

Preliminary Minutes

Rental Registry

August 29, 2022

Howard Barton Jr. Conference Room

Members Present:

Justin Hyjek, Chair

Eric Alden, Vice Chair

Noah Schmidt

Ryan Silvestri

Scott Baitz

Peter Kolenda

Penny Trick

Members Absent:

Rose Goings

Charlie Rimer

Others Present:

Robert Greenawalt (OVTV)

1. Call to Order: Justin called the meeting to order at 5:31 pm.
2. Justin said we have two folks calling in for public comments at some point during the meeting.
3. Justin wanted to inform the board that another third party reached out to him. They are called Rental Scape and found 1,400 listings across 110 listing sites.
4. Justin asked if the committee had any additional information to review before we start going through the presentation material.
5. Ryan began to go through what he was thinking of saying during the presentation. Yes we feel a rental registry is worth pursuing for the town of Ludlow. The focus would be on

Identification and safety. That will give us a clear picture of where we are currently and help us determine where we want to go in the future. He noted that education is important and we should educate with or without a registry. He does feel that cost will be a big topic during the Selectboard meeting.

6. Justin noted there is a unique startup cost and relatively stable annual cost but there are also costs that the town is already incurring that should be taken into account. He also mentioned that the Select Board has been presented with an options tax every few years and that may come up as well.
7. Eric wanted to ask some questions that might be asked. Why have a registry when safety is already covered through the state? Forming a Rental Registry is a slippery slope and when does regulation stop?
8. Justin said that anything that evolves from this process will be another committee or board. He also noted that it is important to get ahead of the state in regards to a rental registry rather than what for the state rules that could be more detrimental to Ludlow.
9. Ryan suggested that this data could help aid the state in providing information on how large the short term rental sector is and help them leverage more resources to departments like the fire Marshall.
10. Justin said we have always had second homeowners but the STR is newer and is unique to Ludlow.
11. Scott wants to make sure we keep it simple with identification, safety and education.
12. Pete, believes that the number of bedrooms would be looked at regarding safety.
13. Justin mentioned that a hotline could become a double edge sword.
14. Scott brought up \$40,000 dollar cost and how that would play out in the town vs village.
15. Justin thinks the village will be receptive with the data that we have found.
16. Eric agrees with Justin.
17. Scott thinks how we enforce will be a topic that the village cares about a lot.
18. Ryan wanted to make sure that the costs vs revenue is highlighted in that proposal.
19. Eric said that is a good question to ask other towns to see how they are doing financially with these programs.
20. Scott thinks we should have a number in mind to talk to the town about.
21. Penny thinks that if we are going to talk numbers we should mention total compliance compared to what is predicted by the third party.
22. Ryan explained total listings vs unique listings. Unique listings are individual properties and each property may have multiple listings on different online sites, Airbnb, VRBO, etc.
23. Scott thinks we shouldn't talk about a number because we don't know what that number actually is.
24. Justin highlighted we are still in the learning process and gathering data to help guide the future.
25. Pete noted we don't want a knee-jerk reaction.
26. Justin thinks that the sheer number of rental units should be establish the need to establish a registry and get more information.
27. Ryan asked what other questions would be asked.
28. Scott recommended keeping it simple.

29. Eric asked “if we approve collecting this data what are we going to do with it?
30. Ryan, keep it simple, it could give us a clear idea of how STRs impact the community, it could aid in zoning, transit...etc.
31. Pete asked about how billing would go.
32. Justin said that is done through the 3rd party
33. Pete asked about fines etc. but noted that is part of the next board.
34. Eric, mentioned STRs are a business and this is just a cost to doing business.
35. Ryan, this brings an idea up, they will be worried about the impact to local residents. Should we mention homesteading vs non homestead? Ryan uses the homestead as a known point to determine a break in taxes or in this case registry fees.
36. The board agreed there should be a reduced rate for homestead property.
37. Robert Greenwalt has been to most meetings and wanted to share his thoughts as a homeowner. As a private citizen and as an STR person. To him the nagging question has been why? Why a registry, this is a list. He believes the board has been talking about regulation and registry which are two separate things. Robert said it has always been about collecting information and why we were collecting it. What data are you collecting and why are you collecting? Last week safety came up, a registry doesn't address safety. It doesn't address sewer or bedrooms. If you are going to use this registry to regulate this is an expensive cost when there are other alternatives that are much cheaper. You can accomplish the same thing without a registry. The registry doesn't tell him you are addressing these issues. Robert wants to know if you are over charging and wants to know the numbers. He thinks it is important to come up with a cost that works. Robert takes his money and keeps it in Ludlow and others are like him. He believes there should be ordinances to follow the registry. He thinks people understand safety and education and have a hard time to grasp the registry.
38. Justin replied to Robert's statement. Transparency is huge, our goal is to see if the town is interested in a rental registry committee. We were tasked with just seeing how it would work. Justin said that with a town of 3500 parcels 800 are STR that is why we should look at them.
39. Eric said, I am not a resident, I am a flatlander. I own properties and rent them here and he wanted to be involved with the registry to make sure it didn't go off the rails, and he wants transparency and makes sure there are people from the all sides of the issue. Where it is going? We all want to know but that is something we don't know yet.
40. Penny, thinks Robert's points and Granicus's points are key, you need a goal. Without a goal you flounder. The answer might be as Scott mentioned, we don't know yet.
41. Justin said the \$40,000 cost for Granicus has intrinsic value to this community
42. Scott said we want to take a step forward and we don't know all the answers yet, but the point is we are all in agreement that we should take the next step.
43. The village trustees meet next Tuesday and Justin encouraged everyone to attend. Hopefully this committee established a baseline for a need to start working toward the future.
44. Ryan's last question, the class action law suites involve heavy regulation, should we agree that we don't see heavy regulations moving forward.
45. The board thinks we shouldn't speculate and we all may differ.

46. Justin said it is going to take the whole community, to determine the path moving forward.
47. Penny asked if we should approve meeting minutes.
48. The board decided to have a quick minute approval meeting via zoom later in September, date to be decided.
49. Scott made a motion to adjourn.
50. Ryan Seconded.
51. The committee adjourned at 6:37 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Noah Schmidt