



Town Council Memorandum

TO: The Honorable Mayor and Town Council for the Town of Bowling Green
FROM: J.C. LaRiviere, Director of Community Development & Partnerships
COPY: India Adams-Jacobs, Town Manager & Zoning Administrator
Jeff Gore, Town Attorney
SUBJECT: Discussion of Proposed Zoning Text Amendment for Short-Term Rentals
DATE: November 7th, 2024

SUMMARY:

At their June 4th work session meeting, the Town Council for the Town of Bowling Green voted to refer the drafting of an ordinance to regulate short-term rentals to the Planning Commission for addition to their annual work plan. The Planning Commission added the item to their workplan and substantive discussions at their August, September, and October meetings. The duly-noticed public hearing occurred at the October meeting, where the Commission voted unanimously to provide a positive recommendation on the draft ordinance to Town Council. Town Council's consideration of the item will occur after the duly-noticed public hearing occurs at the November 7th regular meeting.

BACKGROUND:

There is currently no mechanism available in the zoning ordinance through which the Town can regulate this type of business. The Code of Virginia § 15.2-983 defines a short-term rental business as "the provision of a room or space that is suitable or intended for occupancy for dwelling, sleeping, or lodging purposes, for a period of fewer than 30 consecutive days, in exchange for a charge for the occupancy." Localities may establish a short-term rental registry and require operators within the locality to register annually and charge a fee for that registration. The Town Council briefly researched short-term rental regulations in 2018 with the Town of Blacksburg serving as the model, but no further action was taken.

Staff conducted a comparative analysis of ordinances from other localities, analyzed state code, identified parts of the Zoning Ordinance that may need to be modified, and presented the results of this work to the Commission at their August meeting. The Commission provided input on specific provisions in the draft ordinance at their August and September meetings. Staff included these recommendations in the draft ordinance which received a positive recommendation at the October meeting. There are two versions of the ordinance in the Council packet. The first is the final draft ordinance language proposed by staff, while the second is the version that the Planning Commission voted to recommend. The final changes proposed by staff are technical and structural in nature to support incorporation of best drafting practices and alignment with Town Code.

FISCAL IMPACT:

At this time, staff cannot project a fiscal impact. However, the introduction of short-term rentals into the local economy may produce additional tax revenue for the Town.

RECOMMENDATION & DRAFT MOTION:

Staff recommends that the Council vote to adopt the ordinance proposed by staff. "I move that the Council vote to adopt the ordinance as proposed by staff."