



C H A T H A M C O U N T Y - S A V A N N A H
METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION

"Planning the Future - Respecting the Past"

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: **APRIL 3, 2018**
TO: **THE MAYOR AND ALDERMEN OF THE CITY OF SAVANNAH**
FROM: **METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION**
SUBJECT: **MPC RECOMMENDATION**

PETITION REFERENCED:

Text Amendments to the City of Savannah Zoning Ordinance

Re: Amendments to the Short-term Vacation Rental use to the following zoning ordinance sections:

- **Sec. 8-3028(d) (Victorian Planned Neighborhood Conservation District, List of Uses)**

City of Savannah, Petitioner
File No. 18-001340-ZA

MPC ACTION:

Approval of the proposed amendments to Section 8-3028(d) to permit use # 8(a) by right in the 1-R, 2-R and 3-R zoning districts.

MPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

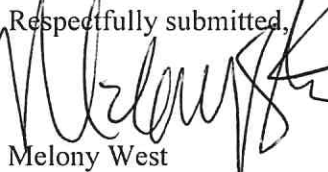
Approval of the proposed amendments to Section 8-3028(d) to permit use # 8(a) by right in the 1-R, 2-R and 3-R zoning districts.

MEMBERS PRESENT: 10 + Chairman

Joseph Ervin, Chairman	Linder Suthers
Thomas Branch	Joseph Welch
Travis Coles	Tom Woiwode
Ellis Cook	
Roberto Hernandez	
Karen Jarrett	
Tanya Milton	
Lee Smith	

PLANNING COMMISSION VOTE: Approve Staff Recommendation (11-0)

APPROVAL Votes: 11	DENIAL Votes: 0	ABSENT
Ervin Branch Cook Coles Hernandez Jarrett Milton Smith Suthers Welch Woiwode		Manigault

Respectfully submitted,

Melony West
Interim Executive Director

/jh

Enclosure

cc Luciana Spracher, Interim Clerk of Council
Brooks Stillwell, City Attorney
Lester B. Johnson, Assistant City Attorney
Jennifer Herman, Assistant City Attorney
Beth Barnes, Department of Inspections

me



Chatham County - Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission

April 3, 2018 Regular MPC Meeting

Title

D3 - ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT | Amend Section 8-3028(d) Victorian District Ordinance Use #8(a) | City of Savannah, Petitioner | File No. 18-001340-ZA

Description

Text Amendment to the City of Savannah Zoning Ordinance
Section 8-3028(d) Permitted Uses
Petitioner: City of Savannah
MPC File No: 18-001340-ZA
MPC Project Planner, Marcus Lotson

The petitioner is proposing to remove the condition that Short-Term Vacation Rentals require Zoning Board of Appeals approval in the 1-R, 2-R and 3-R zoning districts .

Recommendation

MPC staff recommends **approval** of the proposed amendments to the Section 8-3028(d) of the Savannah Zoning Ordinance.

Contact

Financial Impact

Review Comments

Attachments

📎 [Staff Report-18-001340-ZA.pdf](#)



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M E M O R A N D U M

TO: The Mayor and Aldermen, City of Savannah

FROM: The Planning Commission

DATE: April 3, 2018

SUBJECT: Text Amendments to the City of Savannah Zoning Ordinance
 Re: Amendments to the Short-term Vacation Rental use to the
 following zoning ordinance sections:

- **Sec. 8-3028(d) (Victorian Planned Neighborhood Conservation District, List of Uses)**

City of Savannah, Petitioner
File No. 18-001340-ZA
Marcus Lotson, MPC Project Planner

REPORT STATUS: Initial Report

Issue:

A request to amend section 8-3028(d) to remove the Special Use Approval requirement from use # (8a) (Short Term Vacation Rental) in the 1-R, 2-R and 3-R zoning classifications within the Victorian Planned Neighborhood Conservation District.

Background:

In 2014, the City of Savannah adopted the "Short-Term Vacation Rental" (STVR) use as a permitted use within certain mixed-use zoning classifications in the Historic District, Mid-City District and the Victorian District. This became necessary due to the proliferation of STVRs in the city. Prior to the ordinance being adopted, the City of Savannah had permitted STVRs to operate in districts where inns were permitted. Subsequently, it became necessary to more effectively regulate the use. City staff and MPC staff collaborated to create the zoning changes. Permit processes were also added to the City Code which resulted in the current regulations that govern STVRs.

Notification:

Public Notice: As this petition is a proposed amendment to the text of the zoning ordinance, public notice is not required. However, City of Savannah staff did meet with the membership of the Victorian District Neighborhood Association on March 13th to explain the proposed changes and answer questions. This is the only neighborhood where a change is proposed.

Findings:

1. A Short-Term Vacation Rental (STVR) is defined as: “An accommodation for transient guests where, in exchange for compensation, a residential dwelling is rented for lodging for a period of time not to exceed 30 consecutive days. Such use may or may not include an on-site manager. For the purposes of this definition, a residential dwelling shall include all housing types and shall not include group living or lodging uses.”
2. As a result of the exponential growth of the requests for STVRs since the 2014 amendment, the City chose to look for ways to improve the system. In early 2017 city staff held stakeholder meetings with neighborhood associations, local tourism advocates and owners of STVRs. As a result of this collaboration a number of changes were made to the process. Most notably, one of the changes that was agreed upon and subsequently adopted, was a cap on STVRs that would limit the number of non-owner occupied STVR’s in each ward where they are permitted.
3. In addition to the cap and the other administrative changes, ordinances were adopted to address where and under what conditions STVRs would be permitted. In each zoning district where STVRs were permitted, they were allowed “by right” if they met the conditions associated with the use which include; the 20% ward cap, the number of occupants permitted, and the receipt of a short-term vacation rental certificate from the City of Savannah.
4. The exception to the “by right” permission was the 1-R, 2-R and 3-R zoning classifications in the Victorian Planned Neighborhood Conservation District. In these districts, it was determined at the time that in addition to approval by the City of Savannah and meeting all conditions including being under the 20% ward cap, prospective STVR owners would also be required to receive Special Use Approval from the Savannah Zoning Board of Appeals.
5. The Savannah Zoning Board of Appeals is a quasi-judicial body appointed by the Mayor and Aldermen tasked with hearing and ruling upon request for variances from the zoning ordinance, appeals of decisions of the Zoning Administrator and requests for Special Use approval. The Special Use approval process is applied to a number of uses in the zoning ordinance in cases where permitting a use in a certain district might cause detriment.
6. The Short-Term Vacation Rental (STVR) use is currently permitted in 23 zoning districts in the City of Savannah. Only in the Victorian Districts 1-R, 2-R and 3-R classifications is special use approval required. Even within other Victorian District zoning classifications the use does not require this additional level of review and approval. The City of Savannah has determined that the existing permit process and the conditions associated with the use including the ward cap and number of permitted guests is sufficient to regulate the use.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve the petitioner's request as presented.
2. Deny the petitioner's request.
3. Approve an alternative amendment.

POLICY ANALYSIS:

Over the last three and a half years, the City of Savannah has established both an administrative and regulatory process to govern the Short-Term Vacation Rental use through a collaboration with stakeholders that evolved over time. These stakeholders included neighborhood associations, tourism professionals, STVR owners and advocates. The current process is uniformed and predictable with the exception of the required special use approval that exists for the 1-R, 2-R and 3-R zoning districts. In this circumstance, even if an applicant meets all the conditions required by the city, the use could still be denied. The City believes that the conditions and requirements of the permit process are adequate to address the use in all zoning districts.

RECOMMENDATION:

MPC staff recommends **approval** of the proposed amendments to Section 8-3028(d) to permit use # 8(a) by right in the 1-R, 2-R and 3-R zoning districts.