

From: David Murch <dmurch1@gmail.com>
To: Sandy Fredricks <sandy.fredricks@raymondmaine.org>
Date: 07/09/2025 08:51 AM
Subject: Raymond Planning Board - Comments on STR Ordinance

Dear Members of the Raymond Planning Board:

My name is David Murch, and I am a Raymond resident as well as the Chair for the Raymond Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA). In regards to this email, I am contacting you specifically as a Raymond resident, but my comments also come from my time serving on the ZBA during which we have reviewed Raymond's *Land Use* and *ShoreLand Zoning* ordinances in great detail and at great length. Because appeals in an STR Ordinance may be going to the ZBA, I felt it important to share some comments. These comments are based on Cedar Lane Lodge's 6/22/2025 email that has the Subject *Re: Short Term Rental Ordinance - Planning Board Discussion*. My intent is not to single out that specific email, but rather that email serves as a good follow-up to the Planning Board meeting held on June 11, 2025.

1) RE: Additional Ordinance Feedback

I agree 100% with Cedar Lane Lodge's comment that *"We should be making these decisions based on data and not anecdotal statements."* There have been a number of assertions made on both sides of the issue, but I have seen minimal specific references to the documentation that support these assertions. To be clear, I am not indicating that any of the assertions made to date are false; however, it would be important and beneficial to review the actual studies, reports, etc. from which any assertions are made.

2) RE: Definition of Short Term Rental (Section 2)

In regards to the suggestion of *"align[ing] to an industry standard definition as below"*, I do not see a supporting reference as to where the standard definition provided by Cedar Lane Lodge comes from.

In fact, the following statement from AirDNA on 11/28/2024 indicates that STRs are specifically and uniquely defined by jurisdiction:

"Short-term rentals can be defined in different ways depending on your jurisdiction, and the way your town, city, or county defines an STR will impact the taxes you owe, the permits or licenses you'll need, and the rules you'll have to follow to stay compliant as a host." [1]

The Maine Land Use Planning Commission (LUPC), in its current project to implement a phased approach to regulating short-term rentals in the Commission's service area, published the following proposed definition for a STR on March 12, 2025:

"A legally existing dwelling unit, portion of a dwelling unit, or single residential campsite that is rented for a fee or other compensation to a person or group for a period of tenancy of less than 30 consecutive calendar days. The term excludes land use activities

regulated as other use listings, such as, but not limited to recreational lodging facilities, home-based businesses, and commercial uses.” [2]

The LUPC’s ongoing work for STRs is well documented and can be found in the following location on the Web:

<https://www.maine.gov/dacf/lupc/projects/short-term-rentals/>

3) RE: Definition of Short Term Rental (Section 2)

In regards to *“classifying properties as primary, business, and non business”*, it should be noted that the Maine LUPC does distinguish between Residential use and Commercial use for STRs [3]:

Residential Use – The rental of one entire dwelling in a lot

- Allowed in Zones where residential uses are allowed
- Does not meet the definition of a home-based business

Commercial Use – The rental of multiple dwellings/units on a lot

- Allowed in Zones where commercial uses are allowed

Also for consideration is that the Town of Camden, Maine has its own definitions for (and distinguishes between) Residential, Seasonal, and Commercial STRs. The Town correspondingly has a different fee structure for each of these 3 definitions. [4]

4) RE: Occupancy Limits (Section 4B)

I agree 100% that there *“should be some discretion from the code enforcement on exact occupancy based on specific property characteristics”*.

However, in regards to the suggestion of *“an additional 4 people to give greater flexibility”*, that appears to be inconsistent with how other Towns/Cities in Maine (and their residents) have moved forward with STR ordinances. I reviewed multiple STR ordinances from across the State of Maine, and for those with Occupancy Limits that allow for additional guests, the limit was always 2. Those Towns/Cities include Brownfield, Bucksport, Cape Elizabeth, Casco, Freeport, Fryeburg (draft ordinance), Holden, Kennebunkport, Scarborough (draft ordinance), Stonington, and Union.

5) RE: Raymond STR Misinformation

As I have indicated above, I think it is important for all parties to provide supporting documentation for any assertions made. This would be applicable to Raymond STR Initiative Group as well as to Cedar Lane Lodge.

In closing, I believe the creation of a STR Ordinance for Raymond residents to vote on will be no easy task. With the range of rental types, locations, and other considerations, it will be important to draft a document that supports best

case scenarios, but that also provides options for residents and the Town when STRs push the envelope in the opposite direction.

Thank you for your time and consideration in all of this.

Regards,

David F. Murch

REFERENCES:

[1] <https://www.airdna.co/blog/what-is-considered-a-short-term-rental>, November 28, 2024

[2] https://www.maine.gov/dacf/lupc/laws_rules/proposed_rules/chapter2-chapter10/STR_2025_RuleRedline-LUPC.pdf, March 12, 2025

[3] https://www.maine.gov/dacf/lupc/projects/short-term-rentals/outreach/LUPC_CommunityMeetingSTR_Presentation.pdf, June 15, 2023

[4] https://www.camdenmaine.gov/departments/planning_code_enforcement/short-term_rental_information.php, January 1, 2025