"Airbnb is good for Bethlehem"

The Bethlehem Gadfly Airbnb, Short term lodging January 18, 2020



📞 Latest in a series of posts on Airbnb and short-term lodging 🐇



A "Town Square" in today's *Morning Call*. A thorny issue as you can see if you browse past posts in this thread. There's a short-term lodging ordinance on the agenda for Tuesday's City Council meeting. So it's time to pay attention. Gadfly will post again on this issue in the near future, before the meeting.

Airbnb is good for Bethlehem

Travel · Airbnb · Society · Bethlehem, PA

During the last few years there has been discussion about room in their houses through Airbnb. The city introduced an ordinance regarding short-term lodging facilities inpeople renting out 2017, Article 1741.

But the discussion continues. Some people say Article 1741 is not adequately enforced; others think its restrictions do not go far enough and are proposing limiting the number of days a homeowner can rent out rooms as short-term lodging to 180 days a year or even less. I am one of those people who rent out our guest room through Airbnb and I would like to point out why I think Airbnb is a good thing for our city and for our area. I am not against Article 1741 as it stands but I am opposed against further restrictions.

In 2014 we bought an old home in West Bethlehem that needs a lot of work. We invest the income we get through Airbnb into the home. It al-



Some homeowners in Bethlehem are making space in their houses available for rent via Airbnb.

lows us to fix up the house and do all kinds of repairs, which is good for the quality of the neighborhood and for the city of Bethlehem. It is also good for the many painters, contractors, workers, and electricians whom we have employed to

work on our house.

The income from Airbnb allows us to pay the taxes on our house. And of course, we include our Airbnb income on our tax returns. In addition, each guest that books through Re

R

Airbnb cludin Lehigh genera area.

We ren house when y guests to Beth attend weddir plore t for me Uber d our are

> We foll on sho rent or



r rent via

ows us se. And rbnb inaddithrough

Related Stories

Renters hit with lakeside rules

The News-Times 18 Jan 2020

Mel's World

Computer Shopper 1 Feb 2020

Airbnb pays all required taxes including the hotel occupancy tax for Lehigh County. This is how Airbnb generates more tax income for our

We rent out the guest room of our house and we never host guests when we are not home. Many of our guests are young people who come to Bethlehem for job interviews, to attend concerts and festivals, for weddings, to see family or to explore the area. These people go out for meals, drinks, go shopping, pay Uber drivers, and spend money in our area on all kinds of other things.

We follow Bethlehem's ordinance on short-term rentals: we do not rent out more than two rooms (in fact, we only have one guest room) and no guest can stay longer than 30 days at a time (we have never had longterm guests). We have a business license and we have our house inspected every year as Article 1741 requires, resulting in additional repairs and costs.

What we offer falls in a very different price range than most of the hotels in our area. I doubt that most of our guests would have stayed at one of the hotels if the Airbnb option did not exist. The Bethlehem hotels are not our competition.

Airbnb is generating income that is beneficial for our neighborhoods and for our city. It makes our city more attractive to visitors and by investing in our properties, our neighborhoods become better places.

Paul Peucker works as an archivist and is a resident of West Bethlehem.



Wha



