

Village of Coxsackie

Public Hearing Minutes

Short-Term Rental Application Variance-12 Church Street

June 8, 2023

The Public Hearing was called to order by Mayor Mark Evans at 5:45 p.m. Present were Trustee Donald Daoust, Trustee Rodney Levine, and Trustee Rebecca Vermilyea. Trustee Katlyn Irwin was absent.

Mayor Evans stated that the purpose of the Public Hearing is to allow for public comment on the Short-Term Rental Variance application received from Scott Watson, of 12 Church Street.

Robert VanValkenburg, Jr., of 14 Church Street, stated that he is neighbors to the Watson's, and he is also one of the people responsible for overseeing their property while they operate a Short-Term Rental. He will say that his experience has been positive with the renters of the house. This house is not considered a "party house", and he has had no negative experiences as a neighbor.

Kim Mclean asked how many people typically stay at this house.

Robert Van Valkenburg, Jr. stated that it is typically rented once or twice a month, and most often is rented by a couple, a couple of friends, or a small family. It is pretty lowkey.

Scott Watson, of 12 Church Street, was present via Zoom Video Conference. He stated that he is happy to answer any questions that anyone might have. He said that he and his wife are really just trying to get compliant. They weren't even aware that there was a registration process when they first started listing the property as a Short-Term Rental back in Autumn. As he explained in his letter and application, this really is a matter of the Short-Term Rental option best suiting their house, as far as having it kept in good order, and not subject to break-ins, or having long term tenants where they have the lack of ability to effectively manage and monitor. They are hopeful that they can just be good stewards, and neighbors, and find a way that they can still enjoy being in Coxsackie. He said that they will be up next month. They are not intending on being an absentee landlord.

Denise Warren, of 1 Franklin Street, asked if the STR Variance application was necessary because there currently is a moratorium on any new Short-Term Rentals.

Mayor Evans stated that anybody that was non-compliant had to submit for a variance, and the Board can then consider granting them a Short-Term Rental Certificate to allow them to operate.

Denise Warren stated that she wrote a letter regarding the new Local Law related to Short-Term Rentals, and she is just asking if the Board had received it.

Mayor Evans stated that he had received it.

Denise Warren asked if the rest of the Board had received the letter also.

Nikki Berezna, Clerk, stated that every Board Member had received it. However, this Public Hearing is not for the proposed Local Law related to Short-Term Rentals. This Public Hearing is only to discuss the Variance application received from Scott Watson.

Denise Warren asked why the Board had not acknowledged that her letter has been received.

Mayor Evans stated that he has received many letters, and he is sure that hers was in there. He is sure he read it, but it was probably a few weeks ago. Each letter that was received was shared with the Board.

Denise Warren stated that some of the concerns that she stated in her letter kind of relate to tonight's topic. She asked which of the Board Members was not present for the meeting tonight.

Mayor Evans stated that Trustee Katlyn Irwin was absent.

Denise Warren asked if it was because she had to recuse herself for some reason.

Mayor Evans stated that Trustee Irwin was absent due to another commitment.

Denise Warren asked if she understood correctly that the purpose for this Public Hearing was to allow the public to speak out on whether they are for or against the Variance application received.

Mayor Evans stated that that is correct.

Denise Warren stated that she came in late, and wanted to know if anyone else had spoken yet.

Robert Van Valkenburg, Jr. stated that he had spoken.

Denise Warren asked Mr. Van Valkenburg, Jr. what his feelings were on the Variance application received.

Robert Van Valkenburg, Jr. stated that he is a neighbor, and he also helps facilitate operating the Short-Term Rental in the Watson's absence. His experience hasn't been anything but positive. It is usually just rented by couples, and small families, and everyone has been really quiet. He has never had any issue with anybody there.

Denise Warren asked if anybody is against the Variance application received.

Mayor Evans stated that nobody has spoken against it.

Denise Warren stated that she is not against it. She doesn't think that people should be told what to do, and not do, with their property. People pay their taxes, and have to make a living and find a way to pay those taxes. Especially since taxes keep going up.

Veronica Foley stated that part of the Variance application includes having to show that the property owner is experiencing financial hardship due to the moratorium. She stated that she is just curious what that would look like, and asked if under the moratorium, that is what the

Board would have to evaluate and understand.

Mayor Evans stated that so far, the Board has only received a letter and application from Mr. Watson, and have opened the Public Hearing for public comment. They are not answering questions. This is for accepting comment only.

Denise Warren asked if Mr. Watson currently operates his property as a Short-Term Rental.

Scott Watson, via Zoom, stated that they bought the property in 2011, but they have been living in South Carolina in order to deal with caring for elderly parents and other matters. Renting the property out as a Short-Term Rental became the best option for them. They started operating as a Short-Term Rental last Autumn, and they weren't aware at that time that there was a registration process. They didn't find the information on the Village website until it was brought to their attention by the Van Valkenburg's. They have been trying to basically get compliant as quickly as they can, so that they can continue to have a smooth operation that is not disruptive. They have been up to Cocksackie more frequently operating the Short-Term Rental, than they have in the past 5 years. They have been trying to come up every 4-6 weeks. They will be up again next month. They are just hopeful that they can continue to utilize this mechanism to make sure that they can enjoy their property, and have it be standing tall, looking good, and be good neighbors in the community.

Denise Warren asked Mr. Watson if they live on property also, or if there is an apartment that they use when they are here.

Mr. Watson, via Zoom, stated that this is a small, single-family house, with 2 bedrooms. When they are up visiting Cocksackie, his family stays in the house. There is no place to have an adjacent or accessory unit on property. With help from their neighbors, they feel that they have been able to rent it out in a way that is not disruptive to anybody's enjoyment of their property.

Robert Van Valkenburg, Jr. stated that he has agreed to act as their agent.

Denise Warren asked if she understood correctly that Mr. Watson uses the house in between guests.

Mr. Watson, via Zoom, stated that that is correct. They block out dates for when they plan on being in Cocksackie. Right now, they are just obligated to being in South Carolina dealing with his Mother in Law's health and other family matters.

Denise Warren stated that that sounds reasonable.

No further public comments were offered.

A motion to adjourn the Public Hearing was made by Trustee Levine and seconded by Trustee Vermilyea. Trustee Daoust voted yes. Trustee Levine voted yes. Trustee Vermilyea voted yes. The motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nikki Berezna". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Nikki Berezna

Clerk