

Airbnb . . . short-term lodging: why should we care?

The Bethlehem Gadfly Airbnb, Neighborhoods, Northside, Serious Issues, Short term lodging
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 *Latest in a series of posts on Airbnb and short-term lodging* 

As we move into a series of posts on the short-term lodging proposal just introduced before the Planning Commission, Gadfly would like to recycle part of post from October 6, 2018, fourteen months ago, and just 3 weeks after Gadfly-became-Gadfly.

The Northside Historical District is not Gadfly's neighborhood. It is not the neighborhood of you, the vast majority of Gadfly followers.

Why should we care what happens in the Northside Historical District?

First things first, why should the general “we” of the City care? Why is Gadfly spending time on this? Why should you read on if you don't live in the Northside Historical District?

Good question, Gadfly.

And Gadfly answers that it has to do with the perfectly understandable concern over the nature of your neighborhood. Something everybody has or should have. Every time Gadfly uses that word “neighborhood,” he thinks with pleasure of Fred Rogers, “Mr. Rogers” (did you see the recent Tom Hanks’ movie “A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood”?). It's about the quality of life in your neighborhood, about caring for and about your neighborhood, and “control” of your neighborhood. This is or should be a concern across the City and has much wider implications than just Airbnb.

Mr. Gadfly's neighborhood is changing. Has changed. Of the 15 houses in Gadfly's block, 6 are now rentals. Porch palings are missing. Parking is harder. Some sidewalks want to hurt you. Mother Nature is sometimes the only sidewalk snow-shoveler. Glaring, spooky feral cats have taken over the once carnival-like street (40 kids playing there at one point). Yards aren't all that well taken care of. Gadfly's lawn is "crop-circled" by dogs on leashes. Where have all the flowers gone? Some porches have become utility sheds. We were once a tree-shaded lane; now Gadfly's tree ("Secundus," since it is a replacement) stands alone, sole respecter of City ordinance.

Poor maudlin Gadfly. He doesn't live in the Northside Historical District. But he gets it. We all should get it. Neighborhoods change one rented house, one dog pee at a time. Often imperceptible change. Till one day it's too late. Gadfly gets it. We all should get it. And be invested in what happens in the Northside Historical District.

It pays to fight for our neighborhoods. Gadfly always says that. You may have noticed.

We must speak up.

Airbnb has provided some of the most dynamic resident-involved meetings in Gadfly's Council spectatordom history. Take a look at ["Our neighborhoods are under attack"](#) (the quote is Frank Boyer's), about the September 4, 2018, meeting that Gadfly called "one of the best of the year . . . The air crackled. Tension was thick. The issue was urgent, resident commentators were passionate, Council was involved and concerned."

It's up to the City to protect our neighborhoods.

Whether it's First Terrace or West Goepp or whatever, Gadfly will always be following "developments."

Let's see what's going on with this proposed zoning ordinance.

to be continued . . .