

Seneca short-term rental proposal is the right move

Seneca's latest attempt to regulate short-term house rentals is a neighborhood-friendly ordinance that allows people who want to rent out their homes for several days a year to do so while preventing others from negatively affecting life — and home values — in the city.

Under the proposed ordinance, homeowners would be able to rent out their primary residences for 72 days a year. But the proposal won't allow the owners of secondary homes — including out-of-state property owners — from doing the same.

"You have to actually own and live in the home in order to short-term rent it," city administrator Scott Moulder said Tuesday. "It will prevent someone from Atlanta buying up four homes on one street and saying, 'I'm going to rent these things and make a ton of money' and destroy the character of the community."

Moulder believes the proposed ordinance is a "great compromise" because primary residents are accountable to their neighbors. That's based on the belief that property owners are going to be careful about who they rent to and what those renters do, because they have to live with the result of their choices.

Moulder believes Seneca City Council has developed an ordi-

nance that allows it "to take care of our residents."

"That's who you guys represent," Moulder said. "We don't represent a firm out of Atlanta. Let's take care of people who live here and prevent the intrusion of people who don't."

Seneca City Council isn't the only group that has worked to deal with the short-term rental issue. Several homeowners associations in Seneca have updated their covenants to address the issue.

"They are nice people, but they're here for a party," Lakewood Estates resident John Johnston said about short-term renters. "They don't have time to learn the rules of the lake. They don't have time to build relationships with the neighbors. All those things make it possible to live in harmony with your neighbors. Those can't happen in a week."

But not every Seneca resident lives on a street covered by a homeowners association; city council had to act.

The proposed short-term rental ordinance — if passed by city council — would allow people to rent their homes while preventing those with no real stake in the community from doing the same. We urge Seneca City Council to pass the proposed ordinance and protect its neighborhoods.