

April 28, 2022

Council President Theresa Kail Smith

510 City-County Building

414 Grant Street

Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Dear Councilwoman Kail Smith:

The Pennsylvania Association of Bed & Breakfast Inns (PABBI) is a non-profit trade organization representing Pennsylvania’s Bed & Breakfasts/Inns. Our mission is advocacy and education. Over the past six years, PABBI has been working to level the playing field with short-term rentals in terms of providing safe and comfortable lodging and fair business operating requirements (licensing, insurance, occupancy limits, etc.).

Short-term rentals, especially Airbnb, have revolutionized the lodging market. Some of these online home-sharing companies offer more listings than the top five major hotel brands have, combined. Unsurprisingly, these additional lodging options have kept both bed and breakfast and hotel rates in check. Hotel rooms that would often sell out now typically remain open during peak periods. This industry has always welcomed competition; however, it is essential that any competitor experience fair and equitable regulation and treatment like our hotels and bed and breakfasts.

Among other things, hotels and bed and breakfasts are required to:

* obtain a license/occupancy permit to operate and are subject to the Uniform Construction Code for new construction and renovations;
* remit hotel occupancy tax and local county/city room tax;
* purchase commercial insurance;
* have annual inspections of boilers, fire extinguishers, etc.;
* adhere to local zoning ordinances; and
* have adequate parking available.

“Hosts” or “owners” offering their home or vacation rental properties for short-term rentals ought to be held to the same standards of regulatory enforcement comparable to bed and breakfasts and hotels. At a time when this industry pivots to recovery and rebuilding from the COVID-19 pandemic, it is critical that the City of Pittsburgh develops an ordinance that provides protection to neighborhoods and residents as well as levels the playing field with hotels/motels/inns and bed and breakfasts.

PABBI feels strongly that, at minimum, a short-term rental ordinance shall:

* Define where short-term rentals are permissible.
* Develop a short-term rental application that at minimum requires:
  + a local contact is available 24/7 and within 15 miles of the short-term rental property;

Page Two

April 28, 2022

* + copies of County Hotel Room Excise Tax Certificate and current PA Sales and Use Tax Permit;
  + an inspection to ensure safety standards such as fire extinguishers on each floor, smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detector, etc.; and
  + proof that at least $500,000 in general liability insurance has been obtained for the duration of the license term.
* Identify the short-term rentals standards that should address:
  + overnight occupancy limit of the property to no more than [insert number] persons per bedroom, plus [insert number] additional persons, or a maximum of [insert number] occupants, whichever is less;
  + maximum number of days guests allowed at any one time;
  + outdoor parking requirements;
  + regulation of noise; and
  + each short-term rental property must have a clearly visible and legible notice posted within the dwelling unit and on the front door containing the contact information for the local contact, the E-911 address of the property, and maximum number of occupants and vehicles allowed.
* Establish fees and terms for permit renewals.
* Develop an enforcement plan that includes provisions for police and fire personnel to be aware of the location of all short-term rentals.
* Establish violations and penalties plus a process for appeals and hearings.

To assist you in the development of a comprehensive short-term rental ordinance for the City of Pittsburgh, please view our position paper on the “Requirements for Short-Term Rentals” that can be found at www.painns.com/advocacy.

We would also encourage you to review the many Short-term rental ordinances developed and implemented by PA Townships/Boroughs that are successfully regulating short-term rentals for the safety of their communities and residents.

PABBI is available to assist you in any way that we can. If you have any questions or would like to discuss our position on short-term rentals, please call our Director, Rose Mape at 717-525-7799 or email pabbi@painns.com.

Please enter our letter of April 28, 2022 into the minutes of your next meeting.

Sincerely,

Carl Kosko, Chair

PABBI Board of Directors

Owner, Inn & Spa at Intercourse Village

cc: Mayor Ed Gainey

Brenda F. Pree, MMC, City Clerk