

Asheville City Council December 14, 2021 Email Comments

TimeStamp	Text
12/12/2021 6:24:00 PM	<p>Hello,</p> <p>I would like to comment that while I do NOT believe the homestay rules should change to include complete kitchens, they SHOULD be allowed to include a sink of a reasonable depth so that the homeowner may have an easier time cleaning the homestay. I do not want anyone cooking in my homestay, nor do I believe they should be able to. However, having an available sink is absolutely necessary to keep the homestay clean, especially to wash the inevitable dirty dishes. Currently, the homestay rules state that any sink must have a depth of 18" or greater. That is an enormously deep sink, deeper than most bathtubs. Also, I have looked extensively for a sink of that depth and cannot find one in existence.</p> <p>Please change the existing rule to allow for sinks of a more normal and available size, so that the homeowner can have an easier time keeping their homestay clean.</p> <p>Thank you, Linda Covington 62 Beverly Road W. Asheville, NC 28806</p>
12/13/2021 7:22:00 PM	<p>Hi,</p> <p>I am a long-time resident of Asheville, and I am deeply concerned by some of the items on the agenda for December 14th, 2021.</p> <p>*I am emailing to ask that you vote against items J, K, and N under the consent agenda.* Community members have for months, and indeed for years, asked for the council to invest in communities themselves, not in the institution that polices and incarcerates them.</p> <p>It is unacceptable that the council and Mayor are interested in applying for grants amounting to thousands of dollars that will only lead to the greater militarization and mobilization of the Asheville Police Department. The time used to apply for these grants would be far better spent on any number of important issues, including but not limited to: taking action so that reparations be paid to Black community members, establishing low barrier shelter options and long-term housing opportunities for all unhoused community members, or even finding more ways to address our increasingly gentrified housing market.</p> <p>Moreover, I am staunchly opposed to a city-funded and supported campaign to hire more police officers. Increasing our police force will only increase the violence inflicted on oppressed communities in our city. If you are interested in reducing public safety concerns, I encourage you to invest in systems of community care that are not carceral.</p> <p>Additionally, I ask that you immediately commit to an end of sweeps/encampment removals. The council's consistent inability to provide low-barrier shelter options is nothing short of shameful and should be a top priority.</p> <p>Thank you,</p> <p>Juliana Maurer she/her</p>

12/13/2021 9:05:00 PM

Homelessness in Asheville

Homelessness is the result of a failed life, people who made poor choices and now are suffering from those choices.

Whether being homeless is the result of mental illness, drug addiction, alcoholism, PTSD, parental abuse, or a combination of any of the above--giving them a place to stay for free will NOT SOLVE THE PROBLEM. It will INCREASE THE PROBLEM.

The only way to holistically and intelligently deal with homelessness is to:

1. Provide mental health counseling.
2. Provide chemical addiction therapies
3. Provide meaningful employment to teach marketable skills--even if it's paid for by taxpayer dollars for necessary work that benefits our county--such as maintaining roads, trails, parks, building for Habitat for Humanity, or apprenticeships for skilled labor.
4. Providing a pathway for wholesome employment by offering incentives to employers. Giving away a free room to stay in is like throwing gas on a fire. Think Asheville City Council--think.

If immediate refuge from the cold is needed, designate a tract of land to build a army tent city by using the National Guard. If it's good enough for four soldiers, it will be fine for our homeless.

Also, consider funding and expanding First Step Farm's Mission here. Their program works, and can be a model for future expansions in this field.

Stephen A. Towe

12/13/2021 9:24:00 PM

My opinion regarding not being able to homestay an accessory dwelling is: Its bad enough that taxes and speculation are out of control but in addition, the city seems happy to run the new higher values and respective taxes, but then wants to tell people what they can and cannot do with their property. I have actually invested more money in building an accessory dwelling than any basement project which means I'm paying higher taxes than someone with a basement apt and yet I don't have the same rights. Last time I checked I'm the owner and not the city. You cannot differentiate between the two because they are they are not the same. As a matter of fact an argument could be made that he who invests the most and pays higher taxes should receive more benefits not less. What's the difference between a basement honestly and an accessory dwelling from the stand point of how the owner wants to use it. Absolutely no difference. As a matter of fact, to make an argument that somehow I'm personally taking away from the affordable housing inventory suggest the city doesn't understand that property owners cannot be held responsible for the financial outcomes of the ebbs and flows in supply and demand. I own my property and if the property has an apt that could be shorter rented than as the owner and tax payer I deserve the same right as my neighbor who's invested less. This is the United States of America last time I checked and he who invests gets should get treated with respect rather than being taken for granted. Sent from my T-Mobile 4G LTE Device

<p>12/13/2021 9:30:00 PM</p>	<p>Please vote YES in this council meeting (12/14/21) to allow this to go to full council vote and vote YES for sinks & full refrigerators & kitchens to be allowed in STRs. As owner occupied STRs we need this money to make housing/real estate taxes more affordable to live here. Please support the people who live and pay taxes in this city by allowing us to go back to the pre-2018 definition at minimum.</p> <p>This process of review has been ongoing for two plus years and the city staff say allowing sinks & refrigerators will help with enforcement challenges (2nd section, paragraph 2 of the March 8, 2021 PED draft minutes). This is a sanitary, safety and hygiene issue.</p> <p>I know of multiple guests complaining because the non-bathroom faucet had to be removed and this puts the host at a disadvantage to other listings that are grandfathered in to include an extra sink/full refrigerator/kitchen.</p> <p>Thank you to the council members who support this change. I hope that Mayor Manheim and Council Member Turner you will reconsider your vote and support us, the Citizens of Asheville, in allowing the sink/refrigerator/kitchen issue to move forward and get passed.</p> <p>Thank you,</p> <p>Maureen T.</p>
<p>12/13/2021 10:17:00 PM</p>	<p>Hi there, my name is Ellie Jeruss. I have lived in Asheville since 2009 and been an Airbnb host since 2014. Short term renting a bedroom in our home has enabled my family to afford a west Asheville mortgage without having to share our kitchen with a housemate, for which I am grateful.</p> <p>That said, I fully support existing homestay regulations. A detached accessory building or a separate guest suite with a kitchen is much needed HOUSING that should remain accessible to locals who desperately need it. Removing restrictions on Airbnbs will displace even more locals and I'm concerned our lovely city is going to continue down this ugly path of hollowing out.</p> <p>The local housing crisis demands a multi pronged approach, but I am hoping Council will at least not make it worse. Maybe consider implementing deed restrictions like the ones referenced in this article?</p> <p>https://www.outsideonline.com/culture/essays-culture/how-to-save-a-ski-town-west-tourism-economy/</p> <p>Thanks for your time. -Ellie Jeruss</p>
<p>12/13/2021 10:38:00 PM</p>	<p>Dear City council,</p> <p>I am an Asheville native and single mother who has relied on airbnb homestay income for years now... The city has made this increasingly challenging for me and others like me. I would like to see the kitchen ordinance changed as it is ridiculous and unsanitary for guests to have to wash their dishes in the bathroom sink. Its unfair that homeowners and residents cannot have kitchens yet all the hotels and condos you approve all over town get variances and are allowed to have them. I would also love to see accessory dwellings be allowed for homestays...Im not holding my breath on any of these items as the mayor is way in bed with the hotel industry here...</p> <p>--</p>

12/14/2021 12:26:00 AM

I am a homeowner in Asheville and I have spoken with a couple of Council Members over the years about the rules/restrictions on Short Term Rentals. I have been told that this issue will be coming up again in the near future (this week perhaps?). I do agree that there is a problem with people from out of town investing in property just to turn it into STR. However, I don't agree that restrictions should be placed on residents who live here, living in the house where they are renting out space. And that would include an Accessory Housing Unit on the property. These residents could only have 1 STR space - because obviously they can only have 1 primary residence. Also, if this is your primary residence, you have strong incentive to make sure the people renting behave and don't throw a bachelor/bachelorette party. I have been told that some ADU's are closer to their neighbor's house than it is to the primary residence house, but this seems to be a minority, and a weak argument. The ADU is still on your property, most likely uses your driveway, affects your quality of life. It's going to be a rare instance where the ADU only affects your neighbors and not yourself. Also, I'm not sure what interests are trying to be protected by not allowing a functioning kitchen. People are going to eat, so are you trying to force people to go to a restaurant rather than going to the grocery store? Someone is going to sell food. Most people who come into town on vacation want to go out to eat, but it seems unreasonable to not allow them to cook anything at the place where they are staying.

I fear that you may be already losing this battle at the State level. Passing very restrictive laws is causing the State Legislature to strip you of any ability to have any say over this. I caution you to find a way to control outside investors that just want to gobble up property for profit without restricting the rights of homeowners to use their property in the way they want to and helps them make enough to live in Asheville. My experience with City Council in the past has been by the time we get to this point, everyone has already made up their minds. But if you are still open to listening, I hope you take my thoughts into consideration. I tend to be very liberal on almost every issue, but I am firmly on the side of giving rights to a homeowner in their primary residence (not investment properties).

Feel free to reach out to me if you'd like to discuss.
Good luck with the coming debates.

Mark Ledyard

12/14/2021 2:36:00 AM

I propose that the River Ridge Ramada be made into housing for low-income seniors. The Ramada is not a suitable location for any kind of homeless housing, whether emergency or supportive. The Ramada is an excellent location for low-income senior housing, and while the surrounding community does not support making it into homeless housing, the community will support a project of this kind. It would be very good for business at the River Ridge Marketplace to have a group of seniors living nearby. They would spend money at the Marketplace instead of wrecking it, driving away customers, and destroying morale.

The J&S Cafeteria is tailor-made for seniors, and living nearby, they would frequent it. They would also shop regularly at various stores at the Marketplace, including CVS, Hamrick's, Gabe's, and Dollar General. They could have their prescriptions filled at CVS and Sona across the street. They would provide business for the Marketplace beauty salon, Pack 'n' Send, the bookstore, McDonald's, and KFC. So they would support the economy of Asheville instead of being a drain on it. And I'm sure they would find the city bus useful. And of course Walmart is within walking distance, as are various restaurants and other shops. Not to mention the Oakley Library, which the local community managed to keep alive.

Converting the Ramada to provide low-income housing for seniors makes much more sense than locating homeless housing of any kind in a good, safe residential area like this was.

I say "was" because having homeless people moved into the Ramada even temporarily has already begun to make local people's lives less comfortable and less secure. The other day, a strange man came up on our front porch, yelling loudly, gesticulating wildly, and rattling our doorknob. It was frightening. Our neighbor, a young man who lives downstairs from us talked the strange man into leaving. Our neighbor told us that the man looked homeless, and that as the man walked away, he pulled at the doors of the cars in the parking lot, checking for unlocked cars.

It was extremely shocking, unprecedented, and depressing. I have lived here at River Ridge for over 10 years, and nothing like this ever happened before the city put homeless people into the Ramada. We wouldn't have this kind of problem if the Ramada was turned into housing for seniors.

So I ask you to vote against turning the Ramada property over to any organization that will use it for homeless housing. Do not let this happen.

Instead, work on turning the Ramada into housing for low-income senior citizens of Asheville.

This kind of housing is much needed and it would be welcomed by the neighborhoods here.

12/14/2021 9:39:00 AM

Dear City Leaders,

As a concerned lifelong citizen of this area and also as an Airbnb host, I would like to ask city leaders to impose steep licensing fees to Airbnb owners and operators in the area. As a resident who doesn't want to leave the area, I am very concerned at what Airbnb is doing to the housing market. In the past year, every home I have seen sold around me is turned into an Airbnb. My 28 year old daughter cannot find affordable housing for her and her children. The housing shortage is driving the labor shortage. Before long, no one will be able to afford to live in Asheville to serve the tourists. The city of Las Vegas, Nevada is charging non-property owners a \$7000 licensing fee due every year for example. I would like to see both the city and Buncombe county impose such fines here. In my opinion, Airbnb is causing a housing bubble that is going to burst because the Airbnb market is just becoming too oversaturated. I would not mind it if Airbnb and short term rentals were banned. Another solution would be to impose length of stay rules like Sarasota Florida. The money Airbnb brings in is fantastic, but I would rather have my children and grandchildren be able to stay in this area.

Sincerely,
Jenice Mckin

12/14/2021 9:40:00 AM

Dear City Leaders,

As a concerned lifelong citizen of this area and also as an Airbnb host, I would like to ask city leaders to impose steep licensing fees to Airbnb owners and operators in the area. As a resident who doesn't want to leave the area, I am very concerned at what airbnb is doing to the housing market. In the past year, every home I have seen sold around me is turned into an Airbnb. My 28 year old daughter cannot find affordable housing for her and her children. The housing shortage is driving the labor shortage. Before long, no one will be able to afford to live in Asheville to serve the tourists. The city of Las Vegas, Nevada is charging non-property owners a \$7000 licensing fee due every year for example. I would like to see both the city and Buncombe county impose such fines here. In my opinion, airbnb is causing a housing bubble that is going to burst because the Airbnb market is just becoming too oversaturated. I would not mind it if airbnb and short term rentals were banned. Another solution would be to impose length of stay rules like Sarasota Florida. The money airbnb brings in is fantastic, but I would rather have my children and grandchildren be able to stay in this area.

Sincerely,
Jenice Mckin

12/14/2021 1:38:00 PM

Please allow kitchens in homestays. This is very important to people in Asheville for our lives. Many people need to be able to rent our homes to survive financially, and being able to include the kitchen would be enormously helpful to us.

We have worked hard our entire lives to pay for our home, and as homeowners it is our right to do with it what we want to do with it, as long as it doesn't cause a problem to our neighbors. We shouldn't be penalized and restricted since we've worked hard for many years, and *now need to use this space to help support ourselves.* You are infringing on our rights as property owners; it is our land and our right. You are *hurting us* by not allowing us to allow our guests to use the kitchen.

Also, please understand that allowing kitchens will ultimately lead to more long-term rentals, as many will grow tired of dealing with short-term guests and will convert to long-term rentals. This will help the people who are looking for long-term rentals.

It is our understanding that the City Staff has recommended passing the update, and the Asheville Homestay Network supports passing the recommended regulations.

Thank you for passing the modified regulations. We are long-term voters and taxpayers, and we *truly* appreciate your help in this matter.

Best regards,
Amy Billings

12/14/2021 2:01:00 PM

Hello,

I have been an Asheville resident since 2017. My husband and I purchased our home specifically because it has a separate basement apartment that we knew we could have our in-laws stay in for long visits, that we could rent out long term, or that we could Airbnb when I'm on maternity leave so that we can make extra income while my business is not making money.

We are not the conglomerate organizations that are buying up tons of property and trying to exploit the market.

Stopping locals from having kitchens in their rentals does not solve this larger problem. Instead, it prohibits residents who are trying to make a living from being creative, entrepreneurial, and enjoying their homeowner rights.

Please consider this in your vote as to whether to allow homestay rentals to have a kitchen.

Thank you very much,
Martine Jones

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Dr. Martine Jones, Psy.D. (she/her)
Owner and Psychologist at Hazel Tree Counseling Services
<<https://www.hazeltreecounseling.com/>>
Online Therapy in NC, FL, AL, AZ, CO, DC, DE, GA, IL, MN, MO, NE, NV, NH,
OK, PA, TN, TX, UT, VA and Internationally
Infertility, Perinatal, and Singlehood Struggles
(919) 907-1392

12/12/2021 3:58:00 PM Council Members,

A kitchen = a unit of housing. Or, more simply put, a home. You are voting on allowing whole homes to be converted to short term rentals with the proposed changes to the Homestay ordinance. When you have a whole kitchen with a bedroom you have an ADU or more commonly referred to as "home" to the person who lives there.

This is fiscally irresponsible if you allow this. We need all the housing we can muster, not more mini-hotels.

If you don't want to listen to me about this, please, please, please, read the segment from the Bowen Report below.

From the 2020 Bowen Report:

Discussions of ADU affordability are generally either in relation to the renter, the homeowner or the city. ADU rents are affordable in so far as they are simply less than the going market rate for similar dwellings that are not ADUs, at least in terms of total monthly rent. ADUs are a market-based or "naturally" affordable development form, at least for family and friends who may otherwise have needed alternative forms of assistance. ADUs are also usually affordable as compared to the neighborhoods in which they are located. And most importantly, because the housing market supply is constrained, any additional rental space would be expected to help ease rental market pressure, making ADUs an "affordable" form of housing supply for the city. While we did not inventory ADU units in the region to determine typical rents for such units, according to several studies conducted of ADUs in other markets, ADUs are generally rented at rates well below market. These studies revealed that a majority of such units are affordable to households earning below 80% of Area Median Household Income, making them a viable option for low-income/workforce households.

While ADUs can potentially create cost savings for both owner and renter, affordability for these parties could conflict when the owner has the option to rent their ADU short-term at a much higher rate. According to Bowen's stakeholder survey, of 32 respondents, 62.5% expected that rentals were "often" being used as vacation homes and nearly one-third (31.25%) expected that rentals "sometimes" were being rented short-term, primarily driven by the profit motive. As a result, a market that relies on ADUs to help address housing needs runs the risk of periodically losing these rentals from the permanent resident housing stock over the course of an ADU's lifetime.

Source: Asheville, North Carolina Region Housing Needs Assessment January 9, 2020 Revised: March 10, 2020 Page: Regional-105:

If you aren't going to follow the advice here, please stop paying for the Bowen Report. Please stop investing in affordable housing. If you allow hundreds of our most affordable units of housing to be cannibalized for use as hotels sheltering tourists just stop wasting our tax dollars. It's fiscally irresponsible. Every unit of housing lost is one more we need to build to get back to ZERO new units of housing.

I served on the City of Asheville's ADU Task Force in 2016 where our recommendation was to not allow the conversion of ADUs to STRs. Please don't allow this now. It didn't make sense then, and it doesn't make sense now. This is some of our most affordable housing.

I appreciate your consideration of this and hope you vote against the Home Stay proposal December 14.