

Matt and Carol Miello
12 Cardinal Lane
Gales Ferry, CT 06335

We have been neighbors to a non-hosted STR for a little over a year now. The owner lives out of state and owns of another property in Ledyard, along with 3 properties in Norwich.

I have no issues with hosted STRs. I believe the owner will have a vested interest in the wellbeing of their neighbors, their home and the overall community. I would also expect a resident of a hosted STR to have some relationship with their neighbors to address issues as they arise.

Our main concern with non-hosted STRs comes from the transient nature of the home. We are fortunate to have approximately an acre of land so that we are not right on top of our neighbors, but that land still does not prevent us from seeing and hearing much of what goes on in the STR next door to us. While we have not had any major issues with the house, it is a matter of when, not if, a more significant event occurs. Additionally, the individual events are not of any particular concern, but the frequency at which they occur, certainly is. The new renters coming in have no idea if the previous renters were noisy or disruptive, and they probably wouldn't care anyway.

We often see weekends with 5 or 6 cars staying overnight, with up to 8 vehicles overnight one weekend. With this transient nature of the home, we feel it brings a higher risk of people speeding and drunk driving down our block, given that people are generally visiting on vacation or to visit the local attractions, primarily the casinos. We personally watched someone driving significantly over the speed limit and passing cars illegally on a one lane road, only to see that they were guests in the house next door.

The home next to us has a fire pit in the back yard. The property manager makes the fire pit appealing for guests by stacking firewood in a large pile in the pit. Thankfully most of the guests have been smart enough to take most of the wood off before they start a fire, but there are some who have had rather large fires going with woods nearby and a lawn covered in leaves. There were also guests who left the fire burning overnight and we woke up in the morning to see the fire smoldering in the pit from our house. Not only are we concerned that a guest will start a serious fire, we've experienced a group of young men drinking and burning beer boxes that rained ash down in our backyard one afternoon while our son was playing outside. There is also the potential for more serious issues, like sex offenders renting next door without us being aware. A permanent resident would appear on a sex offender registry. A short-term renter does not.

As parents of a 4-year old child, we look anxiously at our neighbor's home each week as a new set of "neighbors" arrives, not knowing what may be in store for us during their stay. As I stated above, we have generally been fortunate that we have not experienced significant issues like large house parties, but there have certainly been days where we needed to hurry our son into the house while he was playing outside, in order to prevent him from hearing music playing from the house or adult language that is not appropriate for a 4-year-old.

While these events could happen with a permanent neighbor, the frequency at which it occurs is something that is unique to an STR. STR tenants are generally there on vacation and to have a good

time. When it is a standing neighbor, this might happen a few times a year, but with an STR, it is nearly every guest that stays – weekends and weekdays. And while they may not need to get up the next morning while they enjoy the deck or fire pit late at night on a nice summer evening, we need to get our son up for school the next day and head into work ourselves.

In addition to the immediate impacts felt by the neighbors of the non-hosted STR, there are larger impacts to the community. A simple google search of “Impacts of AirBnBs on communities” will come up with multiple scholarly and journalistic articles detailing the negative impacts of STRs on local communities. We have provided three such articles along with this letter. It is my understanding that renters pay a 15% tax to the state at the time of booking, which the residents of Ledyard probably would not see any significant portion of. Beyond that, the financial benefits to the residents to a town like Ledyard from increased tourism is most likely negligible or insignificant. We are not a town reliant on tourism so any spending in town would be small while impacting the legitimate lodging establishments in the town and surrounding area. The existence of non-hosted STRs can be directly correlated to increases in housing prices, both for buyers and long-term renters, as housing stock is held onto by STR hosts in lieu of being sold, who are often out of state entities. These homes are no longer available to people who work in the area and want to live in a community like Ledyard. As an example, the previous owners of the home next door to me have been two NAVY families. When the home was sold to my previous neighbors in 2018, it sold for \$285k. When that family got new orders and moved away in 2021, it was listed for \$325k and sold for \$354k within a few days. We watched as multiple families looked at the property during the first open house, only to be bought by an STR investor for a significantly higher sum than the asking price. Buyers entering the housing market with the expectation of making them STRs change the math associated with a home purchase that the average home buyer just can't compete with. An extra \$10k-\$20k for a home purchase by a STR investor just means a slightly longer return-on-investment, where a home buyer may see it as not worth it or push the home past what they can afford. If we want to have a serious discussion about the lack of affordable housing in town, addressing the existence of non-hosted STRs needs to be the first issue addressed. And none of the above discussion touches on the things that can't be quantified, such as no longer having a neighbor.

Due to these issues, and the anxiety we feel each time a new set of guests arrive, we are seriously considering selling our home that we have lived in for the last 10+ years, invested in significantly and hoped to raise our family in, and moving elsewhere. We fear for the degradation and gentrification of the community that will occur if non-hosted STRs are allowed to proliferate and the impact it will have on our way of life that we have enjoyed while living in our home. The proposal being made would cap non-hosted STRs at 1% of the overall housing, which corresponds to 55-60 homes in the community based on 2020 census data and some assumed increase in the number of houses built since then. While that does not sound like much, that is still 60 potential families who will not be able to own a home in the community, never mind the impacts to the current and future populations who will no longer be able to afford to live in Ledyard. We love our town and our home, but the stress and anxiety associated with living next to an STR has created outweighs that enjoyment. We have already decided not to make any further improvements to our home until this issue is resolved and we are assured that the investment is worthwhile. What is the economic impact if others decide to do the same, withholding investment in their home for fear that it may be force to move in the future?

Based on the above, we cannot support the idea of allowing non-hosted STRs in our town. While there is some financial benefit, it does not offset the serious risks and impacts associated with non-hosted STRs to the current and future residents of the town.

While we strongly encourage the town to deny the application to allow non-hosted STRs, if the town so chooses to allow them, we would like to see further restrictions in addition to those being proposed. We would like to see:

- 1) Further reduction in the number of non-hosted STRs in town. The proposed number is 1%, we would like this to be a set number or a smaller percentage (e.g. 0.25% of total homes)
- 2) Restrictions on the number of non-hosted STRs allowed on a block or in a neighborhood (no STRS within some pre-determined distance of each other) to prevent the possibility of homes being surrounded by non-hosted STRs
- 3) Requirements for noise monitoring equipment (www.noiseaware.com) both inside and outside of the home
- 4) Requirements for STR owners to put up privacy fencing on their property at their own expense, if requested by the permanent residents that neighbor the property
- 5) Requirements that STR owners are financially liable for any damage to neighboring homes and property arising from inappropriate behavior by their guests
- 6) Requirement that owner or designated representative live within a reasonable distance from the home to address issues that arise, provide their contact information to the neighboring homes and be available 24/7 while the property is being rented

We strongly agree with the proposed limit on the number of renters allowed in the STR and believe 4 adults should be the maximum occupancy. That said, we still feel non-hosted STRs should not be permitted in Ledyard as the restrictions being proposed, along with the ones above, will still not solve all the concerns and potential problems associated with non-hosted STRs now and in the future.

We recommend that non-hosted STRs not be allowed in Ledyard and a moratorium of 2 years be put in place before the issue can be discussed again.