

David Packer

1 Laulie Ave

Zoning Meeting 8/1/18

The first time I saw a 78 rpm record was when I found one in our living room at our home on Squantz Pond.

I asked my father where it came from, and he told me, "the renters left it here." That was in 1974.

Following World War II, my father built that house by the lake with his father... on weekends, by hand.

It's been the place I where I grew up, and the place I have shared throughout my life, first with my wife, then my two children, and then, **again** with my father in his later years when he moved back in with us for a time.

But one of the most difficult things for me has been the threat of losing that house as property taxes have continued to climb. Those taxes have nearly doubled since I bought the house from my father 10 years ago. Meanwhile, my earned income is essentially the same as it was in 2008, with the time from then to now including a two year period of unemployment.

So in order to keep our cherished family home, I turned, as my father had, in the 1960's and 1970's to renting our home to guests. The only thing that's changed since then is the method for connecting with those guests.

For me, as it has been for other's who list their property, Airbnb has been an economic life preserver, allowing us to keep our home.

And after taxes, any extra money is put right back **into** our home.

To make long overdue repairs and property improvements, all of which benefit, our neighborhood aesthetically and local contractors economically. In fact, this past year alone, we spend over four thousand dollars on property improvements and maintenance... improvements which would not have been possible without our Airbnb guests. In addition, competition on Airbnb forces hosts to "step up their game" in terms of home maintenance to be competitive, and as a result, my house cleaner and landscaper, both locals, are paid directly with Airbnb receipts.

As for the guests, they are spending money, right here in New Fairfield. At our stores, in our restaurants, and paying a 15 percent tax to the State of Connecticut for their stay.

Many talk about concern for the neighborhood.

For safety.

There have been many "what if's" bandied about.

But the reality is that after the vetting process that Airbnb facilitates, the guests we have had at our home have been wonderful. The last thing I would want to do is allow people into our home, our most valuable asset, and our neighborhood who we did not trust.

Many of our guests are family members of people who live in town, and just a few weeks ago we were able to host the extended family of our neighbors who live just a few houses away.

Others have come to our home for family weddings and reunions.

Guests have come from as far as California and the UK, but they have one thing in common. They are mature, experienced travelers who who have been very respectful and responsible. We have made many friendships, and one couple even bought a place of their own and moved into the area after their stay!

My father passed away last month, and one of the last things I was able to do was to take him back to our Squantz Pond home. He told me as he sat on the porch, looking at the lake this past spring that it was the most beautiful place in the world. I am so happy that I was able to have that moment with him.. In that place.... And that I am able to keep that house... for him, for my children. Airbnb has allowed me to do that.

14 Great Meadow Road
New Fairfield, CT 06812
September 1, 2018

New Fairfield Zoning Board
New Fairfield, CT 06812

Dear Members of the Board,

I am writing to the board with regard to short term residential rentals in the town of New Fairfield. I would request that the zoning board pay particular attention to the effect that short-term rentals will have on many of the small lake communities who share common lake beaches, on small rights of way serving two or more houses, and on privately owned properties with easements allowing associated properties to cross and recross over their private property to the shores of Candlewood Lake. Short term rentals will allow greater numbers of strangers to use the often already strained resources of the small community beaches, rights of way, and private properties around the lake. The influx of strangers will upset the sense of community and security many tight knit community's presently enjoy for themselves in their children. Many families will need to think twice before allowing their children to circulate freely among strangers.

Rentals of less than four weeks duration will interfere with the incorporation of the short term residents into the fabric of our communities. The short term rental fees for homes with multiple bedrooms are more attractive to larger groups who would otherwise have to rent multiple hotel rooms to accommodate their group. These economics often lead to overcrowding of the rental properties. The larger number of short term residents might conceivably lead to inviting a larger number of friends to enjoy the rented property with them. It is easy to see how the numbers of people at any specific property may swell exponentially. The fact that New Fairfield has no noise or nuisance regulations will make controlling noxious situations impossible. If each turnover of renters at a property resulted in just one celebration, it is easy to see how rentals of shorter duration would lead to an increase in the number of celebrations per time interval. The increased number of renters and guests will place additional strain on resources like septic systems, water, and parking. I would therefore request that any short term rental regulations that are developed clearly define the number of occupants allowed to live in each property as well as the maximum occupancy of the property itself. Parking regulations will also need to take into consideration not only resident parking but guest parking as well. Short term rental regulations will also need to make provisions for more frequent inspection of septic systems and health issues related to increase occupancy and use, particularly adjacent the ponds, lake, and rivers in town.

Along with the consideration of short term rentals the board will need to consider what duration of residency constitutes town citizenship or makes one a resident as it relates to the use of the town boat launch ramp, beach, town athletic facilities and other town property. Renting of privately owned dock space and mooring facilities on the lake is frowned upon. Will short term renters be allowed to have boats on the lake? If short term renters are to be allowed to have boats on the lake there will need to be provisions for the safe landing and storage of boats on a property by property basis. Will owners of a rented property be allowed to moor the owners boats at a rented property where they are not in residence? Short term rental regulations will also need to define what rights private communities or private landowners are allowed to control. In a perfect world, we would all honor and respect the needs and feelings of our neighbors. All renters as consumers naturally feel entitled to all they think they have paid for, however, renters of a longer duration have a greater incentive to be a part of the community

than short-term renters who may never see their neighbors again. I would therefore ask the zoning board to consider a short term rental period of not less than four weeks. If the period of four weeks is determined to be too long I would request that the regulations make provision for two types of short-term renters (perhaps transients versus residents) offering the privileges spoken of above only to those renters signing a lease for 4 or more weeks.

In summary I would request the board consider a short term rental duration of not less than four weeks. That each rental property participating in short term rentals be registered by the town on a property by property basis and that as a part of the registration process residency numbers and maximum occupancy of each property be established paying particular attention to the septic and health capacity of the individual property. The number of resident parking places and the number of guest parking places will need to be established for each property. The mooring, safe storage and use of boats and personal water craft will also need to be established on a property by property basis as well. In establishing which amenities individual properties may advertise that they offer careful consideration of the effect of increased use and increased congestion on adjoining properties in each residential community will need to be taken into consideration.

If the town of new Fairfield is to have short term rentals I would implore the zoning board to establish noise and nuisance regulations for the town. Realizing that with increased regulation comes the increased potential for abuse of regulations, I would also request zoning board to establish a process by which legitimate complaints can and will be processed.

Thank you for your consideration of my concerns over short term rentals.

Sincerely,



Dr. Curtis H. Beck

August 8, 2018

To the Members of the Zoning Board of New Fairfield:

I recently attended the meeting in which the Board entertained discussion on Airbnb. During this meeting Rob and Kate (owners of Sweet Dotti's Cottage at 30 Windmill Rd) spoke about how much money they made with Airbnb and the financial benefits to New Fairfield. I'd like to offer a counter argument and impress upon the Board some of the negatives of Airbnb.

First let me tell you a little about who I am. I am a homeowner and resident of New Fairfield for over 20 years. My family has been coming to Candlewood Lake for approximately 60 years. My children and grandchildren spend time on the lake and have fond memories of time with family in a safe family-friendly community. My family and I are committed to the preservation of the beauty and health of our community and lake. We also support the local economy by patronizing local businesses from shops, restaurants, contractors, etc.

Airbnb is a short term rental business not dissimilar to a hotel without all the regulatory restrictions of a hotel. If someone wanted to build a hotel next door to me or on my street I would have received a notice from the Township to air my concerns. If someone wanted to convert their house to a multi-family property or simply build an addition or ask for a zoning variance I would have likewise been given an opportunity to speak up. This is not the case when converting a family home to an Airbnb business.

When 30 Windmill Rd New Fairfield CT was listed for sale back in 2015 it was identified as a 2 bed/2 bath home however it is advertised on Airbnb as having 4 bedrooms 5 beds and 2 baths for 8 guests in an 800+ sq ft cottage.

<https://www.airbnb.com/rooms/8304026?location=New%20Fairfield%2C%20CT&guests=1>

ENTIRE COTTAGE

Sweet Dotti's Cottage on Candlewood Lake - 60M NYC

New Fairfield

8 guests 4 bedrooms 5 beds 2 baths

I am personally aware that the Township takes lake water and well water quality seriously so I find it hard to believe that the Township approved a 4 bedroom septic on an 8,712 sq ft lot. This raises serious environmental concerns for me.

As Rob mentioned, his business (in a residential neighborhood) is quite successful, however that success is on the backs of the neighbors, neighborhood and lake. The following are just some examples for your consideration:

- Absentee owners who do not monitor guest activities so as to minimize the disruption to the neighbors
- A consistent stream of people driving too fast on the roads we and our children and grandchildren play/walk on
- Renters appear unaware of boating safety regulations including use of alcohol and excessive speed, driving home-owner's boat – not sure they have the proper boating certificates/education
- Driving of water craft at excessive speeds in the cove (no wake zone), too close to docks and swim areas (requests to slow down are met with jeers and general disrespect)
- Loud party-like activities as guests enjoy their vacation on the lake with loud music, shouting and revving of boat motors
- While home values on average continue to increase the value of homes closest to the Airbnb are negatively impacted as home buyers do not want to live next to a "hotel"

Absentee home owners only interested in the profit they can make are not good neighbors. The first time anyone in the community met the home owners was at the public discussion on the impact of Airbnb. Rob's comments make his motives abundantly clear – he's in it for the money. While I do not begrudge anyone the opportunity to make a living I do not support the exploitation of our community and the contamination of our lake to do so.

I would welcome an opportunity to speak with you and debate the Airbnb issue further but what I really want is for greater restrictions on the establishment and on-going Airbnb activities in New Fairfield , including limitations on short term rentals less than one month and strict enforcement of existing ordinances designed to ensure environmental protections and safe use of our lake and lake community.

Respectfully,

Elisabeth Schuerger
26 Windmill Rd.
New Fairfield, CT 06812

Evan White

From: webadmin@newfairfield.org
Sent: Friday, August 03, 2018 10:49 AM
To: ewhite@newfairfield.org
Subject: Website form message

Timestamp :: 8/3/2018 10:49:12

Name: :: Anna Quinn

Email Address: :: aquinn@newstimes.com

Telephone Number: :: 2037313333

Leave your comment or questions here: :: Hi Evan,

I just left a voicemail at your office but I thought I'd send an email as well in case that's easier. I'm the reporter from the News-Times that was at the hearing this week and who you spoke with a while back about the Airbnb regulation process.

I'm working on a story for the weekend about New Fairfield's hearing and a more regional comparison of how Airbnbs are handled in other towns. I just had a few follow-up questions if you had a minute today to answer.

1. In talking with the P&Z director in Ridgefield, it seems the town used its existing bed and breakfast regulation to shut down Airbnbs operating without special permits because it views them the same as bed and breakfasts. Was this discussed as an option for New Fairfield instead of creating a new regulation since bed and breakfasts are already in the zoning regulations?

2. I reached out to Bridgewater because I thought at the hearing it was mentioned that they have an ordinance surrounding enforcement for Airbnb regulation, but the zoning officer there says they do not have an ordinance or enforce Airbnb restrictions -- was there another town the New Fairfield commission was looking at?

Feel free to give me a call if that's easier.

Thanks!
Anna Quinn
Reporter, News-Times
W: (203) 731-3333
C: (203) 727-3348

From: Eileen Connors <econnors1726@charter.net>

Date: August 2, 2018 at 7:20:34 PM EDT

To: skipco66@charter.net

Cc: econnors1726@charter.net

Subject: Short Term Rentals (Airbnb)

Chairman John Moran and members of the Zoning Commission ,

Thank you for having the meeting that allowed the residents of NF the opportunity to express their opinions about the recent increase in the number of short term rentals in our town.

My major concern is the impact of short term rentals on the safety of our children on our roads .These rentals add extra traffic and parked cars to already crowded narrow roads.

I live on Candlewood Isle but most of the other lake communities and some sections of town have the same narrow roads that we have .The roads are so narrow that we do not have mail delivery to our homes . The school buses only come as far as the entrance even though there are 300 homes here and the Isle is almost 3 miles long . We have a camp here every summer with a couple of hundred children who are out on the roads coming and going from their different activities all day .

Another factor effecting our roads is the number of vehicles that have been working to clean up and repair the major damage that Candlewood Isle has sustained from the May storm . Since then we have had an extraordinary number of tree companies and other work trucks and large pieces of equipment working on the Isle. The crews have been working here from morning till night cleaning up the many downed trees that wrecked havoc on our homes and property . There are tradesman from all of the trades working on repairing the damage to the homes. There are trucks delivering and retrieving dumpsters filled with debris . There are many homes here that need to be repaired and some have been declared unsafe to live in by the town . Some homes will have to be demolished and rebuilt . All this work , which many people say will take a few years to complete has brought a tremendous amount of truck traffic to our roads . We had road closures almost daily for 2 months so that trucks with cranes could remove trees from homes and properties. I expect there will be many more road closures as work continues on the clean up and repair . I am so grateful for all the work that is being done to restore the community but there is no denying that it makes the roads more congested and dangerous .

Therefore I object to the added number of cars and traffic being added to the community by the boom in short term rental businesses . The short term rentals attracts renters who come in large groups with many cars and have no vested interest in this community .

My grandchildren are growing up here as their parents on both sides did and their grandparents did . I would greatly appreciate it if the zoning board would take measure to restore and preserve the nature of this normally quite safe community.

I thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Eileen Connors
12 High Trail Rd
Candlewood Isle

Zoning Commission Town of New Fairfield

Air B'n B's and Short Term Rentals – NOT GOOD!

The concept of a B & B (Bed & Breakfast) has been around for a very long time. It is one that is owner occupied, and hence, the owner of the property is in attendance, on the property, while renting out rooms and overseeing the conduct of the rentees.

An Air B'n B is not the same concept. The owner of the property is not in attendance of the property while it is rented. The burden of overseeing is then left to the neighbors and/or Town to be sure that there is proper conduct while occupying the home.

I believe that most families move to New Fairfield to raise a family in a safe and wholesome environment and have the permanence of a secure family neighborhood. To have accountability of their neighbors and their town. They've chosen a small friendly town, and in most cases, a single family town to accomplish this goal. They may have moved from cities or apartments and now want a secure and friendly home life. They did not want the impermanence of a Rotating Door Home next door. They wanted to feel safe in their neighborhood. They should not have to be concerned about who they or their children are exposed to on a frequent basis right where they live. Not all rentees are bad people but I've heard of some really concerning behavior that has occurred because of the practice of short term rentals and specifically Air B'n B's.

It's fine for folks to purchase a second home, but it is not fine for them to make money off of these homes at the expense of their neighbors. Without owner occupancy there is not good governance of the property. I'm sure that these owners would not knowingly rent to people who would be a problem, but there is very little they can do after the fact except to not rent to them again. The Zoning Enforcement Officer cannot be contacted at night, after 12 p.m. on Friday or weekends about problems that are attendant to the property. And, if the rental ends Sunday night, Monday morning is too late to do anything. Also, we do not have a noise ordinance to enforce in the case of loud and obnoxious sound emanating from the property. You can't ask the owner to please control it because he or she isn't there to do it.

I attended the Zoning Commission Public Hearing August 1st with about 60+ fellow townspeople and it was beyond any doubt that the idea of Air B'n B's is not acceptable. Ninety to 95 percent of the attendees were clearly against it. The only ones in favor were those who are currently benefitting from the rental income they are receiving. So please let your feelings be heard, write to the Zoning Commission, they want to know what your thoughts are and how they should proceed concerning this issue. The next meeting is Wednesday Sept. 5th. Speak now or forever hold your piece.

Diane Gucker
4 High Winds Road, N.F.
203 746 1457

-----Original Message-----

From: srescigno@gmail.com [mailto:srescigno@gmail.com]

Sent: Wednesday, August 29, 2018 10:17 PM

To: Evan White

Subject: Meeting to discuss Airbnb

Zoning committee of New Fairfield,

I have been a resident of Candlewood Isle for over 40 years. I would like to register my complaints and concerns over what is happening on Candlewood Isle with home owners renting out their homes as Airbnb properties.

I feel that if owners are going to continue to rent their properties we should all try and work with the town to regulate the rentals. One solution is to have to rent at least a minimum of 2 weeks and to have to be registered with the town . The isle has always had long term rentals. The owners of Candlewood Isle pay very high taxes to live in a private community.

By owners renting out a few days at a time, I feel our privacy is being compromised.

The septic systems are being overused with so many people renting smaller houses to larger groups which is a health problem. Our roads are very narrow and difficult to have emergency vehicles on our roads even without the extra cars with the rentals of the Airbnb. Noise is a big problem with the rentals. The people who rent these houses are here for a vacation weekend. Partying goes on without the consideration of their neighbors. I could go on and on but think you understand my frustration.

The owners say they need these rentals to support their houses but what about the owners who do not rent their houses and suffer from the people who do rent.

As I said in the beginning I am sure there could be some solutions for everyone if all of us work together.

I have always loved living on Candlewood Isle. At this point I do not like the direction the isle is going in just because some owners are thinking of themselves and not their neighbors.

Thank you for scheduling discussions of Airbnb rentals on your recent zoning meetings.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Rescigno

27 Lake Drive North



Evan White <ewhite@newfairfield.org>

Air bnb

[candlewoodjen <candlewoodjen@candlewoodjen@earthlink.net>](mailto:candlewoodjen@candlewoodjen@earthlink.net)

Reply-To: [candlewoodjen <candlewoodjen@candlewoodjen@earthlink.net>](mailto:candlewoodjen@candlewoodjen@earthlink.net)

To: ewhite@newfairfield.org

Tue, Sep 4, 2018 at 3:19 PM

Hi Evan,

I am writing to express my concern for the high numbers of Air BNB rentals we have seen this summer in Candlewood Knolls and the problems they present.

Many homes in the Knolls are small, seasonal, and have septic and parking that are outdated and limited. Some of the homes that are being advertised to sleep 10-12 are very tiny cabins with one bathroom and 2 bedrooms, and are only equipped to handle 4 or 5 people. This is very concerning, especially in homes that are so close to Candlewood Lake. The other main issue is parking. The Knolls has small streets and limited parking to begin with, and when you have 5 or 6 cars showing up and parking on a tight street, the conditions are very unsafe. Passage on the streets during the weekend is difficult, and would be impossible for an emergency vehicle.

I saw a comment made at that last meeting that the renters are frequenting local restaurants and thus are good for our local economy. This is not true. These renters are hanging out on their decks or our beaches until very late, drinking and barbequing. They are not eating out.

There are not only health and safety issues involved here. If these rentals continue and increase, with property owners buying houses specifically to rent (as one such owner on Candlewood Isle has done - currently with 4 houses) it will dramatically change the face of the town, with limited population in the winter and a very small school population.

We have been residents of New Fairfield for 20 years, and the trend toward these short-term rentals is very concerning to me. Please consider legislation to at least make the rentals longer term, or ban them as some other local towns have done (Ridgefield).

Thank you,
Jennifer Licht



Website form message

webadmin@newfairfield.org <webadmin@newfairfield.org>
o: ewhite@newfairfield.org

Mon, Aug 27, 2018 at 12:33 PM

Timestamp :: 8/27/2018 12:33:49

Name: :: Bobbi Ridgeway

Email Address: :: bobbiloy@yahoo.com

Telephone Number: :: 203-546-7351

Leave your comment or questions here: :: To the Zoning Commission:

Greetings, I would like to introduce myself. I'm Bobbi Ridgeway and my husband and I own a home at 16 Fulton Drive.

Regarding the issue of AirBNB rentals which I believe is to be voted on shortly, I want to begin by saying that I only own one home and do not rent it out in any way. But I am concerned by the possibility of our town prohibiting AirBNB rentals.

I understand that at least one of our neighbors has had some unfortunate dealings with inconsiderate guests from a nearby rental property. While I do sympathize with this individual, I think that penalizing our whole town is perhaps an extreme measure of dealing with this issue. I have stayed in an AirBNB accommodation while traveling so I am somewhat familiar with the company's protocols. There are rating and review mechanisms in place to minimize rentals to undesirable people, Therefore, perhaps as a community we can intact some form of fines or penalties for home owners whose rental gusts consistently breech the bounds of decorum.

For several reasons, one of which is our property values, I do not believe that we will be serving ourselves well by outlawing AirBNB rentals. In the current cultural landscape, AirBNB has become an extremely popular and pervasive form of both travel and of generating extra income. It seems to me that things that help keep our community vibrant and on trend benefit our real estate market. Therefore, if the surrounding towns allow this form of currency while we prohibit it we run the risk of potentially depressing our property values.

In addition, I believe AirBNB has other possible benefits to our town. My sister, who lives in upstate NY, recently suffered the loss of her business. Her two children were grown and gone, so she turned their bedrooms into guest rooms that she rented out on AirBNB. This is what saved her from losing everything during a time of financial hardship. Among other things, AirBNB offers a way for ordinary people to help themselves with financial burdens. I would hate to see this potential avenue of income cut off to all New Fairfield residents because of the negligence of a few of our citizens. And I believe that with effort and cooperation we can come up with a less drastic and more inclusive solution to this problem within our community.

Sincerely,
Bobbi Ridgeway

August 14, 2018

TO: Zoning Board

FROM: Sandra Colesworthy

I have been a resident of Candlewood Isle for forty one years.

Things are changing here and not in a good way. The short term rentals are continuing to cause more problems for all of us.

Two most import issues are the safety and health situations.

Our roads are narrow and we have speed limits. The added cars and disregard for our speed limits create a safety situation.

The other issue is the number of people occupying these houses with limited septic sizes. How can a two bedroom house be advertised that it sleeps ten.

Rentals have always taken place around the lake. However not in this fashion.

The town has to step in and help us out. Having an ordinance that requires a minimum of nights would eliminate the weekend rentals and slow down the constant turnover of houses.

Thank you for your service and consideration.

Sincerely,

Sandra Colesworthy

