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Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

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OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

Cambridge City Council
City Hall, 2d Floor
795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

October 17, 2016

Dear Cambridge City Councilors,

We had a strong, personal response to the piece in the *Boston Globe* last week by Curt Woodward titled: "Heavily rented properties are a cash cow for Airbnb."

Of particular interest to us, this sentence:

"The Cambridge City Council is considering new regulations that could require hosts to live in the building where they're renting a unit, aiming to restrict absentee landlords from running short-term rentals in the city."

Some context: My husband and I are in our seventies and have lived for 18 years at 8 Maple Avenue in a beautiful house that is one of the city's historic treasures. The house is now divided into two condos: our Unit One on the first two floors and Unit two, on the third floor, owned by a second party.

That second owner periodically occupies the unit but, for the last three or so years, mainly has rented it out while they reside elsewhere.

For over a year we endured a hotel-like situation, with Airbnb tenants coming for a day or two or three. This was contrary to our condo documents and Cambridge regulations. But with the help of lawyers (and sacrificing a basement unit where we had a quiet, long-term tenant), we got a legal agreement limiting Unit Two rentals to 30 days.

The owner of the unit, no longer permitted to rent through Airbnb, now rents the apartment on a 28 day (minimum) basis. The most recent rental left us dealing with garbage in the yard and common areas, hazards on the walkways, disruption compounded because the well-meaning large family (with four children) spoke no English, and did not understand the city refuse and recycling, etc.

In a peculiar arrangement, the fire egress for Unit Two is an easement through our dwelling: this was never a problem for the many years when Unit Two was owner-occupied, but now we have the anxiety of an unlocked door between us and a succession of people we do not know. The fire-escape arrangement exemplifies how this Victorian house is not suited for short-term rentals by an absent owner.

The absentee owners have taken, at best, only sporadic responsibility for monitoring the condition of the yard, porch, walkways. As abutters can confirm, the property itself is increasingly unsightly, perhaps even declining in value.

We'd be grateful to communicate further with the Council, or a representative, about our experience, first, of those multiple short-term Airbnb rentals in the third floor unit of our house; and, currently, of 28-day rentals in that same unit.

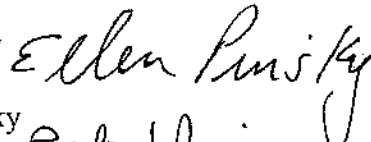
The experience has involved actual damage to our property as well as safety hazards, dirt, disruption and anxiety. The pleasure and comfort we take in living here is significantly affected.

We would welcome regulation that would require hosts—perhaps specifically in small, two-or-three-unit dwellings—to live in a building where they rent a dwelling unit for periods of less than a year.

Please let us know if there are further steps we can take.

Sincerely,

Ellen Pinsky



Robert Pinsky

