

A joint workshop between the City Commission of the City of Apalachicola and the Apalachicola Planning and Zoning Board was held on Monday, May 14, 2018 at 5:00 PM in the Apalachicola Community Center, #1 Bay Avenue, Apalachicola, Florida.

Present City Commission: Mayor Van Johnson, Commissioner Jimmy Elliott, Commissioner Brenda Ash, Commissioner Mitchell Bartley, Commissioner Anita Grove, City Administrator Lee Mathes, City Planner Cindy Clark

Apalachicola Planning & Zoning Board: Tom Daly, Jim Bachrach, Lynn Wilson Spohrer, Uta Hardy

Visitors: Karen Dennis, Marissa Getter, Bruce Hall, David Adlerstein, Pam Lewis

Workshop opened by Mayor Johnson.

Cindy Clark stated that Planning and Zoning held a workshop concerning short term rentals in the residential district and agreed that the best option to regulate issue would be to leave code restrictions in place and impose penalties for zoning code violations. The next step in the process towards adoption is to hold a joint workshop between the City Commission and Planning and Zoning Board. Ms. Clark outlined the rules and regulations in the Land Development Code regarding short term rentals in the residential district, outlined how many short term rentals are operating in violation of the zoning code, and options to enforce the violations.

Commissioner Grove stated this has been on the table as a discussion item for years and is glad to see it moving forward. Commissioner Grove stated she has always been told that short term rental can't be more than 6 months, not 30 days.

Ms. Clark stated the Land Development Code defines short term rental as 30 days or less, and can't identify the section that states 6 months.

Discussion held.

Commissioner Elliott stated the City could mandate that landlords buy an occupational license. Commissioner Elliott stated he doesn't see a problem with short term rentals because it is a supplemental income, help people pay their property taxes, and brings visitors into town.

Ms. Clark stated short term rentals can be destabilizing for a residential neighborhood.

Commissioner Grove stated the illegal short term rentals in a residential district compete with the commercially legal businesses.

Lynn Wilson – Spohrer stated there needs to be some latitude because some people need the extra income.

Karen Dennis discussed the advantages of having short term rentals in residential neighborhood.

Bruce Hall stated short term rentals do not belong in the R-1 district.

David Adlerstein stated the City is faced with a critical affordable housing need.

Ms. Clark stated the options are:

1. Leave code restrictions in place and impose penalties for zoning code violations.
2. Amend the code to allow the activity but regulate the use.
3. Consider Owner-Occupied Short Term Rentals

Commissioner Bartley stated he recommends option 1.

Commissioner Elliott stated he would like more discussion.

Mayor Johnson stated the current law states it is illegal in a residential district and if approved, the use of R-1 would be changed.

Marissa Getter stated limiting the number of short term rentals should be an option.

Commissioner Grove stated she recommends option 1.

Commissioner Elliott stated he would like to research it more and come up with more options.

Commissioner Ash stated we need to enforce the law.

Mayor Johnson stated we need to enforce the law.

There being no further discussion, workshop adjourned.

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Van W. Johnson, Sr., Mayor

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Lee Mathes, City Administrator