

City considers registry for short-term rentals

The City of Lake Ozark is considering another level of opportunity for its short-term rental program.

The possibility of establishing a registration process for authorized short-term rental properties was among the topics discussed at a recent board of aldermen workshop. The intent would be to establish ground rules for legally rented properties to help reduce complaints from neighbors and to establish protocols for the protection of renters, owners and neighbors.

A registry would also help city officials identify and take action against unauthorized rental properties, those that are located within zoning districts that prohibit short-term rentals.

Harrison Fry, assistant city administrator and economic development director, suggested a system comparable to the city's business and contractor's licensing program. Being included on a registry list would also empower legitimate property owners in promoting their properties as authorized properties that follow a set of regulations in the best inter-

ests of the renters and property owners, Fry explained.

The city would have the option of managing the registry in-house or contracting with a company that would handle the registration and monitoring process for a fee. Having an independent third party would include identifying the authorized rental properties, monitoring compliance of guidelines outlined in the license and collecting permit fees.

There are an estimated 101 rental units listed in Lake Ozark across multiple districts with a median nightly rental of \$162. The local rental housing market has seen an 84 percent increase since 2019.

Agreeable

Aldermen seemed agreeable to the registration idea, emphasizing the importance of residents



within the allowed districts knowing which properties are authorized and which are not.

City officials acknowledge that many residents don't want rental prop-

erties in their neighborhoods – especially those that aren't authorized or that break the law. However, the current Municipal Code allows those rentals in certain zoned districts.

Fry explained in detail that rental properties are allowed in established Multi-Family Districts (R-3), Commercial Districts (C-2) and Lake Front Mixed-Use Districts. They are not allowed in Single-Family Residential Districts (R-1 and R-2), which is where most family and private residences are located.

"We get a number of calls from

residents who are not so much against the law but who call because their mailbox has been knocked over or renters are parking in their front yard or ran over their fence post," Fry noted.

A registry would help city officials and Lake Ozark Police officers appropriately respond.

"We need to get ahead of this," Alderman Dennis Klautzer said. "This is going to grow at an alarming rate as more and more investors are buying property to rent. I don't think we need to put more of a strain on city staff, and I like the idea of a company managing the process.

"These people are running a business and they need to be licensed in the city and need to abide by business rules. We need to get ahead of this to protect neighbors and owners of properties so they don't get sued by neighbors."

What now?

Fry said he would visit with city staff to establish a process for registering for board review, and also seek bids from several companies that provide the service.