

REV. ROBERT MACAULEY

July 1, 2017

Dear Mr. Bloch and Mr. Rheaume,

I am writing in response to Mr. Mike Wool's letter of June 9, 2017, regarding short-term rentals of residential property. As you are already aware from the materials Mike included in his letter, we have made our home available for occasional short-term rental, as we will be moving to Oregon in August. We have made no secret about this: in fact, I shared this fact with Mike a few days before he sent his letter, as we watched our kids/grandkids play T ball and chatted about events in our lives.

I'm not an attorney, so my perspective will be personal, free of legalese. We have loved living in Charlotte for the past seven years. In fact, when we moved here, we began calling our house our "forever home," because we could never imagine leaving. But a rare opportunity arose for me to lead the pediatric palliative care team at a large hospital in Portland, and we decided to take it.

As our kids were born and have lived all their lives in Vermont, we couldn't bear the thought of parting with our home. We longed to return to Vermont in the summers, one day joined by sons-and daughters-in-law and grandchildren. And in a perfect world my wife and I would eventually retire here.

This seemed impossible, though, given mortgage payments, upkeep costs, and (as every Charlotter knows) significant real estate taxes. So we came up with a plan to defray some of those costs by occasionally renting out our home. As you can see, this is not about making a profit; it is simply about keeping our home for our family.

We have gone about this with great intentionality and concern for the well-being of our neighbors, neighborhood, and home. We've hired a retired military property manager, who will personally meet each guest at check-in, visit them every few days to ensure that the house is being cared for and the rules are being followed, and then personally check them out at the end of their stay, before professionally cleaning the house. We have established very clear rules for behavior, in order to show respect for the structure, grounds, and neighboring families and property.

We have also been very intentional about selecting guests who have requested to rent the property. There is never an option to "instantly book"; rather, every request comes to me personally, and I engage the requestor in conversation about who they are, how many people would be staying at our home, and for what purpose. Mike refers to the possibility of "4-5 families splitting the cost," so let me set the record straight: the people whose application to stay in our home over the next year that we've accepted are composed of:

- two multigenerational family reunions
- one single family
- one couple who will be getting married nearby
- two families celebrating their children's graduations from Middlebury and UVM, respectively.

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The nightly fee is substantial enough to dissuade the “party crowd” from even inquiring (and we would deny their request, if they did). And also substantial enough that we envision the house being rented for approximately a dozen weeks a year.

We have also been very clear about charging applicable Vermont meals and rooms tax.

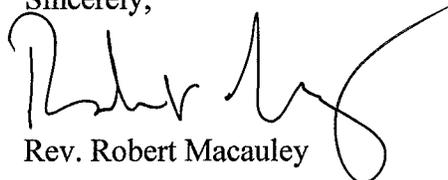
I believe my wife and four children and I are extremely good neighbors. The sort who instituted and host the annual Hills Point block party. The sort who plow our neighbors’ beaches when we do ours (just as they have done for us in the past). The sort who—as the only folks on the street with permanent docks—tell everyone they’re free to use the docks whenever they want (including the neighbors who turn a friendly update shared over a T ball game into a letter of complaint to the town). And the sort who, upon receiving a copy of that letter, immediately conferred with our attorney to make sure that we were not violating any law or ordinance (and thankfully were assured that we weren’t).

I’m glad for this opportunity to let the town and our neighbors know about the steps we’ve taken to ensure that they are in no way inconvenienced or negatively affected. They also know how to contact us if they are concerned about anything related to our house or property. Our property manager is on retainer to attend immediately to any such concerns.

And with regard to any lingering concerns about how the house or property—and, by extension, neighboring properties—will be treated, I would highlight the fact that this is our *home*, which we will return to in the summers and one day retire to. Even if we didn’t care about our neighbors as much as we clearly do, self-preservation would provide more than enough motivation to make sure that only the most reliable people are permitted to stay in our home, even for a short period of time.

Please don’t hesitate to contact me, if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,



Rev. Robert Macauley

P.S. If you would be so kind, please include this letter on your website along with other letters you may have received on this topic. Thank you.