



AGENDA ITEM COMMENTARY

MEETING NAME:	City Council Meeting
MEETING DATE:	June 3, 2024
ITEM TITLE:	Consider and take appropriate action on report on short-term rentals.
STAFF INITIATOR:	Tara Tomlinson, Director of Development Services

BACKGROUND:

Our Zoning Ordinance prohibits transient lodging, or short-term rentals. Ordinance 14.03.011 characterizes a residential dwelling as a household that has tenancy for a minimum of a month or longer. Shorter periods are not considered residential, therefore illegal in city limits.

Some recent matters about short-term rentals have been brought to the City of Wolfforth's attention. In July 2021, a residential home was being used as an AirBNB at 303 10th Street. Due to traffic concerns and noise nuisances, the City of Wolfforth was made aware of the situation and immediately sent notice to make the owner aware that this type of property was not allowed. The owner removed the property from websites, but brought the issue in front of City Council on August 2, 2021. Many citizens from that neighborhood were also present and vocalized their opinion to not change the ordinance. The City Council at that time did not make any recommendations to change the ordinance for transient lodging. Also, during this time, the CDC met to discuss the possibility of allowing short-term rentals due to their management of Hotel Occupancy Tax funds.

Since this incident, other short-term rentals have been in violation and the city has worked to remove these properties from short-term rental sites and ensure they are no longer functioning as a short-term rental. The City of Wolfforth has taken action any time a property has submitted Hotel Occupancy Tax funds or a citizen has complained about the property. Letters are sent to the owners of the property and given a minimum of 7 days, per ordinance, to remove the property from any sites and no longer occupy the property as a short-term rental.

Recently, a citizen filed a complaint with the City of Wolfforth for 604 N 6th Street, which is owned by Jeff and Heather Larson. After confirming that the property was being used as a short-term rental, a letter of violation was sent to the Larson's on January 30, 2024. The property was quickly removed from all websites. Jeff and Heather Larson have recently asked the City Council at the May 20, 2024 meeting to reconsider the City's stance on short-term rentals. I spoke with Mr. Larson on Wednesday May 22 to discuss the history of short-term rentals in Wolfforth, along with gather any suggestions Mr. Larson has on the topic. During the call, Mr. Larson expressed that he was extremely unhappy with the City of Wolfforth and stated that he appreciated the call, but knew that the City would take no action on the matter. He plans to express to other citizens his disapproval of how it is run and that he plans to move out of the City of Wolfforth. He also did not appreciate that the City of Wolfforth made him correct the violation in 10 days, which ordinance only requires 7 days. His only suggestion was to poll the citizen's of Wolfforth to see what their stance is on the matter of short-term rentals.

EXHIBITS:

1. Timeline of actions made due to Short-term rentals

2. Documents from Short-term rental cases

COUNCIL ACTION/STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Council's discretion.