

Wilmington Selectboard Special Meeting

March 12, 2024

Present: Tom Fitzgerald, John Gannon, Sarah Fisher, Tony Tribuno

Others Present: Scott Tucker, Jessica DeFrancesco, Jessica Roberts, Cheryl LaFlamme, Ivy Kirby, Evan Steiner, Todd Gareiss, Vanessa Scandfeld, Jack Widness, Hugo Gomes, Nicki Steel, Elliott Ball, Morgan Rothblat, James Hamilton, Cristin Flannery, Chris Mays, Steve Schoenberger, Rocha Allim, JD Roberto, Dennis Musso, Kevin Seaman, Arthur Rogers, Pat Drury, John Lebron, Pam Mazzaferro, Thomas Elkind, Adam Cohen, Ted Schmidt, Lori Higgins, Ann Loughran, Janeen Capozzi, Mark Galantowicz, Jen Nilsen, Thomas Rafferty, Fred Marra, Matthew Moore, John Frey, Joe Testa, Andy Polglase, Jeanine Quicker, Cliff Leinonen, Christine DeCrescenzo, John Redd, Gretchen Havreluk, Jim McDevitt, Mary Sager, Will Melton, Samantha Kondracki, Marie Carver, James Walker, David Bliss, Donna Rooney, Matt Moran, Jacob Moore, Michael Levesque, Kris Rahmas, Emilio Mignanelli

1. Public hearing on Zoning Ordinance Amendments opened at 6:01 pm
 - Nicki Steel; concerns regarding the definitions of lodging and short-term rentals. Number of rooms, meals being served, etc should define what is lodging and what is short-term rental. STR shouldn't be allowed in Residential, cap on amount of people or bedrooms allowed. Chimney Hill should be moved to Resort-Residential District.
 - Thomas Elkind; disturbed that the focus is on number of bedrooms as a factor. Excessive noise complaints last year to the PD were to homes or apartments with less than 4 bedrooms; only 1 was from a known STR. Number of bedrooms isn't a factor in most other towns.
 - Will Melton; Lake Raponda Association. Lake Raponda is a seep lake; spring-fed. Urge town to manage and monitor STR's. Absentee landlords are buying properties with lake rights, allowing overcrowding of properties. Fireworks being shot out over the lake more often, polluting the lake. Aged septic systems and fuel oil tanks in lawns.
 - JD Roberto; legislature term for lodging states that it does not include short-term rentals. Agrees with Elkind that complaints are not coming from STR's currently. Four-bedroom home in a dense neighborhood is vastly different than a five-bedroom home on 12 acres. Will application, permit and complaint processes be simple and explicit?
 - James Walker; CHOA. How many people does a bedroom sleep? State Fire Marshall regulates STR's; 10+ people bring you to a public use where the Fire Marshall is concerned. Permit requirements should be made clearer.
 - Kevin Seaman; understands the need for some to rent their homes for part of the year. STR's and lodging are two different things and seem to have been combined. An increase in traffic and wear and tear on his road has happened since an STR opened last year. Asks the Board to limit the expansion of STR's. Concerned about full-time short-term renters.
 - Jack Widness; maintain residential districts for residences and not commercial/business purposes. Separate lodging and STR's. Concerned with increased traffic and noise on Lake Raponda; possible leakage of oil tanks and failing septic.
 - Elliott Ball; owns a second-home and rents out on a short-term basis. Has never heard of there being noise complaints from his property. Agrees that safety and sanitation concerns need to be taken. The number of bedrooms does seem arbitrary. Knows of local full-time residents who have bought properties to rent short-term. Maybe look at

- limiting number of days it can be rented per year. He has had noise issues with his full-time resident neighbors. It isn't just short-term renters. It does bring money to the economy, as they go to restaurants and stores.
- Emilio Mignanelli; has had a vacation home for 15 years. Has been managing rentals in Wilmington and Dover for many years. Too many cars or "party house" is something that should be managed through owners and other avenues. Lodging and short-term rental need to be separated and defined appropriately. Come up with a stand-alone short-term rental ordinance.
 - Hugo Gomes; let tourism manage STR's. Prices will go up if you limit the number of STR's; competitive prices will bring more tourism and keep the cost lower. STR's offer full kitchens, hot tubs, pools, and other things that some hotels here don't have.
 - John Lebron; Planning Commission has recommendations- Update STR's to prohibit meals being served, create a registry or licensing process, move Chimney Hill into Resort-Residential District. PC had worked on increasing housing and density. Permitting is not a replacement for a registry. STR's are businesses. Feels that those purchasing homes and renting them are not doing it because they need the income.
 - Pat Drury; fell in love with the area. Rent their home out a few times a year; it is not a business. Wants to maintain the charm of Wilmington. Limit the number of days it can be rented to limit commercial enterprises. Today's testimony sounds a lot more negative than of that during the Planning Commission hearing.
 - Matt Moran; hired a local contractor to fix his newly purchased home a couple years ago. Rents a few times a year to help with the repairs. Keeps in contact with neighbors to ensure there are no issues.
 - JD Roberto; feels John Lebron has an "agenda" and that this is a corporate enterprise is ludicrous. The only way to make it affordable for his family to retire here is to rent out when they aren't here. The market will sort itself out; those owning multiple properties will pull out eventually.
 - Lori Higgins/Evan Steiner; re-iterates JD's comments. They are here all winter and ski. Communicate with their neighbors, fire marshall and police officers.
 - Jacob Moore; STR's should be regulated differently than other lodging. Not against STR's but there needs to be oversight on them; there needs to be clear regulations and guidelines. This will greatly impact the community and its future. People are priced out of buying or renting here. Afraid that in 10 years there won't be any residents, just a ski mountain.
 - Bryce Boyer; own a second home here. Rent it part-time so they have a place to come when he and family want to ski. 80% of STR's manage 1-2 properties; disagrees with the "corporate enterprise" claim. There are some things that can be put in place to help with the noise and parking issues. Noise is a people problem, not a STR problem.
 - Vanessa Scinfeld; concerned that limiting STR's will leave them empty which could lead to less maintenance on the properties; less money being spent in town.

2. Recess hearing to April 2, 2024 at 5:30 pm

Regular meeting began at 7:25 pm

3. Visitors, Public Comment, Changes to agenda

4. Possible approval of Zoning Ordinance

- Gannon thanked everyone who came out and gave comments tonight. It is an important process.

- The ordinance will go to the town attorney for review and clarification on definitions.

5. Other business

Meeting adjourned at 7:27 pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Jessica DeFrancesco

Approved by the Wilmington Selectboard:

Thomas Fitzgerald, Chair

John Gannon, Vice Chair

Vince Rice, Clerk

Sarah Fisher

Tony Tribuno