

WALLA WALLA CITY COUNCIL
Work Session Minutes
August 14, 2017

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Pomraning called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Present: Councilmembers Barbara Clark, Jerry Cummins, Dick Morgan, Steve Moss, Tom Scribner, and Mayor Pro Tem Jim Barrow.

Absent: Mayor Allen Pomraning.

City staff in attendance: Deputy City Manager Byron Olson, City Attorney Tim Donaldson, Development Services Director Elizabeth Chamberlain, Communications Manager David Brauhn, and City Clerk Kammy Hill.

2. ACTIVE AGENDA

A. Review of proposed changes to the noise ordinance.

City Attorney Donaldson reported a review of the City's noise ordinance had been completed at Council's request. There was discussion on the draft ordinance protecting free speech but not unreasonably disrupting or disturbing the peace; changing the connectors "and" to "or" in the ordinance; and restricting the use of leaf blowers.

B. Short term rentals (STR) – continued discussion on non-owner occupied.

Development Services Director Chamberlain reviewed the following concerns raised by Council and how they might be addressed:

1. Neighborhood Compatibility (e.g. dark blocks).

How draft regulations (Planning Commission recommendation) address:

- 24-hour/7 days a week local contact responsible for the unit; and readily available to respond to tenant impacts such as noise.
- Graduated violation system to address mismanagement of a unit.
- Good neighborhood guidelines for tenants.

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- Require an additional off-street parking stall for short term rental.

Other options for council consideration:

Density limit Could consider one non-principal occupied short term rental per block face. Could consider 300-foot separation between non-principal residence short term rental; blocks range from 300 feet to 600 feet to 1,000 feet.	Pros Minimizes the concentration of STRs. Moderate approach to neighborhood compatibility issues raised during public process.	Cons How to address if more than one existing STR per block? Could grandfather existing STRs and once no longer operating then lose grandfather rights.
Prohibit non-principal residence short term rentals in residential zones: Allow non-principal residence short term rentals in commercial zones.	Pros Addresses neighborhood compatibility issues raised during public process.	Cons Property owners who made investments into properties through remodels, etc. are impacted if STRs are prohibited in residential zones.
Host's contact information must be given to all adjoining property owners	No negative impact. Should be included in the regulations.	

Staff recommendation: Establish a density limit; permit one non-principal occupied short term rental per block face.

2. Safety

How draft regulations (Planning Commission recommendation) address:

- Require annual license.
- Require an annual inspection of the unit.
- Require installation of fire extinguishers; number and location are determined at inspection.

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- Carbon monoxide detectors and smoke detectors installed per code.
- If a pool is on the property, then it must be fenced according to the requirements of the building code.
- Property and liability insurance coverage for a short term rental.

3. Parking

How draft regulations (Planning Commission recommendation) address:

- Single Family Residential units require two off-street parking stalls (current code) regardless of number of bedrooms. The draft ordinance requires one additional off-street parking stall for a short term rental.

Other options for council consideration:

- Consider additional off-street parking for a short term rental; option may be to require one stall per bedroom that is rented.

4. Affordable Housing

How draft regulations (Planning Commission recommendation) address:

- The draft regulations do not directly address affordable housing. Affordable housing is a much larger issue beyond short term rentals and should be reviewed through a separate policy discussion such as the comprehensive plan update which allows for a broader look at the issue. The Housing Chapter (a required element) will include a housing inventory and analysis of the city's housing situation.

5. Level Playing Field

How draft regulations (Planning Commission recommendation) address:

- An annual business license required.

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- An annual inspection required.
- Verification that lodging taxes have been paid to Department of Revenue.

There was discussion on:

- Penalties if a hotel/motel is found in violation of health and safety regulations.
- Whether parking would be allowed in front yards.
- Putting a cap on the number of short term rentals would require defensible findings.
- Costs for processing applications and enforcement.
- Prohibiting non-owner occupied short term rentals.
- Whether non-compliant short term rentals would be “grandfathered” in.
- Limiting short term rentals to one per block and how licenses would be issued if there were more than one per block.
- Future use would not transfer with the property. It is a license to operate.
- The City does not have a business and occupation tax so one could not be charged on short term rentals.
- A moratorium is generally enacted prior to the development of policies and regulations, so it would not be appropriate at this point.
- In implementing density regulations, distance in feet may be more useful than block face to eliminate short term rentals being located across the street from each other.
- Need to define a fair system including: implementation date for a transition; providing neighbors with the owner’s contact information; safety of people in the neighborhood; use same parking standards for hotels; charge and collect fees and taxes for commercial businesses; supply is a factor of affordable housing.

There was no consensus on prohibiting non-owner occupied short term rentals in residential areas.

There was no consensus on limiting non-owner occupied short term rentals to only those currently operating.

There was additional discussion on density and the definition of a “block face.” A majority of Council agreed that staff should further study and report back on density limitations, how conflicts in implementing density limitations are resolved (first in time, first in right), and whether there are

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any "takings" if existing non-owner occupied short term rentals are not "grandfathered" in to the new regulations.

There were additional comments on methods to limit the impacts of parking on residential streets and neighborhoods.

Mayor Pro Tem Barrow invited audience members to provide brief comments to the Council.

Michele Gribnau, no address provided, felt that a density limitation takes care of parking impacts.

Debora Rossi, 186 Kimberly Court, Walla Walla, asked Council to consider the investments of adjacent neighbors, zoning, and tracking violators.

Diana Broze, 104 N. Division Street, Walla Walla, suggested allowing people that are currently operating non-owner occupied short term rentals two years to transition the properties from short term rentals.

Brian Duvall, 2595 Kendall Road, Walla Walla, Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce, spoke in support of individual property rights.

Kevin Davis, KS Davis Design, spoke in support of individual property rights and allowing the continuation of short term rentals as a means of supporting local businesses.

C. OWWL Application.

Brelynn Hess, Intern for the City's Communications Division, reviewed the new smart phone application "One Walla Walla List." This application was developed to provide a comprehensive directory of social services in the Walla Walla area.

There was discussion on how the application gets updated, promoting the use of this application, methods for tracking use, and better describing the category for "health."

Ms. Hess was commended for her work on developing this application.

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D. Council Dais Chair Selection.

Deputy City Manager Olson reported a selection of chairs had been delivered from Total Office Concepts for the Council to select a new chair style for the dais in the Council Chambers. All of the chairs are similarly priced.

3. OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was discussed.

4. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:52 p.m.