

**MINUTES OF THE SHORT TERM RENTAL AD HOC COMMITTEE
OF THE CITY OF GALVESTON
REGULAR MEETING - SEPTEMBER 25, 2025**

9/25/2025 - 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, and Claire Reiswerg; Stakeholder Members Christine Bryant, Liz Overton, and Robert Zahn; Tim Tietjens (City Staff); and Bob Brown (City Council).

Absent: Committee Members Dominique Brown and Debra Burkley; Stakeholder Member Chris Wren.

3. Consider Approval Of Meeting Minutes

3.A Draft Minutes — September 12, 2025 & September 19, 2025

David Bloom made a motion to approve the September 12 and 19, 2025 meeting minutes, with Joseph Spencer 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 and consider possible actions on best practices, compliance and enforcement measures for STR operators/owners including registration and HOT compliance for recommendations to City Council

Chair Claire Reiswerg reported that three topics will be covered today - density, the short term rental licensing board, and parking.

STRL Summary (Short-Term Rental Licensing Board): Assistant City Attorney Xochitl Vandiver-Gaskin provided an overview of the proposed STRL board. The board will review STR operators with 3 documented violations (noise, trash, parking) confirmed by city officials. The process provides a structured process for potentially revoking STR licenses, with due process protections for operators. The board includes city staff only (City Manager/designee, Development Services, Finance) for efficiency. Operators are notified, can present evidence, and revocation is not automatic — the board can issue warnings or other sanctions. Final decisions on revocation go to City Council, with appeals allowed. Operators with revoked licenses must delist from platforms like Airbnb.

Enforcement mechanisms and clear procedures will be added to the ordinance.

Density presentation by Christine Bryant: Christine provided Vision Galveston's data from 2021 showing STR distribution across districts, noting District 6 has the highest number of STRs while District 2 has the highest density. Current STR permits stand at 4,271 as of September 2025, a 10% drop since March—likely due to economic factors. However, data inconsistencies remain a challenge: Vision Galveston's data is outdated, and Deckard's real-time reports lack clarity and district-level detail. Moving forward, better, up-to-date data is needed to guide policy, and Vision Galveston is open to providing 2025 data. Ultimately, the city must balance property rights, legal risks, and community concerns in shaping its STR regulations. The committee discussed exploring options for regulating short-term rentals (STRs), including potential density restrictions, though these present legal and practical challenges. Definitions of "density" vary by community, and any changes must be approached carefully to avoid unintended consequences. Assistant City Attorney Xochitl Vandiver-Gaskin advised the committee of legal ramifications involved when implementing STR density rules. The Texas Supreme Court has declined to hear a case on STR density from Austin, meaning the lower court's decision (against Austin's restrictions) stands. Dallas recently had its STR density ordinance blocked, while Fort Worth successfully implemented STR restrictions due to having extensive data supporting the need (public safety, health, etc.). Galveston already restricts STRs in certain areas through R-0 zoning, and there's concern that new rules could undermine existing protections. In a private legal case, the Lafitte's Cove HOA successfully banned STRs via deed restrictions, though this doesn't set citywide precedent.

Joseph Spencer made a motion that the committee requests Vision Galveston to update the data presented today to the most recent data available, with Claire Reiswerg seconding the motion. The motion passed 4-1; David Bloom abstained from voting.

Parking: The committee debated proposed changes to short-term rental (STR) regulations, focusing on parking requirements and whether existing STRs should be grandfathered in. There was concern about inconsistent or incomplete data, but new software (Deckard) is expected to improve information collection. Staff proposed that STRs with more than two bedrooms must show proof of additional parking, with a limit of two on-street spaces counted toward requirements. Existing STRs would be allowed to continue under current conditions but would need to report parking info during registration renewals. Some members preferred a comprehensive, island-wide approach through the Comprehensive Plan, while others stressed the need for immediate action, noting that the plan may lack funding or timeline alignment to address the issue effectively.

Joseph Spencer made a motion to advance the proposed parking changes to the existing LDRs as was put forth by city staff, excluding urban neighborhoods and adding an appeal process. Sheila Lidstone seconded the motion. In favor: Joseph Spencer, Claire Reiswerg, and Sheila Lidstone. In opposition: Ted Shook and David Bloom. The motion failed.

6. Suggestions and recommendations for Community Forum

7. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on October 13, 2025 at 2:00 p.m.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:10 p.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: October 13, 2025