

Legislative Affairs meeting January 28, 2020

Petition 067-18 - Councilor Michael Kushmerek to require all short-term rental units to register and have a regular inspection as outlined in the attached document.

Councilors present were Walsh, DiNatale, Couture, Zarrella, and Schultz.

Present also were City Solicitor Pusateri, Commissioner Barbadoro, and Director Curry.

The meeting began at 7:09 p.m.

Samantha Squailia, 225 Richardson Road, Fitchburg, reported that she was recording the meeting.

Josiah Richards, 199 Fisher Road spoke during public comment. He reiterated his concerns that were outlined in his e-mail of January 27, 2020 (attached), regarding the Application for Short Term Rentals and Lodging Houses (Application) (attached).

Elizabeth Walsh, Chair of Legislative Affairs, gave a short history of this petition, prior action by the Legislative Affairs Committee, and the subsequent meetings attended by members of the Building Department, Board of Health, Fire Department, the City Solicitor's Office, and the Planning Board, at the direction of Liz Murphy, Director of Housing and Development.

Building Commissioner Mark Barbadoro explained that it was safety concerns that had prompted the filing of this petition and the creation of the Application. He then answered all of Mr. Richard's questions. His responses to Mr. Richard's questions are outlined in his e-mail of January 28, 2020 (attached), answers which echoed those answers provided by Housing Director Murphy in her e-mail of January 28, 2020 (attached). Director Murphy was unable to attend last night's meeting.

After a short discussion, the City Solicitor advised that the petition limited us to approve or deny the petition, and, as the Application was not before us, we could not approve the Application itself, but that would be within the province of the License Commission.

Councilor Zarrella made a motion "to draft an ordinance to mandate inspections of short term rentals, renting to one to four occupants; the fee for such inspections shall be waived for short term rentals renting to fewer than 3 people." Councilor Couture seconded the motion. This motion was approved by a 5-0 vote.

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.