

16 Ridge Road
Candlewood Isle, New Fairfield, CT 06812

Zoning Board/Commission
Town of New Fairfield
New Fairfield, CT 06812

RE: SHORT-TERM RENTALS

Dear Sirs/Madams:

I write this letter, not because I think you need more information about this topic, but because I want to make sure that I've done all that I can do to impact the positive outcome in regulating this issue. Thank you for holding the public hearings and for your thoughtful consideration of this matter.

Enclosed, please find two articles from Fairfax County, Virginia on this subject. Although the area is different from here, the articles raise very similar concerns, some of which may not yet have been considered. The articles may also provide possible solutions that can be adapted to New Fairfield's decision.

Short-term rentals share many of the same problems that can and do happen with long-term rentals: safety, security, responsibility, sanitation, noise, accountability – all factors in preserving (or jeopardizing) the desired character of a neighborhood, And in our area this is also affecting many private communities, such as Candlewood Isle that rely on the protection of town regulations to preserve that "desirable character." Rather than complain, I want to present these articles to raise the obstacles and some reasonable resolutions.

Key considerations/requirements: 1) Licensing, registration and inspection by local government, 2) Verification of licensing by hosting platforms i.e., AirBNB, 3) Fines imposed for violations. 4) Enforcement.

Despite all of our good efforts, if the final regulations are not enforced, they are worthless.

I hope you read this letter and the articles. I hope that they guide you in coming to a good decision that suits New Fairfield in the best possible way.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

Louise M. Clark

Louise M. Clark

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Fairfax Co. OKs new rules for Airbnb, other short-term rentals



By [Michelle Basch \(https://wtop.com/author/michelle-basch/\)](https://wtop.com/author/michelle-basch/) | [@MBaschWTOP \(https://twitter.com/MBaschWTOP\)](https://twitter.com/MBaschWTOP)

and [Jack Moore \(https://wtop.com/author/jack-moore/\)](https://wtop.com/author/jack-moore/)

August 1, 2018 11:55 am

WASHINGTON — After more than a year of study, Fairfax County, Virginia has approved new rules for people who rent out their homes through websites, such as Airbnb and FlipKey.

The new rules approved by the county board of supervisors Tuesday go into effect starting Oct. 1.

Under the new rules, owners and renters can rent out their primary residence for up to 60 nights per calendar year.

No more than six people will be able to stay in a rental at one time, and they all have to know each other and book under one contract.

People who rent out their homes must identify an “authorized agent,” who will be available to help guests address problems that come up while a property is being rented.

Each short-term rental must have at least one designated parking space for guests and the rental listing must identify the location of the parking space, according to the new rules.

If you live in the county and are interested in renting out your place, in order to comply with the new rules you’ll have to buy a \$200 permit good for two years.

When the new rules kick in, people who rent out their residences will have to pay transient occupancy taxes, which the county estimates would generate more than \$428,000 a year. Of that, nearly \$250,000 would go to the county’s coffers, while the rest would be used to support tourism and regional transportation.

Until the board of supervisors’ vote Tuesday, short-term rentals were not officially covered by Fairfax County zoning rules, although the county estimated there are currently at least 1,500 active listings on Airbnb and other short-term rental sites.

New regulations on short-term rentals took effect July 1 in both Loudoun County, Virginia (<https://wtop.com/loudoun-county/2018/05/loco-short-term-rental/>) and Montgomery County, Maryland (<https://wtop.com/consumer-news/2018/07/listing-your-home-on-airbnb-new-regulations-have-started/>).

Like WTOP on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/wtopnews>) and follow @WTOP (<https://twitter.com/WTOP>) on Twitter to engage in conversation about this article and others.

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Other Considerations

- A commercial business such as this on residential property is not the same as someone working from their home
- A business rental license should be required.
- The hosting "platform" (Airbnb or other) should verify license with town or govt office.
- There should be fines imposed for violations in safety and illegal bookings. The money collected could go to town towards legal housing
- Certificate of registration and inspection (town and fees charged to owner) required for safety (for commercial use) must be attained by owner and displayed on property.

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Public Affairs



CONTACT INFORMATION: Open during regular business hours, 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Monday - Friday.



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Tony Castrilli,
Director of Public Affairs

Fairfax County to Hold Public Hearings on Proposed Zoning Rules for Short-Term Lodging

March 20, 2018

Today, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors authorized public hearings for proposed new zoning rules on short-term lodgings, such as those offered through Airbnb, VRBO and Flipkey.

The Planning Commission is scheduled to hold its hearing on May 3, and the board will hold its own hearing on June 19. These dates are subject to change, however.

The county has been working on the new zoning rules over the past year, following a 2017 state law that allows local governments to regulate these kinds of short-term uses.



Zoning officials

say the proposed rules attempt to strike a balance between allowing these rentals, which are popular in today's sharing economy, and addressing neighborhood concerns.

Except for bed-and breakfasts and hotels, Fairfax's zoning rules currently don't permit homeowners to allow transient occupancy in their homes, yet there are an estimated 1,500 active Airbnb listings in Fairfax County. **Transient occupancy — more commonly called short term rentals or lodging —are defined as rentals of fewer than 30 days.**

The regulations, if ultimately enacted, wouldn't bar individual homeowners or community associations from prohibiting short-term lodgings, officials say.

PROPOSED RULES

As proposed, the regulations would only allow property owners or renters to offer their primary residence as short-term lodging. This limitation is to prevent businesses from operating multiple, full-time rentals, like a hotel or motel, in residential neighborhoods.

Guests would be limited to six adults, and the lodgers must all be associated with the same rental contract to prevent multiple rentals of a property at the same time.

To protect neighborhoods, **properties may not be rented for events or commercial purposes like parties, weddings or fundraisers.**

The proposal also caps the maximum number of nights short-term lodgings may be rented out. **The rules would allow for up to 180 calendar days, but zoning officials are recommending a 90-night limit or 25 percent of a year.**

The Planning Commission and the board will also consider whether property owners or renters must be present in their home or apartment when it is used as a short-term lodging.

Despite the number of short-term rentals allegedly operating to date, the county has received 54 complaints—or less than 1 percent of the estimated 1,500 Airbnb rentals listed within the county.

County officials acknowledge that enforcement could be a challenge even with the new rules, particularly when it comes to the limit on number of nights and guests. The rules include provisions that will help with enforcement, however. For example, short-term operators must get a permit that can be revoked, and properties must be made available for inspection by county code enforcement inspectors upon request.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Short-term lodging operators also must pay transient occupancy taxes. **County leaders calculate that these rentals could generate \$428,268 in transit occupancy taxes a year.** Of this amount, \$249,823 would go to the county's coffers, and the remaining amount would be used to support tourism and regional transportation as required by state law.

RULES CREATED WITH EXTENSIVE PUBLIC INPUT

Zoning officials engaged in extensive public input to develop the proposed rules. They received more than 7,600 responses to an online survey, held four community meetings across the county and met with individual homeowners and civic groups, tourism professionals, real estate agents and representatives from the short-term lodging and hotel industry.

County staff also participated in a workgroup with other local jurisdictions that are considering or have adopted regulations, including Arlington, Alexandria and Loudoun.

In a separate and future proposal, Fairfax County is also considering whether to create zoning rules for commercially managed apartment buildings that offer short term lodging.

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