

SOME REMARKS FOR THE 9/12/2022 BELHAVEN ZONING MEETING  
REGARDING A PROPOSED ZONING CHANGE IMPACTING SHORT TERM RENTALS

I own short-term rental property in Belhaven at the address above, and have received notice of the proposed zoning changes for discussion tonight. It has occurred to me that it's possible that many people aren't aware of just how short term rentals are run, what the benefits are to the community, and what policies are in place to protect the host and the community.

1. There are not enough accommodations in Belhaven. Example: A man ran his boat aground while traveling from ME to FL. The owner of the rescue company called me, because there were no accommodations in Belhaven. He was about to drive the man to Washington at 8:00 at night!
2. Family of a prominent local official stayed at our place for the wedding. She raved about how wonderful it was. I've had guests stay with me while building their new home here, celebrating birthdays, remote workers wanting a quiet spot, young families, extended family visiting relatives, hunters and fishermen. I also offer my place for free to visiting ministers and missionaries.
3. We bring tourists to town. How do your restaurants, artists, and shops thrive without tourism?
4. I employ a local housekeeper, lawn care service, carpet cleaner, HVAC service, plumber, contractor, tree removal, mason, realtors, attorney, and others.
5. I decorate with a lot of local art and décor, and buy some supplies on the economy. I've bought furniture from shops here in town. My husband, Tom and I joke about how many trips we make—in one day—to the hardware store for tools and other items!
6. I tithe off my Airbnb income to a local church.
7. I put out literature and info on local restaurants and attractions, which my guests often visit and spend money on. They definitely buy groceries at Food Lion.
8. Quite a few hosts rent out their own homes and stay elsewhere for the duration, so they're very likely to keep the property in great condition.
9. Many of us live in the community or have family here that we visit often, so we keep our places very nice for our own use, and we want to keep Belhaven beautiful.
10. Airbnb has very stringent rules that we must follow, or they will drop us. Strict "no parties" rule; high sanitation standards, and a very proactive customer service team.
11. \$2 million in ABB insurance, plus my own homeowners, so if there's serious damage, the house will be repaired quickly. It won't sit there as an eyesore like several places currently in town.
12. People are moving away from hotels and B&B's. They don't want to see a manager or owner when they travel. They want their own space and privacy with all the amenities, and they want a quick online response if they need something. During the covid lockdowns, my place was constantly rented, because people still wanted to travel or get away without risking contact.
13. New Bern has already suspended their regulations and is rewriting to comply with the court's ruling.
14. Read the Airbnb reviews for each of our properties to see how valuable these units are to our visitors.

To summarize, as owners and hosts, we are highly motivated to make our properties the highlight of a town or neighborhood—our income depends on it. We bring improvements to an area and spend a lot of money on purchases and contractors. We attract tourists and family members who spend money on the local economy and keep shops and restaurants in business. As members of the community, we want to keep it nice as much as you do.