

Mayor's Report

The Issue of Short-Term Rentals in Residential Neighbourhoods

Over the past year, the issue of short-term rentals in residential neighbourhoods, that is, rentals shorter than 30 days, has been a hot issue for a number of municipalities. In the [City of Richmond](#), the debate has been particularly high profile in the [media](#) where Richmond Council recently [voted against recommendations](#) to licence and regulate short-term rentals.

During 2016, Richmond staff received about 100 complaints from residents about noise, traffic and land-use violations. Mayor Malcolm Brodie said Richmond Council had to address residents' concerns about the growing number of short-term rentals in the city:

“With the short-term rentals, you have ... strangers in the neighbourhood, people coming and going at all times of night and day,” he said. “You’ve got pressure on the utilities. You’ve got parking issues, and it’s really affecting the neighbourhoods.”
– Mayor Malcolm Brodie, [CBC News, April 20th, 2017](#).

In late 2016, a Richmond [staff report](#) proposed short-term rental operators acquire a business licence, be a primary resident of the home, not have more than six renters, and comply with fire and building regulations. It seemed like a logical and reasonable approach to manage the problem. But Richmond residents continued to be opposed to short-term rentals, and Richmond Council [voted against the recommendations](#).

Belcarra's current Zoning Bylaw does not allow for short-term rentals such as 'AirBnB'. Regardless, there have been two previous instances when 'AirBnB' rentals have been offered by Belcarra property owners, and in both instances Council received complaints very similar to those reported by Richmond. As a consequence, Belcarra's Zoning Bylaw needs to be amended to explicitly address the issue and include appropriate penalties to facilitate bylaw enforcement when contraventions do occur.

Short-term rentals in residential neighbourhoods is only one Zoning Bylaw issue amongst many that Belcarra's 'Zoning Advisory Committee' will be considering in the near future, and Council looks forward to the committee's recommendations on this important subject.

Ralph Drew
Mayor