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Minutes

Short-term Rental Taskforce Meeting
Port Royal Town Hall, 700 Paris Avenue

August 15, 2024

Short-term Rental Taskforce Members: Wendy Zara, Debbie Ball, Megan LaFountain, Barbara Berry and David Fletcher

In attendance: Assistant Town Manager Brooke Plank-Buccola and Town Clerk Lisa Graham

The meeting was called to order at 4:01 PM.

The minutes from the August 8, 2024 meeting were approved.

The taskforce discussed the need to clarify with the town's lawyer whether items listed in safety inspections but not codified in an ordinance could potentially make the town more liable. There was a consensus that it was important to determine if there are different legal rules for items in ordinances versus those listed in reports but not formalized.

The meeting included a comprehensive review of the rental management software currently in use with Business License Administrator Amber Hewitt. It was noted that the software pulls data from both VRBO and Airbnb. However, discrepancies were observed, such as properties that are listed as unlicensed despite having active licenses. The glitches in the software were discussed along with the factors possibly causing them—such as the owners not displaying their license numbers in listings. There were suggestions to include license numbers in property adverts to overcome some of these issues.

It was also brought up that the task force needs to confirm the exact count of short-term rental properties, as there seem to be inconsistencies in the reported numbers.

The software map showing properties with dots was discussed: different colors indicated whether a property was licensed, unlicensed, identified, or had other possible statuses. Members discussed the need for these to be verified manually to ensure accurate records. The task force agreed that accurate

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numbers and maps are crucial for further analysis and planning. Additionally, having a unique business license number for each short and long-term rental was suggested for clarity.

There was an extensive discussion on setting a new policy or regulation regarding the maximum occupancy for bedrooms within short-term rentals. This consideration included potential safety hazards, fire codes, and proper utility usage. The agreement was to include two persons per bedroom with an additional two persons allowed per unit, though some suggested age-related exemptions for counting infants and toddlers.

They discussed ensuring compliance when suspecting an operation without a license. The process involved having code enforcement officers validate compliance through visits, door hangers, and subsequent instructions for necessary documentation compliance.

The meeting adjourned at 5:06 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Graham
Town Clerk

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