

Craig, Sondra

From: J Olson <olsonapartments@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, October 30, 2023 7:44 PM
To: ZZ Council Members
Cc: Reynolds, Mitch; Trane, Andrea; Acklin, Tim
Subject: Short-term Rental regulation

*** CAUTION: This email originated from an external sender. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. ***

Dear Council Members,

As a lifelong landlord of our community(and by lifelong I mean my mother was scrubbing sawdust out of our new construction 16-plex when she was eight months pregnant with me), I would like to offer the following(perhaps unexpected) perspective;

1. Air B&B(and its cohorts, which are essentially transforming ordinary housing into hotel use) is a brand new “thing”. Nobody has built their long-term bread-and-butter family livelihood off of this business model for 20-30+ years with the sole exception of traditional bed and breakfast establishments, for which I understand your legislation has made carve-outs to avoid unintended negative consequences.
2. On multiple occasions in the last year, this topic has come up at AALA(Apartment Association of the La Crosse Area) monthly meetings, and I think it is very notable that this long-established trade organization with 35+ years of history(including two lawsuits against City regulation) has remained publicly uninvolved and silent on this particular issue.
3. Admirable as is the desire to see legislation approved sooner rather than later, the consequences of operating under changing sets of rules sets the Council up for future public lamentations involving properties “purchased in good faith” for use under one set of rules, and accusations of “moving the goal posts”. As much as I know how Council Members resent former colleagues sounding off and proffering uninvited advice, your first stance will be your strongest, and changes from that point could illicit a battle you didn’t bargain for. If you want the 180 day per year limit, you need to insert it from the start. You won’t get it three years from now without a massive amount of wailing and gnashing of teeth.
4. La Crosse was blessed with multiple new hotels developed in our City limits within the last decade. What are the vacancy rates during high tourist seasons? Are our hotels unable to serve the market demand? Or is Air B&B generating a false glut in hospitality supply and cannibalizing our community’s housing to meet maximum demand? Does this not further hinder future potential hotel development?

A good “landlord” cares about their land, the people who occupy their land, the people who neighbor that land, and the future fate of that land. I don’t consider the ownership or operation of an “Air B&B” to be the same or related to that of a “landlord”. When the people you serve only stay a few days, there is no relationship to be built, only a reputation. It makes sense that you craft legislation with the same mindset.

Good luck with it!!

Jessica Olson

