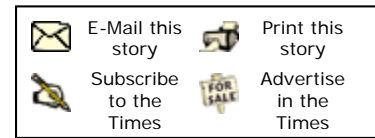


TIMES NEWS

Tega Cay clamps down on rentals

By Jonathan Allen

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No one will be able to rent out a home in Tega Cay for fewer than 90 days under a proposed amendment to the zoning ordinance.

It's a break from the city's past, when it was a small, gated resort community.

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The changes were driven by complaints from city residents about some homeowners renting their property out on a weekly - and sometimes daily - basis, which had not been allowed under the zoning ordinance since it was adopted in the 1980s. However, the zoning code had never explicitly defined several terms, such as "family," "boarding house," and "tourist home," leaving enforcement of the rules somewhat of a gray area.

The new language sets the minimum allowable rental term to no less than 90 days. It does provide a loophole though by grandfathering in some existing prohibited uses. Homes now used for rentals that become prohibited will be exempt as long as the structure exists; Any new homes built on the property will not be allowed to be used as short-term rentals under certain conditions, however.

It also allows owners of boarding or rooming houses to continue to lease to non-family members for up to one year, if a written agreement was already in place prior to the first reading Monday.

Several council members raised concerns that the amendment did nothing to enhance the enforcement of the zoning regulations.

"How are we going to enforce this?" Councilman Larry Harper asked. "You send notices of nonconformity, then what? Fines? Eviction? What are we trying to achieve with this?"

"I think we're crossing a line here, and I don't think it's appropriate," he added.

Mayor Bob Runde, however, was concerned the amended ordinance didn't "have teeth," because it did not offer the city any immediate enforcement options regarding violations of the ordinance.

"We've got a sign ordinance that if someone puts a yard sale sign out on Saturday morning, we don't send them a letter, we take up the thing and bring it back to City Hall," Runde said. "But now we've got something much worse than a yard sale sign and we can't do anything other than write a letter?"

"I want to know how to put some teeth in this."




Councilman John Dervay disagreed and said the council shouldn't bastardize the ordinance it was amending by setting up a special enforcement standard for this one small portion of the zoning code.

"There is no end to this draconian approach to enforcement," he warned.



Planning Commission Chairman Tom Weir suggested the council take up the enforcement issue for people who habitually violate the zoning code as nuisances under the public nuisance ordinance, which will be coming back before the council in the weeks ahead.

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