

To Whom It May Concern,

First and foremost, I would like to say that I fully support regulation of short term rentals in Hamilton. However, I do not approve of some of the motions put forward by the planning committee without any consultation with Hosts. My main objection is to the elimination of non primary address short term rentals. I understand the desire to reduce the amount of "party" homes in the city and potentially increase units available on the long term rental market but I don't think that eliminating non primary addresses from the short term market will yield the results the city is seeking.

The city of Toronto proposed (2018) and implemented these same measures 2 years ago which only resulted in less accommodation options for the booming tourism market, higher long term rents and more expensive hotel stays.

We have heard from many of the guests staying at our property that they are choosing to come to Hamilton in order to avoid the massive costs in Toronto. As a property owner and host here, I see this as great opportunity for the city of Hamilton to increase its volume of tourists and increase the amount of tourism revenue for local businesses still struggling to recover from the last three years of COVID measures.

No good Host wants a party house. As an owner of a bungalow in the Strathcona neighbourhood that is not my primary residence I share one measure that has benefitted me and could benefit both the city and other airbnb hosts such as myself. That is the use of a noise monitoring devices. We have chosen to use a Minut device which looks like a fire alarm but monitors the sound DB in the house. You can set the parameters of the device and it will notify you if guests exceed it. In our case, if the DB level is over 75 for more than 10 minutes after 11pm, the device (linked to our airbnb) sends us and the guest a text notification of the noise. The Minut also monitors the number of devices connected to the wifi in the unit, which helps to eliminate multiple unapproved guests in the property. The use of this device mentioned on our listing which immediately deters renters looking to have a party. Needless to say we have not had to deal with one noise issue implementing the use of this device. The mandatory installation of a noise monitoring device in all non primary residence Short Term Rentals could go great lengths towards eliminating so called party homes.

Another point is that there is a thought that by eliminating non primary residences as short term rentals, these units will become available for long term renters in this time of low inventory. This is simply not true. If you look at what happened in Toronto, the only thing that was accomplished was that rents were driven higher and the market is even more bare now.

Airbnb owners are gravitating to the platform in large part because of the inefficiency of The Landlord Tenant Bureau (LTB). Small landlords are outright afraid of getting a bad tenant and not being able to remove them if they stop paying rent or damage the home. Our homes are simply safer in the hands of Airbnb. Until the LTB is fixed cities are going to see less and less long term rentals available.

Going back to this idea of Airbnbs being "party homes." House parties have existed long before Airbnb, especially in college cities such as Hamilton. I wanted to make one point that seems to be overlooked. In the unfortunate chance there is a party at an AirBnB, the owner has the full legal right to have that guest removed immediately. If that same house goes on the long term rental market and is rented to someone who has parties all the time, given the current state of the LTB, that owner may not be able to evict that tenant for over a year, which would subject the community to a party house for months on end.

I hope that you consider giving all types of short term rental hosts the opportunity to be licensed and run their business in a professional manner that, in the end, will benefit the city, the community and the owners. I also propose that, rather than restricting short term rentals, the city could implement a ticketing and suspension system that would eventually eliminate the bad apples and allow responsible hosts to keep their licenses.

In closing, many of our guests have chosen to stay with us because they want a home away from home. They are families, travellers and professionals who are not interested in sharing multiple hotel rooms, sharing a home or prefer the quiet of a private residence. All of our guests have been wonderful and respectful of the home and community. Everyone travelling has a different preference of the type of place they stay and there is no harm in giving people more options within the city as long as they are run professionally and with respect for the community. This can still be achieved without limiting who is able to host short term rentals.

I would gladly offer my time to discuss more potential options for both the city and hosts.

Thank you for hearing my thoughts. I look forward to continuing to be a contributing member of Hamilton's community.

Respectfully,  
Scott Ramsay