



CITY OF WHITE SALMON
Planning Commission Meeting - Wednesday, September 22, 2021

COMMISSION AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL PRESENT

Commission Members:

Greg Hohensee, Chairman
Ross Henry
Seth Gilchrist
Tom Stevenson

Staff:

Brendan Conboy, City Land-Use Planner
Erika Castro Guzman, City Associate Planner

Excused:

Michael Morneault

CALL TO ORDER/ ROLL CALL

Chairman Greg Hohensee called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m. Two audience members attended by teleconference. A quorum of planning commissioner members was present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. **Approval of Meeting Minutes – August 25, 2021**

Moved by Tom Stevenson. Seconded by Seth Gilchrist.

Motion to approve minutes of August 25, 2021, as amended. CARRIED 4–0.

Hohensee – Aye, Henry – Aye, Gilchrist – Aye, Stevenson – Aye.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

2. **Workshop**

a. **Short-term Rentals**

Land-use Planner, Brendan Conboy, presented to the Planning Commission to discuss staff's proposed alternatives and regulatory tools for short-term rentals (STRs) to guide staff to their desired outcome.

The Planning Commission discussed if short-term rentals should be a conditional use or an outright use by zone/overlay. Land-use Planner Conboy commented this determines the level of review the City does for an STR. Commissioner Gilchrist stated that STRs may be outright use around the commercial zone/overlay and be had with a conditional use permit for the remaining city limits. Commissioner Henry said that STRs should be outright use with clear guidelines, while Commissioner Stevenson opposed by stating that STRs should be a conditional use permit in all zones/overlays. Chairman Hohensee stated that a well-defined administrative procedure may allow STRs as an outright use and supports Commissioner Gilchrist's comment if there were to be an overlay a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) could work.

short-term rentals in ADUs. Chairman Hohensee said he would like to limit the total number of STRs allowed, not restrict the type of structure.

Commissioners discussed if there should be a limit to the total number of nights for short-term rentals. Commissioner Gilchrist stated that the limitation should apply outside the commercial zone overlay, Commissioner Henry agreed. Commissioner Stevenson stated that he thinks the total night limit should be 60; Chairman Hohensee stated that making the number of nights too small may restrict a certain type of growth. Therefore, he believes the total number of nights should not be less than 90. Commissioner Gilchrist shares that it is typical for a family to STR their home while on vacation, and he sees value in limiting the number of nights to less than 90 days depending on how owner-occupied is defined (parameters yet to be discussed); Commissioner Stevenson agrees. In general, the Planning Commission would like to limit the total number of nights in the residential area.

Commissioners discussed their views on what the city would be interested in protecting before defining 'owner-occupancy.' Commissioner Stevenson stated that he sought to avoid taking away from long-term rental stock and avoid STRs from becoming a business. Commissioner Gilchrist said he feared the community losing the small-town feel and evidence of such; Commissioner Henry agreed by adding he is concerned about people using Washington State as a tax shelter. Chairman Hohensee stated he seeks to keep a stable economy and protect the community by preserving our strong neighborhood feel.

Commissioners discussed how to define 'owner-occupancy.' Commissioner Stevenson stated that he would like the definition to include anyone renting a portion of their home/ADU on the premises, or proof of residency in White Salmon, and must have a contact person available 24/7. Commissioner Henry stated he would like to see an element limiting one STR and avoid Washington State be used as a tax shelter. Land-use Conboy suggested adding additional STR application requirements, such as a previous year's income tax return and two forms of identification (ID). Commissioners loosely agreed that the City's goal would be met by requesting STR applicants for a previous year's tax return, two forms of ID, and to be entered into a lottery system if they met the owner-occupancy requirements once a quota is met. Further discussion is needed to define owner occupancy; it was agreed that an applicant must be a White Salmon resident. Some Commissioners suggested that the lottery terms be long enough so that if an applicant doesn't get selected the first time, they have no more of a chance than others of getting chosen at a later time of application. The administrative procedure to be further discussed at the City Council level.

Commissioners discussed if there should be a limit to the total number of short-term rentals per owner/entity. Land-use Planner Conboy stated that he recommended that there not be a limit in the commercial zone and that the residential be limited to one STR. Commissioner Henry and Gilchrist agreed. Commissioner Stevenson recommended a limit of four STRs in the City per owner not to encourage a hotel-like system. Chairman Hohensee recommended limiting one STR in the residential area, recommended a (1/3) fraction of each structure in the commercial area, and no STRs in the multifamily zone district. Commissioner Henry added that STR in the commercial area should not be located on the street level.

Commissioners concluded that more information was needed to determine if there should be a total number of ADUs in the community. Land-use Planner Conboy stated that White Salmon, WA is currently estimated to have 7-14% of its housing stock be used as STR. In comparison, Hood River, OR is 5%, and a typical non-resort town is 1%. Commissioners requests a break down by housing type and size within White Salmon City Limits, a percentage of how many are STRs, a percentage of homes that are 'dark,' and the correlation to housing affordability/crisis to analyze at what percentage of STRs in a community then turns harmful.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Greg Hohensee, Chairman

Erika Castro Guzman, Associate Planner