

**From:** [Chelsea Branson](#)  
**To:** [Pitts, Marianne G. - PDR](#)  
**Subject:** Comments for Short-Term Rentals Ordinance  
**Date:** Sunday, December 15, 2019 4:07:09 PM

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Hello Marianne,

Below are my comments for the short term rentals ordinance. Thank you for collecting!

The proposed short term rental ordinance (No. 2019-343) would increase the safety of all short term renters visiting Richmond. I am in favor of the portion (I) of the short term rental regulations requiring the rental operator to occupy the rental for 185 days of the year. I believe this primary residence portion of the ordinance would positively impact our communities and neighborhoods

In 2018 I lived in an apartment in a three unit multi-family home in Monroe Ward. The building was purchased and the new owner converted the other two units in the building to short term rentals listed on Airbnb before my lease was up. Airbnb users are not always great neighbors; they throw loud parties, smoke in the building, drag their suitcases down the stairs at strange hours, and don't have to pass the background check that I did in order to live there.

When the other units around me were someone's primary home, we got to know each other, helped each other move, had each other over for dinner. We created a community in our building that vanished when the new people living above me only stayed for 2 days at a time. Today that building is usually vacant Monday-Friday (judging by the availability on Airbnb). When I moved into my block I had real neighbors; today that block has 7 Airbnb listings that are empty >50% of the time judging by the listings. As of 12/15 the only night my old home will be occupied in January 2020 is 1/31. The account listing my old apartment has 23 Airbnb listings in Richmond. I don't think any of the 23 listings is their primary home, and they likely never meet any of the renters they are 'hosting'.

Allowing short term rentals outside of primary residences is eroding communities in Richmond, lowering the number of affordable homes in the city, decreasing the occupancy rate of our city, and lowering the number of homes for taxpaying residents. It creates a great business opportunity for those who can afford to take out a few mortgages, but at the expense of the members of the community.

Before making their decision, I urge our council members to think about what it would be like if all of the homes on your block were short-term rentals run by someone who you had never met. Who would you rather have as a neighbor?

Chelsea Branson  
2406 Barton Ave  
Richmond VA 23222

**From:** [Iain Morgan](#)  
**To:** [Pitts, Marianne G. - PDR](#)  
**Subject:** Re: City of Richmond Short-Term Rentals Ordinance  
**Date:** Thursday, December 12, 2019 9:02:03 PM

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Under no circumstances should people be able to short term lease their property without living in that property. That's it. Simple. If you allow a free for all I will leave the city and you will lose my tax dollars and property prices (and therefore taxes) will begin to drop. We have a special city doing well, don't ruin it for short term greed, it won't last and ultimately would put the city back decades.

On Thu, Dec 12, 2019, 10:15 AM Pitts, Marianne G. - PDR  
<[Marianne.Pitts@richmondgov.com](mailto:Marianne.Pitts@richmondgov.com)> wrote:

Good Morning,

I am emailing you as you have attended a public meeting or completed a survey regarding short-term rentals in the city of Richmond. On Monday night, an [ordinance](#) to permit short-term rentals under certain terms and conditions was introduced. The ordinance is currently scheduled to reviewed by City Planning Commission on January 6<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 pm in City Council Chambers. If you would like to provide public comment to the ordinance via email, please email me, and I will provide your comments to the Planning Commission.

Thank you,

Marianne

Marianne Pitts

Department of Planning and Development Review

900 E. Broad Street, Room 511, Richmond, VA 23219

[Marianne.Pitts@richmondgov.com](mailto:Marianne.Pitts@richmondgov.com)

Ph. (804) 646-5207

**From:** [Randy Shell](#)  
**To:** [Pitts, Marianne G. - PDR](#)  
**Subject:** Re: City of Richmond Short-Term Rentals Ordinance  
**Date:** Thursday, December 12, 2019 10:51:31 AM

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**CAUTION:** This message is from an external sender - Do not open attachments or click links unless you recognize the sender's address and know the content is safe.

Hi Marianne, thank you for the information and your efforts to give our city, the community and those who enjoy visiting Richmond access to short term rentals. As private individuals and stakeholders in the growth, beauty and quality of life in Richmond our needs and preferences should be heard, even as we are opposed and sometimes drowned out by those who represent bigger business entities such as hotel lobbyists. Their efforts to defeat the little guy are greedy and against the greater good of our community. It is also unnecessary in that I believe there is enough business to accommodate all of us.

I have spoken to several owners of short term rental properties in Richmond and have had many more conversations with Airbnb guests about the pros and cons of Airbnb facilities; I have yet to hear even one person (guest or host) say anything opposing the opportunities afforded by this home stay model. In fact there are many home owners who require these short term rentals to afford their mortgage (we among them). As an Airbnb Super Host I speak from first hand experience the satisfaction and appreciation expressed over and over by our Airbnb guests who would otherwise not be able to afford to stay in the Richmond area and/or would be extremely inconvenienced by having to stay at a hotel far from their preferred location. And that is not to mention the appreciation expressed for a more personalized experience, sometimes even forging friendships that continue long after the guests have gone away. As for the response from our neighbors, they have had no objections, and quite the contrary; the activity of invited guests makes our homes and streets safer by having additional eyes and an active presence within the neighborhood. Please feel free to use any part of this letter during the City Planning Commission meeting.

On Thu, Dec 12, 2019 at 10:15 AM Pitts, Marianne G. - PDR  
<[Marianne.Pitts@richmondgov.com](mailto:Marianne.Pitts@richmondgov.com)> wrote:

Good Morning,

I am emailing you as you have attended a public meeting or completed a survey regarding short-term rentals in the city of Richmond. On Monday night, an [ordinance](#) to permit short-term rentals under certain terms and conditions was introduced. The ordinance is currently scheduled to reviewed by City Planning Commission on January 6<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 pm in City Council Chambers. If you would like to provide public comment to the ordinance via email, please email me, and I will provide your comments to the Planning Commission.

Thank you,

**From:** [Jessica Jordan](#)  
**To:** [Pitts, Marianne G. - PDR](#)  
**Subject:** Re: City of Richmond Short-Term Rentals Ordinance  
**Date:** Saturday, December 14, 2019 10:21:41 AM

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Dear Marianne,

Thanks for your thoroughness in including so many interested parties in this planning process. My husband and I rent out our home on Airbnb when we are out of town. It is obviously our primary residence as we receive mail here, and have many family pictures on the wall. I have some questions about the proposed ordinance, and some comment.

This document references several other sections of code. What is the language in this section:

Sections 30-1020 through 30-1020.5 of the Code of the City of Richmond (2015)?

Also, I understand that you will use a third party for enforcement. Are there any fines or punishment associated with that?

How will you enforce the 185 day occupancy rule? My husband and I just retired, and are planning to do quite a bit of traveling, as well as spend more time at our second home in the Northern Neck. We have rented out our home since 2017, and not had any problems with the neighbors' complaints. In the past, at the end of the year, I tally up days of rental, and it is far short of 100 nights. But that is different from availability. Last year my work took me out of the country for about 5 months, and it was open for rental when I was gone.

Now that we are retired, we went on a 90 day trip. Our house had Airbnb rentals, co-hosted by a neighbor, while we were gone. It was available for rental for 90 days, but only had 8-10 days of rental each month. It seems to me that days of actual rental would be easier to enforce. I get a summary from Airbnb that shows how many days my house was rented. It does not show how many nights it was available for rental. I do not see how you can validate the number of days we stay in our house, so any enforcement of occupancy would have to be discriminatory or based on neighbors' complaints. Or you ask hosts to make a statement, and then believe whatever they say.

In summary, I agree with the idea that rentals should be in people's homes, not a

rental business. We stayed in many Airbnb's on our trip. Only two of them had signs that it was a family vacation home. These houses were much more fun for us, and had better equipped kitchens. But I think making a rule about how many days an owner must occupy a house will be very difficult to enforce. It is easy to recognize when it is someone's part-time home. I understand that the intent is to keep the long-term rental market equitable, but I am not sure that is the best way to do it.

If you want me to write a separate letter stating this, I can, or you can glean my comments from this email.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak my thoughts.

Sincerely,  
Jessica

Jessica Jordan, CNM, MSN  
*Retired*

WhatsApp: +1 804 677 5442

On Thu, Dec 12, 2019 at 12:22 PM Pitts, Marianne G. - PDR  
<[Marianne.Pitts@richmondgov.com](mailto:Marianne.Pitts@richmondgov.com)> wrote:

Please note that while many sections of the code were amended to allow short-term rentals as an accessory use, the new division of code which outlines the conditions applicable to short-term rentals begins on page 151.

Marianne Pitts

Department of Planning and Development Review

900 E. Broad Street, Room 511, Richmond, VA 23219

[Marianne.Pitts@richmondgov.com](mailto:Marianne.Pitts@richmondgov.com)

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[www.richmond300.com](http://www.richmond300.com)



January 2, 2020

Chairman Rodney Poole  
Richmond Planning Commission  
900 East Broad Street  
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Chairman Poole:

On behalf of the Richmond Association of REALTORS®, I would like to voice our support for the proposed short term rental ordinance. Our members have a vested interest in protecting both an individual's property rights and a neighborhood's character. To that end, we believe that the proposed ordinance achieves both goals.

Our major concern around short term rentals is absentee owners. In long and short term rentals alike, lack of oversight from the property owner can quickly become an issue for the renters as well as the neighbors. For this reason, we support the primary residence requirement--mandating that the owner or responsible party be available throughout the rental period.

Additionally, the residence requirement alleviates our apprehension about the preservation of neighborhood character and existing resident displacement via conversion of long term rentals to short term rentals. Conversion of this nature would lead to price speculation and removal of units from the market; ultimately, driving up rents and pushing out those who can no longer afford to pay. Richmond's diversity and affordability make it a top destination for tourists. It would be a shame if the industry were to cannibalize itself.

Finally, we support the provision in the ordinance allowing short term rentals in accessory dwelling units and hope that the Administration, City Council, and Planning Commission will move with all deliberate speed to pass an Accessory Dwelling Unit ordinance to further the creation of affordable housing units.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer comment. We look forward to the Commission's discussion of these items. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Laura Lafayette  
Chief Executive Officer

Cc: Vice Chair Melvin Law  
Commissioner Elizabeth Hancock Greenfield  
Commissioner Max Hepp-Buchanan  
Commissioner David Johannas  
Commissioner Vik Murthy  
Commissioner Jack Thompson  
Councilwoman Ellen Robertson  
Acting CAO Lenora Reid  
Deputy Chief Administrative Officer Sharon Ebert  
Director of Planning Mark Olinger

**From:** [Leo Griffin](#)  
**To:** [Pitts, Marianne G. - PDR](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: FW: Short-Term Rentals: City Planning Commission Agenda Jan 6, 2020  
**Date:** Thursday, January 2, 2020 3:15:27 PM

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Marianne,

Although I am against short-term rentals for single-family homes within the City of Richmond, if the Ordinance moves forward I support the *primary residence requirement*. Ultimately, I believe short-term rentals in single family home neighborhoods will negatively impact property values and real estates taxes.

I have experience with a short-term rental on my block. The neighbors on either side of that short-term rental have *both* recently sold their homes and moved. Although the next door short-term rental may not have been the primary reason for their move, both expressed frustration with the constant noise and coming and going next door. One of those neighbors was at wits end over the late night hot tub parties going on next door. That family moved to the county. I have observed a gang of young people, along with many out of state plates, renting that home on a short-term basis.

This isn't what I expected when I moved into the neighborhood in 2013 and it will impact my decision on whether I stay or move from the city.

Thank you for your consideration.

Leo Griffin  
3832 Kenmore Rd  
Richmond, VA 23225

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

**From:** Griffin, Leo F. - RRS <[Leo.Griffin@richmondgov.com](mailto:Leo.Griffin@richmondgov.com)>  
**Date:** Thu, Jan 2, 2020 at 2:07 PM  
**Subject:** FW: Short-Term Rentals: City Planning Commission Agenda Jan 6, 2020  
**To:** [leofgriffin@gmail.com](mailto:leofgriffin@gmail.com) <[leofgriffin@gmail.com](mailto:leofgriffin@gmail.com)>

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**From:** Pitts, Marianne G. - PDR



**From:** [Bill Hamill](#)  
**To:** [Olinger, Mark A. - PDR](#)  
**Cc:** [Addison, Andreas D. - City Council](#); [Pitts, Marianne G. - PDR](#); [Philip Hart](#); [Joe Andrews](#); [Marty Parrish](#); [Cyane Crump](#)  
**Subject:** Short-Term Rentals - Staff Report  
**Date:** Sunday, January 5, 2020 1:23:47 PM

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Mark:

I'm emailing to let you know that I think the staff report on STRs was thoughtfully prepared and clearly written.

You may recall that the recent Westhampton Citizens Association survey on Richmond 300 included a question on STRs. In summary, there is very substantial apprehension (to say the least) about STRs. By a 4-to-1 margin, respondents don't want STRs to even be permitted in their neighborhood. From this, one can confidently assume that respondents would overwhelmingly support strong regulation of STRs coupled with rigorous enforcement.

Let's hope that STRs come under appropriate regulation and the proposal you and your colleagues have crafted doesn't get watered down.

Bill

Bill Hamill  
President, Westhampton Citizens Association