Short Term Rentals (STR) Working Group
Meeting Summary

Date: April 12, 2021
Location: Webex Teleconference
Attendance: Rafe Sacks, Rob Ferguson, Eldon Wong, Noam Dolgin, Kenny Hammond, Hanna Wolff, Mo Vaziri, Karen Dar Woon, Rob Takeuchi, Kelly Riopelle, Kristie Starr, Claire Thompson, Matthew Yong, Koji Miyaji, Matthew Campbell, Maria Stanborough
Regrets: Patrick Audley
Member update : Rebecca Apostl and Aihua Ji no longer part of the Working Group

Meeting started at 6:34 pm

Introductions (Maria)

- Recap of commitment and productivity by the group in the first 2 meetings
- Land Acknowledgement

Review Agendas

Topic of this Meeting, Next 2 Meetings & Tonight's Agenda (Maria)

1. Strata Properties (tonight)
2. License Application and Enforcement
3. The City working with Online Platforms & Next Steps

Meeting Discussion

Part 1 –Overview of the Prohibited Buildings Program/Registry (Claire)

- To obtain a STR license one must have approval of the Strata Council or landlord, where applicable, and provide associated documentation
- Laneway houses and legal secondary suites are separate dwellings – if there is a long-term tenant, only the tenant may get a license to operate an STR from those units
- The prohibited STR buildings program is a registry of strata and rental buildings in Vancouver that have a bylaw or rental agreements prohibiting STRs. The buildings are added when a property manager, strata council or landlord reaches out to be added
- If an individual applies for a STR license for a building on the STR Prohibited Buildings registry, their application will be automatically denied
- Since its inception, the STR Prohibited Buildings Program has expanded to include more buildings and could expand further. City worked with real-estate community throughout 2020
- The registry is not currently made public
- In 2018, the Province changed legislation so that stratas who prohibit STRs can fine owners that operate STRs $1000/day for each offense, increased from $200/week

Part 2 - Questions for Working Group members (Maria)

- *How do you think the City of Vancouver can best communicate to the public about the prohibited buildings program and how it works? What value would you see in making the registry public?*
- *As owners or renters and/or strata members, do you feel there would be any concerns regarding negative impacts of the list if it goes public?*

Working Group feedback:

- majority agreed publishing the registry of buildings that prohibit STRs for the public to access would provide value to the public including potential buyers, renters and existing residents
    - a concern was raised that if the registry was public that it could be used for ulterior motives such as marketing in real-estate industry
- supported more public awareness and promotion needed
- suggested current name of program/registry didn't clearly identify the intent and not easily searchable
- registration to program needs to be easy. Suggested to have opt out consideration rather than opt in.
- suggested registry should be published on the City website at minimum along with information on how to report non-compliance
- suggested the more comprehensive the registry the more valuable it would be
- concern expressed about the license application process which requires an applicant only to self-declare permission to operate an STR (in a strata building or other residence) rather than documentation of proof
- City confirmed that they do follow up with buildings that have stated they have bylaws that prohibit STRs
- City of Toronto identified as a good website for comparison
- Identified that real estate sector is a key player in strata education of STRs
- Identified that to deal with increased costs of buildings that permit STRs, STR operators could/should pay a fee to their strata for registering an STR. This offers transparency, compliance, and financial resources if there are potential negative outcomes from a STR to shared common property

Part 3 - STR and Strata Buildings in general – topics are from the discussion from meeting #2. Presentation of slides with Q&A (Claire).

- Q: **What body is responsible for enforcing STR regulation – the City or stratas?**
  A: Stratas and City work in parallel in regards to enforcement of their independent bylaws and compliance. Focus on education first. Strata and City have different processes and consequences.

- Q: **Can the City help with drafting of bylaws?**
  A: The Province recommends consulting a lawyer knowledgeable in strata properties.

This approach is also supported by the City. The City must remain neutral and find a balance of multiple interests.

- Q: **Is there a way to make a multiple offenders list public?**
  A: Publicizing personal information regarding enforcement is a breach of privacy laws. Information regarding an offender may become public if it goes to prosecution through the courts.

- Q: **Is there a distinction between how strata properties and non-strata properties are enforced?**
  A: No

- Q: **Are there resources for residents whose first language is not English?**
  A: The City has an on-line STR Operator Guide in simplified and traditional Chinese. All calls and queries through 3-1-1 can be addressed in multiple languages. For business licence audit meetings the City provides a translator.

- Q**: Is there a way to identify property managers who are making money managing STRs?**
  A: Any property manager who is managing more than one STR property on behalf of another person must obtain a City property managers license

  -One member shared that they would like to see the City work with developers earlier in the strata bylaw development phase rather than owners attempting to vote in a bylaw with 75% support required. The level of support needed to change a bylaw is difficult to secure after the fact. The member believed it would be easier for owners to have a bylaw prohibiting STRs in place at time of first purchasing a unit, and subsequently evaluate whether they would want to allow STRs later

  Closing words from each group member shared.

Meeting ended at 8:05pm; next meeting June 7, 2021