

**MINUTES OF THE SHORT TERM RENTAL AD HOC COMMITTEE
OF THE CITY OF GALVESTON
REGULAR MEETING - AUGUST 5, 2025**

8/5/2025 - Short Term Rental Ad Hoc Committee Minutes

1. Declaration of a quorum and call meeting to order

Chair Claire Reiswerg declared a quorum and called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Present: Committee Members Sheila Lidstone, David Bloom, Joseph Spencer, Ted Shook, Claire Reiswerg, and Debra Burkley; Stakeholder Members Robert Zahn, Liz Overton, and Christine Bryant; Tim Tietjens (City Staff); and Bob Brown (City Council).

Absent: Committee Member Dominique Brown; Stakeholder Member Chris Wren.

3. Consider Approval Of Meeting Minutes

3.A Draft Minutes - July 30, 2025

Sheila Lidstone made a motion to approve the July 30, 2025 meeting minutes, with David Bloom seconding the motion. Unanimously approved by the voting members present.

4. Public Comment

Members of the public may address the Committee. Speakers will be limited to three minutes.

No public comments were received.

5. Discuss best practices, compliance and enforcement measures for STR operators/owners including registration and HOT compliance for recommendations to City Council

Chair Claire Reiswerg emphasized that certain topics — such as tiers and classifications, community education, what to post, density restrictions, and parking — will be discussed at a future meeting. The committee did not revisit previous revisions in order to focus on completing the current draft ordinance. The revisions already made reflect prior discussions and are in good shape.

The committee reviewed the draft STR ordinance paragraph by paragraph to identify

gaps and development recommendations for City Council.

Compliance

- **Monthly reporting vs. quarterly; if software automates it and doesn't add extra work, monthly reporting seems manageable.**
- **Needs to state that providing false documents can lead to a one-year denial for reapplication.**
- **There should be a formal requirement for owners to certify compliance with all standards (may already exist in STRL board procedures).**
- **The city or its designated system will coordinate hotline notifications; all complaints must funnel through this system for consistent enforcement.**
- **Discussion on adding language allowing city officials to conduct on-site inspections; concern that it might be considered a warrantless search.**

Short Term Rental Licensing (STRL) board

- **The board is intended to handle repeated violations from STR operators; helps to streamline complaint resolution outside of the court system.**
- **Concerns raised about keeping the process objective, not subjective or political.**
- **Proposed members - City Manager or designee, Director of Development Services, and Director of Finance. discussion of lack of stakeholder representation.**
- **Suggestion of alternate members and legal advisor involvement.**
- **Violations must be verified and documented through the city's compliance system.**
- **Discussion over whether anonymous complaints should be allowed.**
- **Noise is highly subjective and often intermittent, making enforcement difficult.**
- **Discussion about whether failure to pay HOT should be grounds for license revocation.**
- **Suggested changing "upon a showing" to "upon three documented and verified violations".**
- **A flowchart or process diagram will be created to clarify how complaints are reported, investigated, validated, and escalated (if needed).**

Advertisement of short term rental units

- **Discussion of whether signage should include the GVR number, whether print or digital.**
- **Concerns raised about signage on properties, especially yard signs and large banners.**
- **The committee favors mirroring the more discreet bed and breakfast signage rules, allowing identification signs but discouraging large or promotional yard signs to respect neighborhoods.**

Short term rental platforms

- **STR platforms remit differently - Airbnb collects and remits taxes directly, while VRBO operators can choose to remit themselves or have the platform do so.**
- **The City receives aggregate tax payments without detailed backup, complicating audit processes.**
- **STR operators are required to report their bookings and taxes monthly, but there is limited ability to verify the accuracy of platform remittances without audits.**
- **Cities struggle with platforms like Airbnb being unresponsive to removal requests of unlicensed listings.**

The committee discussed having owners inform guests of city ordinances and their responsibilities through a clear, standardized posted notice to minimize complaints, especially about trash and parking, and promoting respectful guest behavior.

The committee discussed how to manage short term rental regulations and associated fees. There was consensus not to reduce or change fees until they clearly understand the full scope and cost of administering the STR program. The ordinance will set the scope of work, and fees should be based on the actual cost to implement and enforce it. Council will ultimately decide on fees based on staff recommendations and the finalized ordinance.

6. Suggested future agenda items by Committee Members

The committee will discuss density, tiering and classifications, signage, and a flowchart at an upcoming meeting.

7. Decide Next Meeting Time and Date

The next meeting will be held on August 15th from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:40 p.m.



Janelle Williams, City Secretary
Date Approved: August 15, 2025