



Greater Westside

B O A R D O F T R A D E

December 23, 2020

His Worship Gord Milsom & Council
West Kelowna City
2760 Cameron Road
West Kelowna, BC
V1Z 2T6

Dear His Worship & Council;

As the organization representing businesses in operating in West Kelowna and on the Westbank First Nation, we have reviewed the City's "Proposed Short Term Rental Regulations". We welcome the opportunity to assist the City in dealing with an issue that has existed for some years.

Home sharing platforms, such as Airbnb, have grown tremendously in popularity. However, what started as true home sharing – where the owner is present during the guest's stay – has expanded into growing commercial operations in which entire homes and multiple units are being rented out. Many hosts are exploiting a lack of regulation and are running illegal hotels, which has given rise to unintended consequences including less housing, community nuisances and lost taxes.

Short-term rental operations have had a profound impact on affordable housing – an issue that has already reached a critical state in West Kelowna. Long-term rental units are being repurposed for short-term rentals, exacerbating a shortage of affordable housing. Community workers in West Kelowna are struggling to find places to live, with many having to commute hours to work each day. The rights of West Kelownians to have meaningful work in West Kelowna and a place to live should be of paramount importance to council. Furthermore, not only is valuable permanent housing inventory being taken off the market, rental rates are also skyrocketing. Given this reality, it should not be possible for commercial operators to repurpose residential homes for commercial use.

Commercial operators, who do not offer security or supervision on the premise, are also having an unfortunate impact on communities. Reports of parking constraints, nuisance, garbage pile-up, disruption and crime are increasing. People no longer know their neighbours, and guests

are increasingly at risk since health and safety standards and inspections may not be in place. In fact, according to a recent Nanos Research report, 65% of B.C. residents have expressed concern regarding a neighbouring home being regularly rented on Airbnb¹.

It is also important to consider that although Airbnb is now collecting the provincial sales tax as well as the municipal and regional district tax in British Columbia, similar platforms must also comply. Additionally, there is still considerable property tax loss occurring today. Fair rules must be applied in order to ensure a level playing field. Anyone operating in the commercial accommodations space should be subject to the same rules and regulations as other businesses doing exactly the same kind of work. This includes taxation, insurance, licensing, and health & safety.

I strongly encourage the West Kelowna City Council to pass regulations that will limit the use of short-term rentals to principal residences. Furthermore, it will be critical to include a strong and effective enforcement mechanism to ensure success.

We thank you for your important work on this critical issue.

Sincerely,



Heather Robinson
Executive Director
Greater Westside Board of Trade
Ph: 250-768-3378
executivedirector@gwboardoftrade.com

¹ <http://www.nanos.co/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/2018-1208-Hotel-Association-AirBnB-August-Populated-report-with-Tabs.pdf>

From: Gellatly Bay Goats Peak Community Association <gellatlybaycommunity@gmail.com>

Sent: January 5, 2021 8:20 PM

To: dev services <dev.services@westkelownacity.ca>

Cc: MayorAndCouncil <mayorandcouncil@westkelownacity.ca>; info west kelowna <info@westkelownacity.ca>; Paul Gipps <Paul.Gipps@westkelownacity.ca>

Subject: Short Term Rentals

To Whom This May Concern,

The Gellatly Bay Goats Peak Community Association would like to provide additional feedback with regards to the Draft Regulations for Short Term Rentals. First and foremost we applaud your efforts on this initiative and believe these regulations are a step in the right direction for this currently illegal but very operational industry in our city. We strongly agree with your proposed requirements when it comes to licensing, parking, guests limitations, fine increases, and ensuring a responsive and local contact remain available for the rental at all times.

In addition to the above we would also like you to consider further regulations on:

- The number of short term rental licenses granted into select neighbourhoods (i.e. Gellatly Bay). This would also need to include a fair way to turnover licenses within the neighbourhoods year over year potentially through a lottery system.
- Setting limits on the number of nights the residence can be rented out as a Short Term Rental during the year.
- Not allowing homes to be purchased and operated as full-time Short Term Rentals. Numerous of these currently operate in the City which take away from a residential neighbourhood sense of community. One option to circumvent this would be to require that the dwelling be occupied by the primary owner/ licensor at least 50% of the year. Alternatively if this is an option you are looking to support additional licensing fees should be applied.
- Increasing fines and penalties for repeat offenders. In an effort to keep enforcement costs manageable fines should be tripled (or more) on your third incident. Similarly, any Short Term Rentals that receive more than 3 infractions in a year should have their business license suspended with no chance of renewal the following year.
- The City needs to move forward with registration and collection of a Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT) for all Short Term Rentals with the revenue being invested back into enforcement and support.

Last but most important is enforcement for these regulations which we do not see being adequately addressed in your current draft. Many of our members are personally affected by Short Term Rentals and are all too familiar with where the City falls short. Your draft for regulating this initiative needs to include additional Bylaw Officers that are proactive and operate on a 24/7 shift schedule for the Summer season. Majority of infractions occur outside the existing Bylaw operating hours and as such we recommend West Kelowna adopt a similar Bylaw schedule as the City of Kelowna. This includes 24/7 Bylaw Officer resources over the Summer season which have responsive access to a RCMP officer.

If there is any additional feedback or support we can offer your team as you move forward with the next draft please don't hesitate to reach out.

All the Best,
The Gellatly Bay Goats Peak Community Association