

April 16, 2023

Neighborhood Planning & Development Committee
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Dear Neighborhood Planning & Development Committee,

What is a Neighborhood?

We used to know without having to define it. A neighborhood is where residents live, play, and raise families. We work and volunteer here. Neighborhoods are a core strength of our city. But the overwhelming growth of non-resident short-term rentals in residential neighborhoods has changed that fabric and has impacted quality of life for residents.

Are we against resident-occupied short-term rentals? No. On-site hosts are part of the social fabric and are available when problems arise. Those homeowners pay earnings taxes, are counted as part of the U.S. Census, and vote.

However, the number of unregulated non-resident short-term rentals has exploded to more than 2,000 units, many managed by individuals and LLC's with no ties to the community. In other cities that number has mushroomed to more than 20,000. Kansas City is facing a crisis in terms of available, affordable housing. Those investors compete with prospective tenants and home buyers who want to put down roots in our city.

The growth of non-resident short-term rentals has also created a safety issue. It makes it harder for residents to know who the owner, host, or guests are, and determine when property crimes may be occurring. In the case of multi-family buildings, it means transient guests will have access to keys or entrance codes meant to protect long term tenants. The 2018 ordinance required simple notification if the property owner lived on site. If the owner did not live at the property the ordinance required a majority of adjacent property owners to consent to an application. The revised ordinance, as currently drafted, eliminates those safeguards. It takes away the power and voice of homeowners and neighborhood associations who have worked with the city to revitalize and stabilize residential areas. It disrupts the sense of community built from those efforts.

I have reviewed the comments and concerns expressed by the Midtown Neighborhoods in their Comments to Substitute Versions of 230267 and 230268, dated April 12, 2023. I implore the City Council and Mayor to enact an ordinance that resolves those concerns, including:

- Neighbor consent should continue to be required, although a reasonable compromise is disallowing non-resident STRs in R zoning and enacting density requirements.
- Quality of life protections, for both neighbors and guests, should continue to be required including the limits on the number of guests and prohibition of parties/events.
- Current permitted STRs should be required to re-register under Chapter 56 once their permit expires, and will be expected to comply with all requirements except the zoning and density requirement as long as the registrant or ownership does not change.
- The booking platforms must be required to remove any unregistered or deregistered STR.
- The Neighborhoods Department must be committed to actively enforcing the Ordinance to address violations and shut down STRs that are illegally operating or failing to comply with the Ordinance.

Ordinance #230268 will determine the fate of residential neighborhoods in Kansas City, Missouri. It will impact whether those neighborhoods are safe for residents, including families with children.

We are asking our elected representatives to partner with residents and neighborhoods to create a reasonable compromise that allows for sustainable growth but protects the rights and interests of permanent residents.

Sincerely,

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