



TOWN OF CHESTER

PLANNING COMMISSION
556 Elm Street
P.O. Box 370
Chester, VT 05143

(802) 875-2173 office
(802) 875-2237 fax
pcchair@chestervt.gov
www.chestervt.gov

August 15, 2022

Dear Chester Selectboard:

The Planning Commission is focusing on the topic of Short-Term Rentals (STRs). STRs have become a highly visible and debated topic across many towns in Vermont as well as across the country.

Strategies for STR regulation vary widely from simple registration programs to very strict and limiting policies regulating how and where STRs are allowed. Some of the most common concerns about STRs are related to health and safety, diminished neighborhood character, and impact on housing affordability, yet at the same time STRs can provide an important source of revenue helping people afford their properties and increasing tourism.

Chester currently does not regulate STRs. Chester has approximately 80 STR listings which represents about 8% of the housing stock. The majority are single family homes where the entire house is rented. In the past two years STR growth has increased by 58%.

Given the increasing popularity of the STR business model combined with the trends in Chester, the Planning Commission feels a “do nothing” approach is no longer in the Town’s best interests, nor is an approach that would create a high degree of regulation. The Planning Commission recommends a crawl, walk, run approach where the first step is to create an annual STR registration process to better understand how STRs are operating within the community and to promote and protect the public health, safety, and welfare.

Attached please find a draft Short-Term Rental Ordinance that embodies the Planning Commission’s recommendations for your consideration as well as a document outlining additional regulations, not included in the draft ordinance, for your reference. Administration of the ordinance could be budget neutral through the charging of annual fees and contracting with an STR compliance monitoring provider.

Sincerely,

Hugh Quinn

Planning Commission Chair