

**From:** [Todd Avis](#)  
**To:** [Darlene Friend](#)  
**Subject:** I caught a couple of typos. Please post this version.  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 26, 2024 7:12:26 PM

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Dear Village of Empire Council,

Being physically removed from Empire as the Village is embroiled in a debate over the need or lack of need for an STR ordinance gives me a unique perspective as I am hearing from both sides of the issue.

As the primary author of the 2020 STR study that was presented to Council and relegated to a shelf, I can attest that even though some may have had opposing opinions on our recommendations, not one voice expressed displeasure with the process that was taken to arrive at our conclusions. In my professional career of over 40 years, I've learned a great deal about committee work and have come to the belief that more often than not, process is more important than the final product. This why I write today.

The Council must recognize they are responsible for the current community division respecting the STR debate. The Council must face the fact they have created animosity and confusion within the community. Talk about hollowing out a community.

The charge given to the STR Committee was premature, lacked guidance on process, and ignored the professional services available to guide our community through such a volatile topic.

I encourage the Village Council to suspend the proceedings of the committee tonight and regroup before any ordinance is taken up for vote. Do what is right, call a time out, let cooler heads prevail and most importantly determine if it's the will of the people to develop an ordinance.

If Council determines the need to continue the writing of an ordinance, I recommend the following.

1. Conduct a citizen survey to hear firsthand from the community their thoughts and opinions. This will bring credibility to an end product.
2. Drop all language that references the 'poor behavior' of renters and treat our renters as guests as they should be. Until contrarian empirical data and evidence can be provided, there should be no reference to poorly behaved renters. In 12 years I've hosted nearly two hundred guests and have received two complaints. One complaint was lodged because of a party my three boys threw and I took care of that and the second complaint, was lodged because a young couple was embracing, looking at the stars, after being engaged a few hours earlier on the Empire beach. The embrace made the neighbor feel uncomfortable. Imagine that.
3. If you insist on placing a cap, I'd recommend using a percentage of STRs against total number of residential units in the Village. As the Village increases housing units, new STRs would be brought on. This is fair and equitable.
4. Drop the language about establishing a number of guests per unit. Aside from being essentially impossible to enforce, I know several of my neighbors host families and friends that often exceed the potential density mandates imposed on STRs.

There are my thoughts. Bottom line, suspend this process, regroup, provide a roadmap to a committee, survey the community, and then let the process take place. You'll get a far better end product, I'm certain.

Watching from the sideline and hoping the coach puts me in,

Todd Avis

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Sent from my iPad Sent from my iPhone