

Airbnb/Short Term Rentals in Kittery

Maria Southworth

Sat 9/24/2022 12:52 PM

To:town comments <tcomments@kitteryme.org>;

Friends,

I live at 15 Government Street in Kittery, Maine. Over the last several years three large 2-4 bedroom apartments/units have been converted to short term rentals. When I moved to the Foreside neighborhood five years ago, there were long term tenants residing in these units. Over the course of the pandemic and as long term renters moved out, the units were converted to short stay. On any given week, there may be 2-3 different groups coming and going from the units. The cleanouts occur as tenants leave, and then a new group arrives within hours.

The impact to the neighborhood is extremely negative. Residents who live here year round have a vested interest in their community as fellow citizens and neighbors. We look out for one another. Short term renters are interested in the charm that brought us to this community, the great restaurants, proximity to Portsmouth and the outlets and the greater seacoast.... but contribute nothing in return other than increased noise, traffic, garbage, pet waste, and parking disasters. I was told by the property manager of these three different units that I should be glad to "meet new people every day"! It's not about whether they are friendly or not..... but the character of our neighborhood has changed, and not for the good.

I fear our property values are also affected as the obvious noise and congestion caused by increased numbers of people and cars is a detriment to the neighborhood.

I was told they have decibel readers inside the units, but these devices do not read the noise levels that occur outside the buildings well into the night with revelers smoking and drinking and having their good time on vacation.... while we year rounders listen in.

I was drawn to this community initially because of its proximity to everything I hold dear, the quiet and pretty streets, the shops and restaurants... all the things that would be attractive to visitors to our seacoast.... but that has changed and will continue to change irreparably if the town continues to grant licenses to Airbnb applicants without any regard to the concentration of those units in any given neighborhood...

I sincerely hope that the council will consider these concerns carefully and appreciate your efforts to keep Kittery Kittery!

Best regards,

Maria Southworth

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