

Minutes

Short-Term-Rental (STR) Task Force

Thursday, February 17, 2022
City Council Chambers

Task Force Attendees:

Co-Chairs Aaron Baker and Geraldine Dinkins

Task Force members: Nory LeBrun, Jeremy Owen, Hannah Bowers, Madeline Offen, Tripp Presnell, Isaac Allen

City Staff: Aaron Bland, Mack McKeller

Member of the Public: Annelise Hagedorn

Co-chair Geraldine Dinkins welcomed all task force members and called the meeting to order at 11:01.

Task Force members approved the agenda for the February 17 meeting unanimously.

The Task Force members certified a quorum with eight members present.

Task Force members approved the minutes from the Dec. 16 meeting.

There was no public participation.

Sub-committee Reports

On behalf of the data-collection sub-committee, Mr. Owen gave a brief update on the progress of the economic impact study of STRs in Transylvania County. The committee has approved the study and initiated it back in November. Mr. Owen said the data is being compiled and will be analyzed over the coming months. We may see a few early take-aways by mid-spring 2022.

Mr. Owen also updated the entire task force on data points in the local housing market. Most notable median single-family home price has increased from \$359,900 end of 2020 to \$370,250 at the end of 2021.

Also noteworthy is that the months' supply available for most housing priced under \$1 million is less than 2 months. In a balanced housing market, the ideal inventory is adequate for 6 months.

Furthermore, the number of days on the market from listing to closing shrunk from an average of 111 days in 2020 to 47 days in 2021. All of this points to a housing market that is short in supply and high in demand, Mr. Owen told Task Force members.

On behalf of the survey sub-committee, Mr. Baker, Ms. Bowers and Ms. Offen introduced Ms. Hagedorn, who teaches at Blue Ridge College and has volunteered to help with the

wording and other considerations for a survey on the topic of STRs within the city. Task Force members have received a 33-question draft survey and Ms. Hagedorn walked the committee through it and collected feedback.

Several questions were re-worded, added, eliminated or combined. The sub-committee also presented possible ways to deliver the survey, such as in a coded form included with the water bill, as well as an un-coded modality that would be directly accessible on the city's website. Ms. Bowers also added that printed forms of the survey will need to be available and collected from places, such as the library, churches and community centers, for people who do not have access to the internet. Task Force members discussed the pros and cons of various forms of delivery of the survey to city residents and the challenges posed by a fairly in-depth survey.

The survey can roughly be divided into four segments, collecting information on residents' current housing situation, observations or opinions regarding STRs and demographic information. Several members voiced their concern that the survey is too long and will require further editing. Several questions may be better suited for focus groups that the task force could hold to further capture city residents' attitude toward STRs. The survey sub-committee will return with a fine-tuned survey to the next meeting. Mr. Baker stated that during the next meeting the entire task force will have to make clear decisions on modes of delivery of the survey timeline, and if necessary come up with a budget to market the survey to achieve a representative sample.

Discussion

During discussion, task force members revisited the possible changes in policy recommendations that the task force is limited to, if the data and survey responses point to actual or perceived problems caused directly by STRs.

Mr. McKeller reminded the task force that state law limits municipalities and counties to zoning restrictions and definitions in what constitutes a STRs, as the only legally defensible areas to recommend policy changes, if so desired.

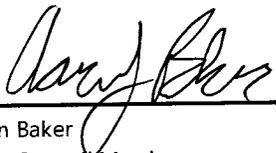
Next Steps

The Task Force meets again March 17 to continue work on the survey.

Adjourn

There being no further business, Co-chair Ms. Dinkins declared the meeting as closed at 12:58 p.m.

Minutes Approved: March 17, 2022

X 

Aaron Baker
Chair, Council Member

X 

Geraldine Dinkins
Co-Chair, Council Member