

Town of East Hampton
Town Council Public Hearing
Tuesday, September 4, 2018
East Hampton Town Hall

DRAFT MINUTES

Present: Chairperson Melissa Engel, Vice Chairperson Mark Philhower, Council Members Josh Piteo, Pete Brown, Dean Markham, Kevin Reich, and Tim Feegel, and Town Manager Michael Maniscalco

Call to order & Pledge of Allegiance

Chairperson Engel called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m.

Public Hearing

Ordinance for Short Term Residential Rentals

Maryann Meehl, 39 High Point Dr., asked what the impetus for the ordinance was.

Dean Brown, 26 Barton Hill Rd., owner of the Bevin House B&B and a short term rental on Middle Haddam Rd. stated that with the proposed ordinance in place he would lose his house on Middle Haddam Rd. He is owner occupied on his B&B and can't be both places. In addition, his cleaning lady would be out of her job. People coming here for vacation spend money in town. He has never had one complaint on his property.

Rich Leone, 4 Sherry Dr. asked where the ordinance came from. He has also rented his lake property and has had no complaints and been very conscientious about it. He is concerned this may be aimed at a particular individual and the rest of all the homeowners will suffer.

Austin, 63 Meeks Point Rd., has had an air bnb for a year with no problems; his neighbors are happy. He asked about the motivation for the ordinance and to see data in regard to its creation.

Rob Johnson, 7 East Hayes Rd., he has started renting his house as an airbnb with no complaints.

Frank Nunes, 49 Bay Rd., has an airbnb with no issues. As other speakers, he directs guests to local businesses. He doesn't see the need for the ordinance. The rules and regulations already in place should be used instead.

Kyle Dostaler, William Dr., asked about the administrative costs to the town. He stated it is anti-business because it's anti-tourism. He doesn't feel it is necessary.

Mary Jane Fay, Hog Hill Rd., employed by a vacation rental owner at 29 Spellman Pt. Rd. as the property manager, stated the owner screens for high quality guests and has extensive rules. The guests spend their money around

town benefiting all the local businesses. She asked what the Council's concerns are and how they can all work together to keep the rentals.

Doreen Nablo, 43 Bay Rd., owns 3 rental properties on Spellman Point, she has brought a lot of people to town and she doesn't like being regulated. She feels the fees are outrageous.

Mary Ann Dostaler, William Dr., wants to understand the Council's process to develop the ordinance. What is this really about? Clearly it is not coming from the people in town.

Tania Sones, 17 Curry Lane, wants local businesses to prosper, doesn't want additional regulations.

Bob Davis, Injun Hollow Rd., asked why we would want to hamper visitors to town and asked for specific reasons for the ordinance.

Miriam Scott, 29 Spellman Pt. Rd., is able to keep her house here because of short term rentals. She is a realtor and stated that this ordinance would have to be disclosed to buyers in the area, which will not help house values. She requests a more collaborative effort with homeowners and community for best way to regulate.

Mary Ann Dostaler, William Dr., stated we are in a shared economy now and asked how it will be administered by the town to ensure that all the short term rental owners are treated equally.

Sue Weintraub, Knowles Rd., agrees with all who spoke. She noted the town does have a history of rentals, especially around the lake. She asked how can this can be monitored and done fairly. Her guests are spending money throughout the town. She asked the Council to table the decision on the ordinance and work with the owners.

Chase Arnold, Bay Point, stated there are no lakeside vacation opportunities for people since there are no hotels. Short term rentals are the way people access our town – this is the new tourism for E. Hampton.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Philhower and seconded by Councilor Feegel to close the public hearing at 6:45 p.m. All voted in favor.

Chairperson Engel stated that this has been on the Council's agenda several times and that no one is trying to put anyone out of business or have anyone lose a home. Her source of concern is fairly and equitably taxing the short term rentals as businesses. This is not a complaint driven or personal attack ordinance. She is willing to table this and speak with others.

This meeting was adjourned and the Special Town Council Meeting called to order immediately.

(Minutes submitted by Eliza LoPresti; not present at the meeting)