



TOWN OF BEL AIR

DEPARTMENTS OF PLANNING AND PUBLIC WORKS

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Bel Air Board of Town Commissioners

FROM: Bel Air Planning Commission

SUBJECT: Ordinance regarding Short Term Rental

DATE: June 5, 2025, Hearing Date

The Bel Air Planning Commission reviewed the draft version of an ordinance enabling the regulation of Short-Term Rentals at their regularly scheduled meeting on June 5, 2025. The information below provides a fair representation of the discussion and a recommendation to the Town Board regarding this proposed Development Regulation amendment.

Short Term Rental

Short Term Rentals (STR) are not provided for in the Permitted Use Tables located at the end of Chapter 165 and do not have performance standards outlined in the appropriate article. This lack of provision results in STR's being prohibited in the Town. This does not mean they do not exist, it only means they are operated in a clandestine manner without the proper permits from Bel Air. It is hard to know how many currently exist, but it is estimated at between 10 to 15 based on past research. Companies such as Airbnb and Verbo do not readily cooperate with the Town by freely providing information regarding their hosts. Impacts from an STR has been spotty and infrequent, however, any incident from such a use is difficult to pinpoint since the users are transient and hard to trace back to the accommodation.

The Planning Commission has limited experience with any current regulation since STR's are prohibited in Bel Air. The definition of an STR was previously included when the definition of an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) was included in 2023. What remains to be addressed is allowable location and criteria. There is support for the economic benefits of STR's by allowing retirees and those with fixed incomes to stay in their homes by adding to revenue from an STR. It also benefits the Town by keeping visitors in the community where they will spend money in local restaurants and shops. The alternative is the current situation where lodging is inconveniently located in Belcamp, Aberdeen and White Marsh. Requiring a license be associated with the potential use allows enforcement to be streamlined and simpler. This is critical to keeping remediation of a violation quick and effective.

Based on the above discussion, The Bel Air Planning Commission took no exception to the draft legislation as presented and voted to recommend the proposed amendment to the Board of Town Commissioners with no revision.

cc Kevin L. Small, Director of Planning & Community Development
Edward Hopkins, Town Administrator
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