

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

9/5/2025 - 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 10:00 a.m.

2. Roll Call

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

3. Consider Approval Of Meeting Minutes

3.A Draft Minutes - August 15, 2025

David Bloom made a motion to approve the August 15, 2025 meeting minutes, with Joseph Spencer seconding the motion. Unanimously approved.

4. Public Comment

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

Priscilla Smith (1021 Arbor View) raised concerns about a short-term rental that was expanded from 4 to 5 bedrooms and now sleeps 25 people, likely violating occupancy and safety codes. She urged the city to consider Texas property code and safety risks when permitting such properties.

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

Claire Reiswerg reported that the community forum has been scheduled for October 9th from 5:00 to 6:30 PM at the Historic Water and Light Building. The event will feature interactive tables with City staff and committee members to explain parts of the draft ordinance and answer questions. Attendees can also take a survey on-site using a QR code.

Christine Bryant provided additional details of the community forum and a public survey to gather feedback on the proposed STR ordinance. The event will use a table-based format where residents can walk through sections of the ordinance, ask questions, and leave comments. City staff and STR committee members will be available at each table to listen, not persuade. The survey will be short, anonymous, and available in English and Spanish, both online and in person. Goal: 200+ survey responses. Outreach will include HOAs, community groups, and public spaces. Focus is on accessibility, neutrality, and making residents feel comfortable participating. Draft survey topics include: STR impact on neighborhoods (noise, parking); economic contribution; and STR owner accountability, enforcement and license revocation. Survey questions will be refined based on feedback and will be brought back for further discussion.

Density and parking issues were recognized but will be handled separately by the committee.

6. Discuss enforcement, websites and data presented on websites

City Marshal Heather Morris shared insights on their approach to enforcing short-term rental (STR) regulations. She has been with the office for nearly three months and has reviewed prior committee meetings to understand the issues and goals. The office currently handles STR complaints like other code violations, but they are now improving communication by coordinating with a designated 24-hour contact person for each STR. This aims to speed up issue resolution by having immediate, direct communication instead of relying on slow processes like posting letters.

The Marshals typically operate from 8 AM to 5 PM, seven days a week, but not during evenings or nights when many complaints (especially noise) occur. There's recognition that staffing and scheduling might need adjustment during peak seasons, but that also involves budget and personnel challenges.

Heather emphasized that the Marshals prefer to personally verify complaints onsite rather than relying solely on administrative follow-up, to better assess the situation and communicate effectively with the STR contact. While administrative staff handle some office duties, having Marshals physically at the location is crucial for enforcement and resolution.

The discussion also highlighted that most complaints come from a small number of problematic properties, and better data tracking and communication may solve many issues administratively. However, face-to-face enforcement remains important to ensure compliance, prevent repeat offenses, and maintain accountability.

7. Suggested future agenda items by Committee Members

8. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting is Friday, September 12th at 1:00 p.m.

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:05 a.m.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Janelle Williams". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J".

Janelle Williams, City Secretary

Date Approved: September 12, 2025