

Subject:

FW: Email - Communication - Alisa Thompson - Short Term Accommodation - File CK 4350-71

From: Web NoReply

Sent: August 31, 2020 10:04 AM

To: City Council <City.Council@Saskatoon.ca>

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--- Replies to this email will go to [REDACTED] ---

Submitted on Monday, August 31, 2020 - 10:03

Submitted by user: Anonymous

Submitted values are:

Date Monday, August 31, 2020

To His Worship the Mayor and Members of City Council

First Name Alisa

Last Name Thompson

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City Saskatoon

Province Saskatchewan

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Name of the organization or agency you are representing (if applicable) Epic Alliance Inc.

Subject Short-Term Accommodation

Meeting (if known)

Comments

**I sent in a previous submission however I noticed an error so I re-sent the submission. Please excuse my mistake and assume this letter as the corrected version. Thank you.*

To His Worship the Mayor and Members of City Council,

I truly appreciate the opportunity to write this letter and bring a new perspective on short-term rentals to your meeting today. I am asking the Council if you have considered the recent changes in the world and how they affect and increase the need for short term rentals in the City of Saskatoon. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, many local businesses are being hurt or going extinct. Short-term rentals are not one of these hurting enterprises. Community members and citizens of the Saskatoon Area should be given the option of a smaller controllable space, which can be found in a short-term rental. It is much more convenient and safer for guests to stay in a house that has been sanitised than be in a larger unit or hotel where there are many people. Some of the guests in our short-term rentals even sanitize the door handles and handrails on their own accord. This feat is much easier to achieve on a small single-family home than in large multi homes. People have more control of their safety in smaller homes than in larger multi units. If you remove short-term rentals, you will be removing

the option of a safe stay away from home for everyone. Ask yourself this, would you feel safer staying with your family in a confined unit on your own during these times or staying with dozens or more strangers all in the same building, interacting with the same elevator buttons and handrails, etc.

In addition, the need for short-term rentals for the large population of students from the local university and technical education center has never been greater. Now more than ever students are faced with adversity to accessing education and they need options that suit their unique situation. Many students are now doing online training, yet there are still components of their post-secondary education that cannot be instructed through a Zoom or video call. Would you want to see a medical doctor that has never assessed a live person? Would you want an electrician to enter your home to do some wiring or repairs, but they have only learned about the issue through a 50-minute remotely instructed video?

We currently manage 80 team members and our team is growing daily. I took the liberty of asking them questions about the recent changes to their lives due to Covid-19:

For example, one of my team members is originally from Kenya, Africa. His sister came to Canada last fall to go to University. Once classes went online, she then moved back to Kenya. She is a prime example of the huge amounts of income lost to our local region because like many other international students, she is no longer in our province buying groceries, utilizing facilities, buying fuel for a car, going to restaurants, using the postal service, or contributing to our economy in any capacity.

Another example would be trade/technical schools. These facilities all have some form of hands on training/labs as a component of their education. At our company, we pay for the apprentices and their schooling as well as their wage while they attend school. I know of only 3 other businesses that do this in our jurisdiction. I'm not only advocating for our team members, I'm here for all the other students who are not this blessed. With the current changes many students have training/labs for only a few days or weeks out of their schooling term. A student is typically living on a lower income. Our short-term rentals are at least half the cost of a hotel room per night. Most of our units are 2 beds 1 bathroom for about \$50 a night. A student can occupy a space with a kitchen and enough room to study by themselves. It does not make sense to have large amounts of bedrooms in short term rentals. It is counterproductive to have huge amounts of people renting the space because it is too hard to control the environment and clean it properly. Wear and tear on furniture and flooring with large amounts of traffic would be cost prohibited in a short-term rental. Now in society there is going to be a shift of thousands of students only needing a place for shorter periods of time. For the safety of everyone do you want hundreds of students in one location that they can not afford? Many students will cram 3 or 4 to a room to make it affordable. Doesn't it make more sense in these crazy times to have the students in individual or very small units they can afford and not all be staying on top of each other? Has anyone thought about this situation? In a short-term rental, the students have access to their own kitchens, therefore they can get groceries, feed themselves and not have to go to restaurants for every meal. Think about that. Say there are 100 students that come to do a training/lab for 2 weeks. If they all stay in hotels, then they all have to go to restaurants or fast food places 3 times a day to eat. That's a lot of transient traffic in the city. Now if they have their own kitchen, it's cheaper to cook for themselves and not have to eat out as much. Which means less transient traffic. I encourage you to think about that for the safety of everyone!

Now you have people coming for medical treatments to the city, is it not safer for them and their family to stay with many people in large hotels or is it safer for smaller houses. Another thing to think about...

How about the newcomers to the country? Is it safer for all to have them stay in a singular home where they have less contact with people? In a hotel they would have to quarantine for 14 days. In a short-term rental, they have access to a kitchen which allows them to have groceries delivered so they can cook for themselves. In a hotel they would have to have food delivered 3 times a day. That's a lot of contact with someone who is quarantining for 14 days. Imagine you and your family trapped in an oversized bedroom and 1 bathroom with no kitchen for 2 weeks... How well would that social experiment go? Is it not safer for everyone to be in smaller houses during these trying times?

As for this idea it takes away from affordable housing, that's not true. Our company works very closely with Social Services tenants. Our clients from this demographic prefer certain neighborhoods to live in. Where our short term rentals are located is not this neighborhood where these clients desire to live in. For example, very few social services tenants want to live on the east side. The majority feel the east side is too far away from

their friends, family, and the facilities they utilize. This is why 85% of our rentals are on the west side. The world is changing and Saskatoon doesn't have a choice but to pivot and adapt. Like it or not, short term rentals are the wave of the future now more than ever.

Sincerely,

Alisa Thompson
Attachments

The results of this submission may be viewed at:

