for a day, and we monitor any stranger that we see walking through someone's property. We have done this since there was a home invasion a few years ago on the next street -and it does give us a sense of security. This same sense of security was not there with all of these strangers coming and going from the one rental - at one point there were so many different cars and trucks pulling in and out that we had no idea who was living there.

The most important issue for us is when you buy a house in a neighborhood, you are entering into what for most people is the single largest investment that they will make in their lifetime. If your circumstances change after you purchase a house and you cannot make your mortgage - what is there to stop you from turning your home into an unofficial boarding house ? And then, if you are caught doing this - what are the consequences?

We hope that the quantity of rentals in this town will be seriously looked at as there are several websites and blogs regarding this issue and the negative impact it is having and has had on people's quality of living. We have had three of our friends retire here to Maine and all of them cited that as one of the reasons not to buy here in Rockland. So, it does have additional financial impacts that maybe people either aren't aware of or have discounted as not being too important. You can usually tell from driving down a street here in town whose house is a rental and whose house is a home where it is being lovingly taken care of - it makes a big difference and it does impact everyone's property values. We thank you for all of your hard work and we hope that our sharing our concerns sheds some light on some of the more important issues of the rentals.

Sincerely,

Don and Sue Bates
17 Payson Lane

Stuart Sylvester

From: Dee Peppe <deepeppe@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 02, 2015 1:55 PM
To: ssylvester@ci.rockland.me.us; frankisganitis@gmail.com;
larrypritchett.council@gmail.com; louisemaclellanruf@gmail.com; williamclayton79@gmail.com; Valli.CityCouncil@GMail.Com
Subject: short term rentals

Dear City Council Members,

I am writing in support of short-term rentals in Rockland. I am not suggesting to eliminate an ordinance but instead I am requesting that the ordinance be written where the homeowner can easily meet the requirements and be in compliance.

I am a Rockland resident, a small business owner in Rockland for 19 years, and a member of the Chamber of Commerce. I do not do short term rentals, but I would like the opportunity to do so in the future if I am in financial need.

To earn a living in the mid-coast area it is necessary to have more than one job. I am faculty at the University of Maine, as a fine-art photographer I work as an artist in resident in the public schools, I do private photography lessons, I clean houses, and I pet sit. Making a living in this area of Maine requires creativity. With all these jobs that I do, I still don't make enough to afford a turn-key house. I had to purchase a house that needs work, a house that is under \$100K, however, my intention is to upgrade my property.

Short term rentals is a way that a single-income household can help to offset the high cost of homeownership that includes electric, sewer, water, and heat as well as Rockland's high tax rate. Renting a room or the house helps to create extra income so homeowners can maintain and upgrade their property's and keep the value up, thereby improving the neighborhood by not letting their property go into disrepair.

Over the past 20 years Rockland has become a diverse demographic with the arrival of art galleries, the Strand Theater, boutiques, specialty shops, and ethnic cuisine meanwhile maintaining it's seafaring and industrial past. Rockland is where fishermen and artists, bankers and factory workers, attorneys and trade-workers live side-by-side. Rockland has become "the place to live" in Knox County for all walks of life and has become a destination for a diverse population of travelers.

The people who look for accommodations on the web sites such as Airbnb are not looking for luxury. They are looking for affordability. These are the people who might camp, or travel with an RV, the people who are not likely to leave their children or pets home, and the people who seek an alternative travel experience. These are

people who want a less tourist experience and want to blend in to the fabric of the town and community. If this option of lodging is eliminated these guests are not going to stay in Rockland.

Please consider the economic benefits that short-term rentals bring to the homeowners, the neighborhoods, the businesses, and ultimately the city as a whole. And please do not make your decision based on hearsay and inaccurate statements.

Sincerely, Dee Peppe

2 March 2015
Letter concerning home sharing ordinance
Benjamin St.Cyr
148 N Main St Apt 3 Rockland

Dear Rockland City Council Members,

First I want to thank you for your service as a City Council Member. I know that you all probably have very busy lives, so taking the time to serve our city on the council is very appreciated.

Secondly I want to quickly share my experiences and opinions with you about home sharing and specifically AirBnB. I have used home sharing experiences many times and have always had an amazing experience. On one instance I and six other people rented a home from a man who was moving and needed some more income for the move. We went down to Boston for 2 day festival. I only paid \$100 for two nights in Boston. I would not have been able to visit the festival if I had to go down traditional routes of hotels or B&B's. I am about to go on a trip to Iceland. On this trip I will be using AirBnB.com for all of my boarding. It is the only way that I can travel otherwise my trip would be very short. These two experiences illustrate two major points of view that I have. First, Rockland is known for our festivals. We have amazing entertainment all summer. People similar to my age in my 30's will not travel to these small festivals or tourist areas if we do not have an option of home sharing. I would not have enough money to spend at restaurants or events if I had to pay the astronomical price of traditional boarding. My last point of view is that the industry is changing, and consumers are changing. People are starving for interaction and culture. Home sharing allows for this interaction of cultures and also you get a built in local guide wherever you are staying. Staying in a hotel is expensive and impersonal, staying at a Bed & Breakfast is thought of for elderly people or someone who just got married.

Home sharing will never replace traditional hotels or Bed & Breakfasts but it is a viable mode of lodging for untraditional travelers. Putting any excess taxation or stringent regulations on home sharing for short amounts of time would hurt our local economy, homeowners, and tourism.

Thank You For Your Time

Ben St Cyr



March 2, 2015

Let me take a moment to introduce you to the Vacation Rental Professionals of Maine which is a group of professional vacation rental managers and individuals who rent their cottages themselves. Maine vacation rental managers began meeting informally as an interest group in about 2001. About two years ago we recognized the need to organize more formally as we saw detrimental decisions were being made without full understanding of the impact they would have on this industry and in order to better promote our industry within the Tourism sector, and in December of last year we incorporated and began the process of organization.

Our association consists primarily of small business owners living and working throughout Maine who offer professional vacation rental management for property owners. We also offer membership to individual property owners who rent their cottages themselves. Several of our members have vacation rentals in Rockland.

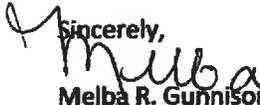
Our geographically diverse locations and many years of experience, some measured in decades, make us the best resource to share information, establish best practices and communicate with government representatives on any topic relating to Maine vacation rentals. As professionals, we are also committed to ensuring that our properties meet all current laws regarding health and safety and that all have "Good Neighbor Policies".

Maine has a long, rich history of providing seasonal rentals to visitors to our state throughout the summer or winter season.

Vacation Rentals are different from other types of lodging in that we rent a whole house, apartment, condo, cottage, etc., to a group comprised of family and/or friends who all know each other and are here for a common purpose. We do not rent out parts of a property to people who are strangers to one another with the property owner living there. Nor do we serve meals. All meals are cooked by the renters themselves rather than offered by management as part of the lodging fee. We consider Businesses offering those types of rentals to be Inns and Bed and Breakfasts. Naturally we recognize the need and demand for those types of occupancy, but we do not consider them to be vacation rentals.

Please let us know if you have any questions or would like more information. I have attached some facts that we hope will be of interest to you as you consider this issue. It is also important to note that this issue is coming up in a bill at the State Level and may address the concerns you have.

Sincerely,


Melba R. Gunnison, Legislative Chair
Vacation Rental Professionals of Maine, Inc.



**Vacation Rental
Professionals of Maine**

**P.P. Box 464
South Casco, ME 04077**

Vacation Rental Facts:

- Traditional Vacation Rentals account for approximately 16% of the Tourism dollars that come into the state. (\$592 Million in 2012)*
- Vacation Rentals paid over \$51 Million (2012) in Lodging Taxes to the State*
- Employs 14,000+ people*
- State Tourism Report for 2013 cites that the average stay in a vacation rental was 5 nights*
- Provides income to property owners who otherwise might have to sell their treasured family cottage or second home
- Supports over 200 vacation rental businesses
- Typically rent for 7 Nights in July and August but may rent for shorter periods in the Spring, Fall and Winter when visitors only come for a few days to view the foliage, ski, pick apples, etc. but want their own place to do so
- Professional Vacation Rental Managers ensure their properties meet all State and Local health and safety codes. We all have additional safety requirements that we enforce as professionals and without government oversight. There has never been a reported safety issue or incident in Rockland with a vacation rental and only a couple in decades here in the State.
- Vacation Rentals are different from other types of lodging in that we rent a whole house, apartment, condo, cottage, etc., to a group comprised of family and/or friends who all know each other and are here for a common purpose. We do not rent out parts of a property to people who are strangers to one another; nor do we serve meals. All meals are cooked by the renters themselves rather than offered by management as part of the lodging fee.

*Facts taken from the 2012/2013 and the 2013/2014 Maine Tourism Annual Reports, available from the Maine Office of Tourism



Mission:

To promote and support the Maine Vacation Rental industry through effective collaborative, influence over matters affecting its conduct.

Vision:

To become the respected, pre-eminent voice for Maine's Vacation Rental Industry.

Core Values:

Collaboration

"In unity, there is strength." We understand the unique needs and challenges of Maine's vacation rental industry and we bring Maine's professional managers and individual owners together to listen, learn and innovate so that our individual businesses and the industry as a whole will continue to be respected participants in Maine's economy.

Vigilance

We monitor and report changes and potential changes in the industry to keep our members informed so they can always be providing top quality service.

Commitment

We proactively support the Maine Vacation Rental Industry by establishing recognized definitions and operational criteria for vacation rentals and marshalling our resources as needed to engage in relevant legislative activities that allow not only our members but also all unaffiliated agencies and property owners to keep their businesses profitable.

Integrity

By setting and promoting professional ethics and standards of conduct, we support our members in their goal to always do the right thing. Our members know that we are an ethical, credible authority that always delivers on its promises.

Education

We provide valuable educational resources that contribute to the quality of the vacation rental experience for managers, home owners and renters alike.

Stuart Sylvester

Subject: FW: Changing Times

From: Kathryn Fogg [<mailto:iringa67@yahoo.com>]

Sent: Sunday, March 08, 2015 12:00 AM

To: Stuart Sylvester; Frank Isganitis; Louse MaclellanRuf; Valli Geiger; Will Clayton; Larry Pritchett

Cc: James Chaousis; John Root

Subject: Changing Times

To the City Council

The City will deal with a myriad of issues in this century whether it is drones flying around the City or home owners filling their homes with tourists.

For years homeowners have let rooms to people including department heads moving to Rockland using a temporary place until more permanent lodging can be found. Suddenly reasons are given for issues that seem to be that it is all about safety; yet in my ears I hear the voice of Kevin O'Leary of Shark Tank hissing, "It's the money." Yet it is such a different clientele b-etween inns and homeowners, we should be able to accommodate all.

We do want our Bed and Breakfast Inns to make money. The owners have purchased their dreams, heavily investing in beautiful buildings which are an asset to the City to remain standing. There are people who are looking for this type of accommodation for a more luxurious setting. From the calendar bookings, they do seem to do fairly well. These lovely homes cannot be equated with the residential homes of most townspeople. The Inns may have several floors with numerous doors leading off various hallways. They may be more complicated to leave in a fire. As one host said of the exits of our smaller homes, there's the front and there's the back.

The rules trying to be adapted to short term housing seems like a modern foot trying to be fit into a shoe of 100 years ago. Since there are no rules that fit, rules used to measure other issues are being used to try to fit the use of homes by Rockland citizens. A new form needs to be used to address the needs of this modern issue for visitors to explore their world in a way different than what has been offered in the past. It is odd to refer to homes as bnbs when few homes actually serve breakfast.

The argument that people who stay a few days cause more of a problem than those who stay a week makes no sense to me. Why do two people coming and going each day make any more difference than if they stay a week or three days with two others filling the rest of the week? I doubt that many people really notice who is coming and going unless they are peeking out from behind the curtains of their windows. Not many of us really have the time or interest in doing this.

Warren Buffet has given high praise to airbnb for its service to communities in filling the needs of the business community in finding space for visitors who seek a different and economical way of visiting an area. It can only be good for the community and homeowners, inns and motels should embrace their differences. The more people come to Rockland, the more they will look around and see the possibilities for returning for a rather different visit the next time.

Kathryn Fogg Hill
84 Grace St

Stuart Sylvester

To: jroot@ci.rockland.me.us
Subject: RE: Council Meeting for March 23, 2015

From: Frank Isganitis [<mailto:frankisganitis@gmail.com>]
Sent: Monday, March 09, 2015 3:15 PM
To: James D Chaousis II; John Root work
Subject: Council Meeting for March 23, 2015

At last Monday's workshop regarding transient housing, I asked each of the councilors and the public to provide comments on the three areas of consensus, 1) life-safety; 2) enforcement; and 3) oversight. Accordingly, I have prepared the attached for consideration. It would be my hope that it could be read into the record at the meeting in my absence.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Best,
Frank Isganitis

Why do we need to regulate ALL overnight accommodations? The reason is simple, for the public good. In the simplest terms, laws need to exist at the divergence of a social contract. What does this mean? It means that the role of government is to artfully balance the wants, needs and desires of a few against the wants, needs and desires of a greater public interest.

Community is an important value in the State of Maine. When I see the word, I see two words, common and unity. The values and principles we share in common serve to unite us in purpose and mission. And throughout the State of Maine, municipalities have routinely addressed home-based activities. Why, because the intensity of activities associated with businesses in a residential setting quickly has the potential to adversely impact the quiet enjoyment of residents.

Even in urban settings where businesses and residents co-exist, municipalities often walk a tight rope. Case in point, the City of Portland is being asked to consider enhancing and/or enforcing noise regulations in the Old Port as a direct result of residents and transient hotel visitors having their sleep disrupted by boisterous late night revelers. So, I ask you this. Who's right is greater? That of the late-night reveler careening down the street yelling, or that of a property owner, resident or overnight guest just trying to get a good night's sleep.

The internet has changed the way we live. Accordingly, we need to re-evaluate our existing laws to both a) ascertain if they are still relevant and/or necessary, and b) to determine if they need to be changed to catch up with life. Less than fifty years ago, renting a room in your home on an overnight basis was almost non-existent. Over the course of time, life changed and so did the need for overnight accommodations. From college towns to skiing locales to coastal Maine villages, alternatives to traditional overnight accommodations (ie. Hotels and Motels) have become plentiful in Maine.

This is a good thing. In a State that boasts the nickname Vacationland, anything we can do to attract a visitor enhances our community. In Rockland, we have been repeatedly blessed with visitors that enjoyed their transient stay in the area so much it translated into relocation and/or investment in our community. A number of historic homes have been purchased and renovated. Some, including Congressman Charles E. Littlefield's home, have been repurposed as bed and breakfasts.

Ironically, the purchasers of Mr. Littlefield's home in 1994 were faced with a number of challenges in that repurpose. The most glaring was the fact that the City did not provide for overnight accommodations in residential neighborhoods. But after lively community outreach, input and debate, Rockland's ordinances were updated to provide overnight accommodations in residential neighborhoods, and LimeRock Inn was born just twenty years ago. See, we have a history of updating laws to reflect the way we live.

In the new millennium, a proliferation of websites have arisen boasting listing options for overnight accommodations under the guise of a "shared economy". Now is the time to have a conversation about the newest form of overnight accommodations because it relates back to the premise above. When does one property owner's right to provide overnight accommodations in their residence adversely impact abutting neighbors, change the dynamic and function of neighborhoods and undermine zoning? Let's explore the question.

In Rockland, Code Chapter 19 - Zoning not only has a general definition for what is a Home Occupation, it classifies all of them into three distinct levels based on level of impact, and a Permit is required for all. Interestingly enough, even the least impactful Level 1 Home Occupation which is reserved for businesses, such as authors, computer programmers and single pupil instructors, provides that "There shall be no employees outside the immediate family-in-residence, no face-to-face sales or services conducted on the premises except for single-pupil instruction. Single-pupil instruction shall be limited to 9a.m. to 5p.m."

Already, overnight accommodations exceed this lowest level standard because business is being conducted on premise by face-to-face interaction outside the hours of 9a.m. to 5p.m. And the use of a housekeeper and/or property manager further exceeds the standard of no outside employees. So clearly, there is precedent to demonstrate that activity (ie coming and going) at a residence does have an adverse impact to neighbors and a neighborhood as demonstrated by the existing Code. And in the case of overnight accommodations, this impact adds up quickly as demonstrated by the chart below.

30-Day Impact Analysis			
	Dwelling Unit	Unique Family Occupant	Potential Unique Family Occupants
Single Family Dwelling	1	1	1
Add weekly rental	1	1	4
Add nightly rental	1	1	30
Add one room rental	1	2	2
Add one room weekly rental	1	2	5
Add one room nightly rental	1	2	31
Add two rooms nightly rental	1	3	61
Add three rooms nightly rental	1	4	91

As the chart demonstrates over the period of one month, even the nightly rental of one room in a Single Family Dwelling has a 30 times impact potential to neighbors and a neighborhood for vehicles coming and going on the street; occupants coming in and out of the house; and increases the number of unrelated persons in occupancy under one roof. This premise is why zoning, land use, and life safety regulations are increased when one structure becomes inhabited by multiple unrelated occupants. Again, the precedent already exists to regulate.

In closing, I want to reflect on a few things. Community is about coming together on what we have in common, and laws need to exist where we diverge in opinion in order to navigate to a minimal standard. Government has an awesome responsibility to artfully balance an individual's rights against the consequences of an individual's actions and their impact on a greater humanity.

In Vacationland, any activity that helps promote our communities, our values and our principles is a good thing. But let us remember our state motto, *Dirigo, we lead!* In a state where tourism is our number one economy, let us lead in embracing this new form of accommodation. But let's lead by confronting the issue and resolving our differences to a minimal standard. Our future and our sustainability depend on it.

March 10, 2015

Dear Council Members:

As you prepare to discuss the proposed Transient Housing Ordinance, I'd like to make an additional appeal, to supplement my letter of February 21st.

The ordinance, as drafted, seeks not only to impose safety regulations on home owners, but also to limit all of us to renting for seven days or more. It is the 7-day minimum that concerns me, since I'm quite comfortable with the safety, parking, and insurance provisions I already have had in place the entire time I've been renting my house on VRBO.

Rockland appears to be engaged in the work of a city that is so much more than a summer vacation town. The art and food scene is thriving and a hotel and a new museum are being built. Despite this, the proposed ordinance seeks to shut down all home rentals (whole house and otherwise) that last less than a week. A survey of the rental home owners in Rockland would surely show you that this would eliminate a very large portion of all the rentals that occur from September to early June. At the same time, those same homes host many weekend visitors who patronize the businesses in Rockland, using it as a base for mid coast excursions or family visits.

For those who would argue that all these visitors can simply fill the inns, I beg to differ. As I wrote in my earlier letter, our house is specifically designed for our family, which includes two very active little boys. As such, we offer our visitors parental conveniences such as baby monitors, outlet plugs, a high chair, a pack 'n play, and a baby gate. Our dining room table is virtually indestructible and we offer toys and children's picture books for restless kids. More importantly, we have space for parents to comfortably entertain their children, both indoors and out, without going insane inside a small hotel room. Do the inns really want families with two or three small children roaming their halls at 9pm or jumping on the bed at 6am? I would argue that the availability of family homes fills a need for visitors that simply cannot and should not be met by the inns and hotels in town. If these young families cannot stay in Rockland, they will base themselves in a nearby town and spend all their money there.

However, you don't need to depend solely upon my opinion in this matter. In order to support my case, I did some field research. I went to the Facebook page for my parenting blog and posted a prompt asking people to share their experiences staying in a hotel room with children. I assure you that this long list of responses (attached) appeared randomly and from people who don't know me, personally. As you can see by the general prompt I've included below, and the indication of the thousands of people Facebook showed it to, this is a random sampling of parents from all over the country. I have not edited the (witty and overwhelmingly negative) responses. For balance, I also did not remove the positive ones. I think there might be two positive comments in the list of about fifty responses.

From the perspective of a local taxpayer, I want to stress that a regulation against partial-week rentals is not a generous compromise for those of us who need this income to pay our oil bills and our snow removal fees through the winter, as well as keep our lawns in great shape and our homes in good repair. Make no mistake: by passing this ordinance, you are making a vote *against* a large group of Rockland homeowners. You are deciding that inns and innkeepers are your focus, and that families (both residential and visiting) are less important. This is going to make it harder for many of us to pay our way, so please forgive me for saying quite clearly that you are making a decision that will very adversely affect many of your citizens, and that this decision currently appears to be based on vague and arbitrary accusations that are unsupported by documentation and facts. I think I speak for all the besieged homeowners when I say that I have no idea how my guest who arrives on Friday and leaves on Monday is any more disruptive to the neighborhood than one who stays the entire week and drives up and down the street going to Hannaford...because that's about how

exciting it gets for our guests. They drive to Hannaford, and they walk into town to eat and shop, they take their kids to Cone Home for ice cream, and then they sit in our yard and enjoy their solitary hour after their kids go to bed. Maybe they get crazy and watch some Netflix afterward. Family vacations: you do your best, right?

Please review the testimony below, if only because it will remind you how glad you are that you aren't currently staying in a hotel room with children.

Thanks so much for your ongoing thought and consideration.

-Alicia Steffann

Blogger at *Naps Happen* and Rockland Homeowner

Naps Happen

Posted by Alicia Steffann · February 22 at 1:11pm ·

Dear friends: I am working on a project and I am seeking one or two sentences on what it's like to stay in a one-room hotel room or an inn with children. I would love to hear your response!

2,983 people reached

[Like](#) · [Share](#)



[Write a comment...](#)

NOTE: The number next to "Reply" indicates how many "likes" a comment received from other people.

It's like being trapped in a box with a bunch of life-size Superballs.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 12 · February 22 at 1:45pm

"No, we don't need more ice. I know you want to go use the ice machine. There's still ice in the bucket from last time; we've run out of things to do with ice. Fine. Yes, you can carry the bucket."

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 11 · February 22 at 1:28pm

Constantly shushing, "lower your voices," "don't stomp on the floor," "no, you can't leave the room without mom or dad." And if you want the kids to sleep, it's lights out, TV off for all by 8 p.m.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 10 · February 22 at 1:21pm

Being in a hotel with kids for an extended period of time is so exhausting and it has ruined my feelings about a vacation spot. I'd rather rent a house or a condo where we can have more space. We often return to places where we've been able to spread out, like we do at home

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 7 · February 22 at 1:17pm

Always request a ground floor room. No matter what, kids love to jump jump jump in hotel rooms.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 5 · February 22 at 2:06pm

Don't open that door! Stop banging the wall! I know you're bored, I'm trying! Here watch *insert show they're normally not allowed to watch but love to sneak watch*

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 5 · February 22 at 1:36pm

Why are we even renting a room with beds? You know there will be no sleeping

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 5 · February 22 at 2:18pm

Imagine a fraternity house and then imagine the one together guy and then remove any shred of human dignity.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 4 · February 22 at 1:55pm

It's as close to hell as you can possibly ever get without engulfing into flames.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 4 · February 22 at 3:19pm

Same circus, different tent. (When my kids were little(r) they always ended up in our bedroom anyway.)

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 4 · February 22 at 2:16pm

It's like trying to baptize a cat.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 4 · February 22 at 3:00pm

Awesome! 7pm bedtime with no tv and praying you don't have to use the rr all night

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 4 · February 22 at 2:16pm

No more than 50% of the people in the room will ever be asleep at the same time.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 4 · February 22 at 2:42pm

Torture.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 10 · February 22 at 1:35pm

Nothing makes you more grateful to be home!

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 3 · February 22 at 4:08pm

This summer will be our third week spending a week at the beach in a one room apartment. My kids are 6 and almost 4. We were all good.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 3 · February 22 at 2:23pm

Vacation homes are so much better for families. As well as it's better for patrons of the hotels not to have the little kids running down the halls at 7 am with the mom screaming after them, "People are sleeping, keep your voice down!"

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 3 · February 22 at 1:49pm

Not fun! No sleep!

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 3 · February 22 at 1:46pm

We've abandoned hotels and now opt for apartment or house rentals on House Trip/Airbnb etc. Cheaper all the way around and we're not in trouble for bringing 3 small kids in a room with us.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 3 · February 22 at 1:49pm

Don't put that in your mouth. Please go to sleep.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 3 · February 22 at 2:23pm

I've learned, never, ever again.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 2 · February 22 at 2:34pm

"You can't run around and be loud, there are people sleeping next door. Yes, I know you were in the car for 9 hours today, but it's way past bedtime and people are sleeping. This isn't like at home."

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 2 · February 22 at 3:29pm

"Don't touch that. Don't lick that, WHERE did you get that? What is that? Did he eat that?!"

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 2 · February 22 at 2:56pm

Always had good experience. Helped to lower expectations of the perfect stay.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 2 · February 22 at 2:18pm

A one room hotel with kids?? AHHHHHH! I agree with everything Danielle said. It's really tough for everyone, and not like a vacation at all. We've taken to getting condos or homes because everyone has a space to be in and we don't have to worry about disturbing those above, below, or next to us.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 2 · February 22 at 2:01pm

Never in my life have I had so little sleep!

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 1 · February 23 at 1:12am

One child and a four star hotel is absolutely a treat, watching your Toddler order room service is the cutest thing ever!

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 1 · February 22 at 2:13pm

Hotel trips are the only times that our daughter gets to sleep in the same bed with us. She's in heaven, but we don't sleep well.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 1 · February 22 at 2:30pm

I love it. Vacation time means giggles and snuggles.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 1 · February 22 at 8:56pm

Thank God for long hallways.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 1 · February 22 at 5:48pm

"Can't the baby sleep in the closet? "

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 1 · February 22 at 4:57pm

Hiding in the bathroom from bedtime until they're sound asleep!

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 1 · February 22 at 1:54pm

"I am climbing the walls and pulling my hair out. No wait. That was the chimpanzee we saw at the Zoo BEFORE we returned to the hotel."

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 1 · February 22 at 9:22pm

Dante's 10th Circle of Hell that he somehow forgot to mention...

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 1 · February 22 at 6:10pm

Don't do it ever! Get second room with an adjoining door. It feels like a waste of money, but really and truly, it's not.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 1 · February 22 at 2:30pm

The only time it worked well for us was at Disney World. We were out early each morning, waiked in the hot sun all day long, returned to the room after a huge dinner, and after showers, we all fell into bed at the same time and slept like the dead until we got up the next morning to do it all again. We were all too tired to annoy anyone else.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 1 · February 22 at 6:02pm

I did it with my 3 kids.. it's interesting to say the least

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 1 · February 22 at 3:40pm

Bedtime takes forever, because everyone's all keyed up and overstimulated, simultaneously excited and freaked out about being in an unfamiliar place. Then they finally, finally go to sleep, and you get all excited, because you'll finally get some adult...[See More](#)

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 1 · February 22 at 4:22pm

I have 3 little kids, and my husband, my MIL, and I, all stayed in a hotel room with 2 queen beds and pullout couch for several days last May. It wasn't bad! Less space to have to keep tidy!

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · February 22 at 6:17pm

Hell.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 3 · February 22 at 1:52pm

No privacy. No sleep. Why am I paying for this experience again?

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · February 22 at 4:34pm

It can be a real nightmare - especially with three kids! We usually try to find houses for rent. A hotel - with kids - is usually our last resort.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · February 22 at 2:39pm

This is not romper room.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · February 22 at 2:24pm

I love this. It is very powerful!

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · February 23 at 9:04pm

Awoken at 3am by a toddler standing in their pack'n play, quiet, wide eyed and grinning at you. Hotel rooms - what make your children seem creepy.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 1 · February 22 at 4:48pm

Have you ever tried chewing on glass while simultaneously jabbing ice picks into your brain?? No? Well I think its comparable to that.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 2 · February 22 at 5:01pm

It's hard in more ways than you'd imagine... Finding ways to entertain, trying to explain the situation, getting past any stigma ... It's not something I'd ever want to do again...

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 1 · February 22 at 2:47pm

7:30 bedtime for all...or eating your dinner in the bathroom.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 1 · February 22 at 7:24pm

Its like living with your parents all over again. There is a curfew cause there is no way you will be staying up late watching t.v. and talking. In the morning there is no getting a few more min. of sleep because said child will, without a doubt, wake up to the slightest stir and there is no out of sight out of mind. We shared a room with our 8, 4 and 1 y.o. this past summer. Our youngest was the challenging one.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 1 · February 22 at 2:45pm

Rockland City
Hall Council Chambers
Att: City Clerk: Stuart H. Sylvester
270 Pleasant Street
Rockland, ME 04841

March 14, 2015

Re: Proposed short-term rental rules - Please include this letter in the package for Council consideration

Dear Council Members:

I am writing regarding the proposed rules/regulations to be imposed on short-term rentals in Rockland, as discussed at the March 2nd Council workshop. I strongly support all of the items discussed and proposed with the exception of the length of stay. It was discussed whether rentals on a full house or private apartment should be limited to one week- 30 days. I would like to suggest that limiting stays in house/apartments to a minimum of one week will eliminate a very important segment of the short-term rental community. That is, the families with children wanting to take a long weekend and family reunion groups, both of which tend to be less than a week. The usual stay for both of these groups tends to be 2-4 nights, and both prefer a private home/apartment with private entrances, several bedrooms, some cooking facilities and perhaps garden sitting areas. They want more than a bedroom.

In my opinion if we limit full home/apartment rentals to less than a week we eliminate a very lucrative market, both for the home owners and Rockland. A look at the license plates in the summer shows that we attract many visitors from MA, CT, NH and NY. These are areas that provide travelers who enjoy many long weekends here, and the group that allowing long weekend stay in homes/apartments will attract. I would suggest that the minimum length of stay accepted should be left to the home owner. The control instrument should be the license. If the homeowner does not control their guests' stay and it creates a community problem, the license should simply be revoked.

Thank you for your attention. I look forward to attending the March 23rd workshop meeting.

Carol Eliassen
57 Main Street
Rockland ME 04841
(207) 593-7963

March 16, 2015

Dear City Council,

I've been following the recent opposition to the short-term, 'transient rental' market, and I wanted to take a minute to voice my support of this industry. The idea of people renting out unused rooms to visiting tourists is obviously not new, but with Airbnb the service has become more dependable, safe, efficient and transparent. Historically, finding a 'room for rent' was one of the main ways to visit our beautiful Maine coastal towns. Short-term summer rentals (even for just a night) was one of the early ways that our tourist-based economy succeeded. Now in this new sharing economy, many people who may have limited financial means can plan trips to the coast while still staying within a tight budget. Renting on Airbnb, as opposed to an inn or B&B at \$150 - \$300 a night, often is the deciding factor for whether or not a guest makes the trip. There are also some guests who could not stay in a traditional inn or B&B (large families, guests with pets, etc.). Personally, I would greatly prefer a room with a kitchen! Now, because of the advent of services like Airbnb we can welcome these tourists to our area. These services not only allow guests the security of knowing exactly where they will stay, but also additional safety as well. Airbnb now offers all hosts and travelers \$1,000,000 of free liability coverage. And these short-term rentals also have a rigorous approval process and transparent feedback, which means that unsafe, dirty or dangerous rentals are quickly eliminated.

Airbnb has also made the process much more efficient and transparent. I believe the town should embrace these organizations if not for the simple fact that they provide a clear way to legitimize this form of short-term rentals. Income now has to be reported and taxed, both at the federal, state and local level. While I can understand the need for proper regulation for all business industries, especially when it pertains to protecting their safety, it seems that there are already state and federal guidelines in place. There also is statewide legislation currently in the works to further regulate short-term rentals.

Some towns have enacted new legislation to curb abuse of the system and I think that may be prudent for Rockland, too. There are stories of illegal, informal 'inns' that rent numerous rooms year-round, as a way to skirt the regulation and safety. Just recently, Portland opted not to tamper with existing rental regulations but instead to crack down on illegal rentals as the need arose. But, aside from those rare examples, short-term rentals are both safe and economical choices for thousands of people. This proposed regulation seems to be established more to restrict competition and customer options, rather than keeping them safe or helping our community grow. Every week, more and more elected officials and community leaders are learning about the important role the sharing economy can play in supporting jobs, promoting innovation, and strengthening neighborhoods across the country. I think this is a time when Rockland can continue being a community innovator and a leader in this new economy. Rockland has worked hard to be a town that fosters new growth, removes barriers to access, and encourages economic diversity.

Sincerely,

Josh Hixson
Executive Chef & Owner
3Crow Restaurant & Bar

[Rec'd 03/18/15]

Dear City Council,

I am writing this letter in support of Airbnb type rentals in Rockland. I believe the current ordinance, which was written 20 years ago to address traditional style B&Bs, does not fit the growth and progress that Rockland has seen over this time. Currently home owners are allowed to rent 1 room for under 7 days but renting multiple rooms for less than 7 days is frowned upon. I'm not sure that I understand this logic. I've heard the arguments that this type of rental is taking tax revenue from Rockland. I have to disagree. The person renting their home is paying income AND hotel lodging tax. This type of rental also allows travelers an affordable option to come visit our fantastic mid-coast area. Once they come to visit, they spend money in town and create revenue for the local businesses that pay taxes too so I'm not sure how this is a solid argument.

I also want to you to know that I am not writing as someone who rents their home in Airbnb style. My current set up doesn't really allow for that but my husband and I use Airbnb when we travel because it allows us the opportunity to stay in places we might not otherwise be able to afford. Not everyone can shell out \$130/night or more in peak season (for one room) to stay at one of our local B&Bs. I think by shutting down Airbnb type rentals in Rockland, the city is sending an unintended message that it's tough luck for anyone who can't afford to stay here or you have to stay here on the city's terms. Besides the money it takes to stay at a nice B&B, that type of traveling is not for everyone. Airbnb rentals offer a more casual and laid back atmosphere where you either have the whole property to yourself or you're space sharing with new people. You don't get that opportunity by staying in a traditional B&B or hotel.

I have one other opinion on this subject before we draw to a close. Anyone on the council who has a direct stake in a privately owned business that would financially benefit from Airbnb type rentals being disallowed should recuse themselves from the vote. If it turns out that the majority of council members have to recuse themselves, then the vote should go to the people. It's really the only fair way for council to handle this situation.

Sincerely,

Erin Darnell
Rockland Homeowner

March 18, 2015

Dear Mayor Isganitis and City Council,

I bought my first home in Rockland two years ago with the intention of offering both long term and short term rentals, in order to afford the costs of owning and maintaining a house. Last year I had been working closely with John Root in an attempt to obtain a permit for an accessory apartment. During this time, it was brought to my attention that an ordinance to limit short term rentals was being drafted.

A couple, who live in Dubai, own a vacation home next door to me. Since I informed them that I was doing rentals, they began complaining to the code enforcement office about a dispute over a shared driveway. The complicated parking arrangement existed before I even bought the house, and certainly before I started short term rentals. Unfortunately, this has been presented and treated as a short term rental problem. It is important, in this discussion, not to penalize owners of rental properties for what is essentially a petty neighborly dispute. Please note that there have been no problems regarding noise, traffic, trash or other issues related to my guests.

My neighbor has expressed that he is simply unhappy about my rentals (both long and short term) because of personal prejudices. Unfortunately, his determination to control my activities will not cease, regardless of any conclusion the council comes to about this ordinance.

I don't disagree with the ordinance being clarified. There is not currently a definition for vacation rentals in the code. The closest definition is that of a Bed and Breakfast. Clearly, a vacation rental is different than a B&B. Clarification is necessary. I welcome the opportunity to apply for a permit to demonstrate that my house meets single family safety requirements.

I am concerned with the limitations of the most recently drafted ordinance around a minimum stay of 7 days. The only argument made to support the need to restrict nightly rentals is turnover.

While neighborhood stability is important, there is no supporting evidence that a 3 night stay is more disruptive to a neighborhood than a 7 night stay. There have been no police reports or complaints from neighbors to support this assumption.

It is important to point out that Bed & Breakfast Inns are allowed in residential neighborhoods, therefore if there was a valid concern for disruption of neighborhoods, then B&Bs would also need to be required to have a minimum stay of 7 nights.

In addition, there is little difference in activity between a guest unloading luggage and unloading groceries. Not to mention that a longer term guest is more likely to spend more time in the neighborhood, while shorter term guests spend most of their time exploring the area (hence the need for just a room or a small apartment).

The discrimination against nightly vacation home rentals (vs. weekly) is disturbing. It suggests the influence of special interests and does not take the community as a whole into consideration.

It is arbitrary to allow absentee out of state homeowners to rent their houses by the week, while targeting tax paying community members who are using creative methods to afford high property taxes. Especially when the only neighbor "complaint" is from an out of state vacation homeowner.

The problem of a homeowner renting to tourists for 1-6 nights does not exist. There is nothing to fix. The current ordinance draft allows an exception during festivals. If short term rentals truly present a problem in neighborhoods, it's only a contradiction to *ignore* the problem during festivals.

The *problem* is that our city doesn't yet have framework for this conversation.

I suggest the following alterations to the existing ordinance draft:

- RTA 1- will permit rental of one to three bedrooms in an owner occupied dwelling for any number of days, less than a month.
- RTA 2- will permit rental of a whole house, two-family dwelling or one unit within a multi-family dwelling, for periods of less than a month.

The essential changes I have made are to allow for nightly rentals for up to 3 rooms for owner occupied homes, whole houses, two-family dwellings, and apartment units. I also eliminated the requirement of owner occupancy for rentals of a duplex or apartment. There are a number of out of state homeowners who do nightly rentals. They provide job opportunities for housekeepers, care takers, lawn maintenance crews, etc., while providing a place for families to visit Rockland even when they can't stay for a whole week. There's no need to limit their activity, just as there is no reason to limit weekly rentals.

There's no question that Rockland needs it's growth in tourism. The fact that a four story hotel is being built in the south end speaks to the need for more accommodations. The question of safety has been answered by existing city and state regulations. If there are any doubts regarding liability; AIRbnb provides liability insurance protection* to every host, HomeAway offers it's own homeowners insurance, and many vacation rental homeowners carry an insurance policy covering short term rentals.

To place a minimum stay on vacation rentals would not only be extremely difficult to enforce but would also place an unnecessary burden on the city. Not to mention a demographic of travelers that Rockland would no longer realize, causing a negative impact on our economy.

I think that you will find that most homeowners doing rentals are compliant with current safety regulations. We are willing and ready to get permits and move on with our lives!

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Nicole Fuller
21 Holmes St. Rockland
Photographer/Educator

*Airbnb's host protection is outlined here: <https://www.airbnb.com/host-protection-insurance>

[Rec'd 03/18/15]

Dear City Council Members,

VRPOMe (Vacation Rental Professionals of Maine, Inc.) commends the Rockland Code Enforcement Officer for seeing the difference between a vacation rental and a B&B where an individual rents out a room or sofa in their home. We support Basic Life Safety Standards which we have already implemented as responsible business owners. We seriously object to being told how a vacation property can conduct business with regard to the number of nights a property can be rented.

Though Vacation Rentals are one of the mainstays of Maine's Lodging Industry they are just one of many unique and sought after types of lodging in Maine. There are no such limits imposed on other segments of the lodging industry. To limit homeowners in the number of nights they can rent to each party would limit their ability to compete with other sectors, thereby limiting their income.

Maine Tourism Statistics confirm that the average stay for a person in a vacation rental in the summer, fall and winter is approximately 5 days – NOT 7 days. Limiting the ability to rent vacation properties consistent with market trends is not only unfair, but, could have serious ramifications for property values and salability. This could also be considered an unfair restraint of a legal business.

Rockland, in comparison to other Mid-coast cities and towns, has one of the smallest numbers of vacation rentals and there have been no complaints that we are aware of for a true vacation rental.

Therefore, we would ask that you not pass this pending ordinance without substantial modification. We would be happy to provide information or assistance in how this ordinance could be altered appropriately for the vacation rental industry.

Sincerely,

Melba R. Gunnison

Chair of Government Affairs

207-380-3043

Notes and comments for the Rockland City Council
public comment session March 2, 2015
by Kathryn Fogg Hill

Even Playing Field vs Home is My Castle

When I hear talk about the Inns wanting a level playing field when it comes to short term housing and that home owners are too inept to understand the importance of having insurance and safety for their guests, I wonder if the catastrophe they suggest is really a fear of its coming to the INNS rather than the homeowners.

The Inns are corporate entities, Limited Liability Companies. One might ask what their financial limits are in a catastrophe. Many are \$ ½ million buildings, large and much more complex in their hallways and exits than in a standard house. The City has changed its rules where the BnB owners may have their residence next door. One wonders if a staff person is in the inn at night to take charge quickly in case of a fire.

Home owners are usually present if they have rooms for guests and they are trying to meet their expenses in a town where I believe 25% of the property is tax exempt.

While the City is making it more difficult for homeowners to rent rooms for less than a week, there are no inspections for all the other apartments in Rockland where no owner is on the premises unless there is a complaint or when the property is sold. What is the safety difference between the type of units? The suggested ordinance then admits the need for short term housing but ignores these important safety issues it espouses by saying it is not so important when there are festivals or other busy times.

Many things the home owner is accused of, the innkeepers have no way of knowing: that they have no insurance, that they lack safety of catastrophic dimensions, that they do not pay taxes on their earnings, and that they are not paying the 8% tax to the State.

To suggest that two sets of people in a week is going to cause more trouble than one set for the whole week is ridiculous. My neighbors have enjoyed meeting visitors and discuss such things as childcare, what life is like where the visitors have come from, and what to see in Rockland.

While the innkeepers try to claim that they are concerned only about safety and a level playing field, in a recorded session in Belfast, the mayor complained that airbnb was cutting into his business. Inns are inns, homes are homes, and they are very different situations but each are something Rockland needs.

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