

Rentals still concern some despite changes

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SENECA — While changes have been made to Seneca's proposed short-term rental ordinance, some residents told city council they still have concerns about speeding, noise violations, density and safety they believe the ordinance could bring to neighborhoods in the city.

The proposed ordinance, which is expected to have a final reading before council in August,

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Tommy Hutchins

er trucks to pick up trash that might be left from the weekend on Mondays after a renter has left the rental.

"We would anticipate these rentals would end through the weekend and they would throw all their trash there when they left on Sunday and they would sit there until Thursday," Moulder said. "We are actually going to pick up (garbage) early before it sits there too long."

While some residents at the meeting said the changes make the ordinance better than the original version, those who spoke at the meeting said they still had concerns about the proposed ordinance. All residents who spoke Tuesday live on Shorecrest Drive, which is considering its own covenant that would limit short-term rentals.

"A good number of houses on the lake are being bought as second homes," Tommy Hutchins told council. "I don't have a problem with that, but our neighborhood is changing. A lot of people

are coming in from out of state, and they do not abide by the speed limits.

"You're having people coming to have a good time for a weekend or a week, and they don't care who they disrupt," he added. "Some type of control on short-term rentals is drastically needed, or our neighborhoods are going to turn into just motels with people flying in and out. It's not what we signed up for when we bought that lot."

Virginia Bell said she feels unsafe in her home and has had "strangers showing up at my doorstep in the middle of the night."

"They don't have a car and they don't look sober," she said. "My point is I want to feel safe in my own home. We moved to a small town for a reason, and that reason is disappearing. I think the council would be well advised to look at the deficits. Let us not speed to do something incomplete when we can put what is needed in the way of accountability for their sublessors."

Paul Stovall, who has lived on Shorecrest for 40 years, told council "We had a neighborhood, and it's going away."

"I'm here and I'm going to engage and I'm going to follow this," he said. "I know who I voted for in the past, and I'm going to watch this to see who I vote for in the future."

Stovall said he has called police for "noise violations, fireworks and other issues."

"I hate to waste the officers' time," he said. "They don't need this. They have other things to manage."

Nancy Johnston said the number of homes on a street that could be used as a short-term rental should be limited, adding that there are three short-term rental houses out of the eight homes on her section of the street and there is a potential for others to become rentals.

"It is very important to consider density," she said. "We could have the whole string of homes across the cove as short-term rentals."

was discussed during a council work session Tuesday night. Residents responded during a public comment session during a special called meeting that followed.

City administrator Scott Moulder said changes

have been made to the ordinance, including a requirement that only the homeowner can apply to use a home as a short-term rental and a clause affirming that covenants of neighborhoods that prohibit short-term rentals would be in force even if the council approves the ordinance.

Moulder said the ordinance would require that trash cans could not be on the street for collection more than 48 hours and must be removed from the street within 24 hours after garbage is collected. He added officials are talking about using small-



Moulder