

**YARDLEY BOROUGH PLANNING COMMISSION**  
*Thursday, April 11, 2024, 7:30 PM Borough Hall*  
**MEETING MINUTES**



**I. CALL TO ORDER – 7:38 PM**

**II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**III. ROLL CALL**

Present: Richard Hodge (RH), Robert Bushar (RB), Melissa Dawson (MD),  
Chuck Dolan (CD), Zach Bark (ZB), Susan Taylor (ST)

Not Present: Matthew Sinberg (MS)

Council Members Present: David Applebaum (DA), Uri Feiner (UF)

**IV. COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS**

A. Video recordings of all Council Meetings available on Yardley Borough Site & Facebook.

**V. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

At this time – public comment is welcome.

**VI. APPLICANTS FOR THIS MONTH**

**A.** No applicant

**VII. MINUTES APPROVAL**

Approval of Minutes dated 14 Mar 2024

MD noted that the date of Don Carlson’s presentation to Council on the short-term rental ordinance needs to be corrected to November 21<sup>st</sup>.

RB motioned to approve the minutes with this change. The minutes were approved by four commissioners – RB, RH, CD, MD. ZB abstained because he did not attend the March meeting, ST was not present for the minutes approval and arrived later in the meeting.

**VIII. COUNCIL UPDATES**

**IX. ITEMS FOR REVIEW THIS MONTH**

**A. Creation of a short-term rental ordinance for Yardley**

The goal for this meeting is to provide a summary of recommendations to Council on a short-term rental ordinance. Any questions requiring further research should be identified.

There was a general consensus that a new ordinance should be created for short-term rentals rather than modifying the current ordinance for bed-and-breakfast/guesthouse (27-760). It was noted that bed-and-breakfast/guesthouse is a conditional use subject to approval by Council. Permits are limited to stipulated areas in R1 and R2 zones. For the sake of consistency, it would be useful to follow the template of the bed-and-breakfast/guesthouse ordinance for any new ordinance on short term rentals.

CD observed that we would need to define what a short-term rental is. He summarized some of the research he did on the definition applied in other locations. While bed-and-breakfast / guesthouses are typically owner-occupied, short-term rentals like Airbnb and Vrbo are not. Any new ordinance should address this distinction. In CD's opinion, resident owners should have more liberty.

RH observed that the use is residential in nature and ideally is indistinguishable from the surrounding occupancies. On the other extreme case, ZB noted that someone could buy a whole block and turn them into short-term rentals. When tenants turn over on a short term basis, the difference to a neighborhood is the anonymity of the short-term occupants. One or two houses occupied by short-term tenants may not change the character of a neighborhood. But a neighborhood overrun by short-term rentals could have a dramatic impact. This may be the justification for limiting the number of short-term rental properties in a given area or zone. RH offered the opinion that, by this reasoning, this use should be more limited in the Residential zones than in the Commercial zones.

A discussion of the relevant parameters governing short-term rentals followed.

Length of short-term rental – a longer minimum stay will tend to encourage more responsible renters.

- Minimum – 3-nights (long weekend stay)

Maximum number of rental periods - limiting the turnover of tenants will reduce disruption.

- Maximum – 90 nights per year in Residential zones.
- No Maximum nights per year in Commercial zones.

Limit the number of permitted short term rentals per the discussion above.

- Limits for quantity – In Residential zones, 10 total in Residential R1 and R2 zone, with the quantity to be reassessed by Council each year
- No Limits for quantity in Commercial zones

Limit Occupancy in coordination with other limits by Ordinance, the party-house phenomena, and associated nuisance is the purpose of this limit.

- Two overnight guests per bedroom + 4 additional overnight guests maximum
- Also, limit the number of non-overnight guests (75% percent of overnight guests)

Limit number of cars – No conclusion about this. UF noted that it could be tied to occupancy, 1 car per 4 people. On-street parking is the impact of concern.

The relevant administrative requirements were also discussed, although it was acknowledged that Council, the Borough Manager and others will play a larger role than the Planning Commission in establishing the administrative parameters.

- Renewal requirements – Applicants will need to apply for renewal annually. They will be required to submit a report that summarizes their financials and the number of rental periods/nights that the property was in use.
- Proof of Insurance, Minimum age requirements for renters, Inspection requirements, Nuisance Enforcement for noise, and other restrictions
- Implications of short-term rentals within the flood zone should not be overlooked. Renters need to be appropriately educated for lodging in this critical zone. Ordinance should require the owner to inform their renters of the associated risk.
- Insurance requirements were discussed. RB mentioned \$500,000 limited liability is required. Additional requirements will be needed for these short-term rentals.

DA notes that short-term rentals generate revenue by way of the Bucks County Hotel Lodging Tax. Visit Bucks County gets some of that tax, and they sponsor events that we hold in town. Yardley would see a direct benefit.

UF asked that the Commission note that the definition of hotels as tourist homes may need to be removed from the existing ordinance. We need to go through the definitions and make sure there is clarity on the definition of hotel, short-term rental, vacation rental, etc.

ZB noted the [website](#) that was shared with rest of the PC earlier. The website is a tool used by municipalities that helps ID and track these short-term rentals but also establish a line of communication with the owners of the properties for registration, compliance, taxes, complaints, etc. (Govos.com). CD shared a reference that summarized violation fees.

**B. Land Development Definition Question** – This was briefly discussed at the end of the meeting after ST joined. RH asked if ST could take the lead on arranging a meeting with the solicitor to discuss this issue. UF asked if the PC would like Council to arrange a meeting for this discussion. ST will move forward with setting up a meeting. He noted his support of this as an issue that should be addressed with the solicitor. UF asked if this would result in a PC recommendation on what changes should be implemented; RH/ST responded yes.

**C. 2024 Yardley Borough Comprehensive Plan Update - Update on Consultant RFP**

RH noted that Paula informed the PC of one quote that was received in response to the Comprehensive Plan RFP. Urban Research & Development provided a quote of \$30,000. Bucks County Planning Commission has asked if the work can be deferred to the Fall. If the schedule can be delayed, BCPC will likely provide a quote on the work. RH asked MD to contact Paula to setup a meeting with BC Planning Commission to discuss steps moving forward. UF supports using BCPC and waiting until they are available to do the work. We can use the extra time to pull together what we want to include in the Comprehensive Plan. ZB noted that it would be good to see the proposal submitted by Urban Research to understand the scope of services that they included in their proposal.

#### **D. New Business**

UF presented a few additional updates for the PC:

- (1) UF has been working with a property owner on North Main Street that has decided to gift the property to Yardley Borough. UF just wanted to inform the PC of this. This property may be included as Borough owned space in the upcoming Comprehensive Plan update.
- (2) PECO property – Yardley Borough is ready to sign the acquisition for the PECO lot property.
- (3) UF and Council have been working with the solicitor on an ordinance to control the proliferation of vape shops in Yardley Borough. Eventually this will come to the Planning Commission for review. CD noted that there should be consideration for something similar for pawn shops in the area.

#### **X. ADJOURNMENT – 9:38 PM**

#### **References:**

[Regulations Relative to Short-Term Rentals](#)

[GOVOS](#)