

**EXCERPTS**  
**PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION MEETING**  
**COLUMBIA CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBER**  
**701 EAST BROADWAY, COLUMBIA, MO**  
**February 19, 2025**

**Case Number 70-2026**

**A request by Elena Sass (owner) seeking approval to allow 1707 Nelwood Drive to be used as a short-term rental for a maximum of six transient guests and up to 210-nights annually pursuant to Section 29-3.3(vv) and Section 29-6.4(m)(2) of the Unified Development Code. The subject dwelling sought for STR operations is the western half of an existing duplex that is addressed 1705 and 1707 Nelwood Drive. The 0.46-acre subject site is located on the west side of Nelwood Drive, approximately 105 feet north of its intersection with Quail Drive.**

MS. GEUEA JONES: May we please have a staff report?

Staff report was given by Mr. Ross Halligan of the Planning and Development Department. Staff recommends approval of the conditional use permit to allow the dwelling at 1707 Nelwood Drive to be operated as a STR subject to:

1. The Maximum occupancy of six transient guests;
2. A maximum of 210 nights of annual rental usage.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Thank you. Before we go to questions for staff, if anyone has had contact with parties to this case outside of the public hearing, please disclose so now. Seeing none. Any questions for staff? Seeing none. Thank you. We will go to public comment.

**PUBLIC HEARING OPENED**

MS. GEUEA JONES: If any members of the public that wish to speak on this case, please come forward. State your name and address for the record. Three minutes for the individual, and six minutes for groups or the applicant. Start when you are ready.

MS. SASS: I'm Elena Sass, I'm a property owner, and I'm currently staying at 1705 Nelwood Drive, and this is my property I wanted for 13 years. The reason I decided to turn it into short-term rental, because I'm basically very next to Quail Drive. I couldn't get good renters long term. That property was destroyed twice, and the last time it cost me \$27,000 to put it together because the people who were renting next door to us who were living at that property at that time had the son going psychotic, and he went in the attic and he -- (inaudible) -- through the ceiling in several rooms and he broke the windows. So we just couldn't -- couldn't take it anymore. And when -- I'm staying at that property right now. My daughter is staying with me. I just want to feel safe. And when you -- when I rent the short term, most people who rent there are parents who come to see their kids in the university. It's not a party people, so it's been very quiet. Those people are screened. I have a right not to rent to someone who doesn't have a good background or reviews from other owners. And it feels amazing and improved quality of the property and quality of life in Columbia.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Thank you. Any questions for this speaker? Commissioner Stanton?

MR. STANTON: What took you so long to come into compliance? You got a note for illegal STR. So why now versus June, versus early last year, and what --

MS. SASS: Right. So --

MR. STANTON: -- took you so long to come to the light?

MS. SASS: It took me a while to fill out the application. It's rather complex, and it's required the documents which I didn't have at that time because I purchased that property 13 years ago, and I had got divorced, so the property owner should change, and then we never updated the deed, so I had to go through redoing all of the paperwork, basically, based on that.

MR. STANTON: Okay.

MS. SASS: And that property wasn't renting anyways at that time because, honestly, it's not a popular place to stay. It's not in a good area. So, you know, for a while, I thought maybe I'm just not going to do it at all, and just, you know, sell the property. But then my ex-husband agreed to transfer the property, and everything worked out.

MR. STANTON: Thank you.

MS. SASS: You're welcome.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Commissioner Ortiz?

MS. ORTIZ: How many Airbnbs are you operating in Columbia?

MS. SASS: That's the only one.

MS. ORTIZ: Okay. Thanks.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Any other questions? Seeing none. Thank you.

MS. SASS: For the record, I'm staying next door at least three to five days a month. I'm a doctor; I'm a psychiatrist, so I work, Telemed, and then I have some clients actually in Columbia who I come and see in their homes. And I survive there through my summers since it's very hot in Arizona, so in the summer it tends to be my winter residence. I love it there.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Okay. And did you say your daughter was staying --

MS. SASS: Yes. My daughter, when she's in relationship, she tends to move in with someone, but then she comes back and lives there intermittently. So recently she lives there most during the week, and then she's gone on the weekends. But she has also her own place and she'll be helping me with management. She's been -- she's been very good so far.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Thank you. Thank you. Any other questions? Seeing none. Thank you for being here tonight. Any other speakers on this case, please come forward.

MR. MITCHELL: My name is Kerby Mitchell; I'm with Son of Mine, LLC, and we own the six four-plexes that butt up to this property. Ours faces Quail -- our address is on Quail.

MS. GEUEA JONES: And what's the address of your business?

MR. MITCHELL: So -- of the business? 1441 South Victoria Avenue is the business name, but our address is on Quail at 2603, 2607, 2611, and I own four other duplexes on the street. We've been

down there since 1989. We have fought that street from top to bottom trying to make it a better place for people to live, to feel safe. I fight other landlords on that street constantly trying to accomplish this.

MS. WILSON: You've got to pull the mic closer. Sorry.

MR. MITCHELL: Oh, I'm sorry. When I first saw this public hearing, I guess I wasn't very clear on what she was wanting to do with the property. My concern was is that we have a lot of homeless traffic that comes down Quail Drive. That is a throughfare for them to go down to the end of the street, and then they get out along Hinkson Creek and whatnot, you know. And we have a lot of problems with them, as someone was saying earlier, about coming up to my tenants' houses, and asking to come in out of the rain, or charge a phone, or just things like that. So, until I got here and heard -- my only concern is who is coming and going, because, literally, the side that she was going to rent out is probably 30 feet from my fence of my parking lot. And I -- I just don't want it to become an issue with my tenants because I have a lot of long-term tenants in there, plus I don't want it to become an issue for future tenants also. So -- but if it's going to be an Airbnb, as long as -- I don't know if there's a way to regulate who is coming and going, but that was my biggest concern is just property value, you know, coming down, and just who is coming and going, you know. I have a lot of people down there to look out after, and I just want to make sure they're safe.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Appreciate that.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Commissioner Stanton?

MR. MITCHELL: Yes, sir.

MR. STANTON: The STR thing has been a journey for all of us, including the folks sitting up here.

MR. MITCHELL: It sure has, yes.

MR. STANTON: So the key to success for these, and nothing is guaranteed, we haven't taken a vote --

MR. MITCHELL: Sure. Absolutely.

MR. STANTON: -- is the communication. You see the owner behind you. It is essential that you guys communicate because good neighbors is what's going to make or break this whole thing.

MR. MITCHELL: I agree with you. I agree with you.

MR. STANTON: So --

MR. MITCHELL: Well, and this is the first time I've ever even -- even seen the owner of the property, so --

MR. STANTON: Definitely exchange, and definitely talk either way it goes.

MR. MITCHELL: Sure. Sure. Absolutely, yes. I understand.

MR. STANTON: I think you two can benefit from communication.

MR. MITCHELL: Yeah. Yeah. I saw -- and to be honest with you, just to be completely transparent, when I first came up -- when I first came here, I probably should have went and looked up

the definition for transient because, in my mind, it was another -- just she was going to let transient homeless people live there for short terms. I didn't really know how they were going to pay for it. I thought maybe there was some subsidy or something, you know, but, you know, if it's a Airbnb, you know, as long as, like I said, and I don't have a problem having a conversation because, like I said, I have -- we have tried and tried and tried on that street to make it a better street. And unfortunately, there's some landlords that just don't care, you know, so we're not one of them, fortunately, but thank you for your time.

MR. STANTON: Thank you, sir.

MR. MITCHELL: Do you have a question?

MS. GEUEA JONES: Yeah. And just to comment on the record, because we actually hear that a lot.

MR. MITCHELL: Actually -- yeah.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Transient guest is the tax term, which is why we use it.

MR. MITCHELL: Yeah.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Because it's how we are able to tax.

MR. MITCHELL: It was just a little confusing for me.

MS. GEUEA JONES: I totally get it.

MR. MITCHELL: I just -- I'm just trying to protect my investment. Like I said, we started buying property on that street in 1989, and we've put a lot of time and effort down there, and I'm just trying to protect that.

MS. GEUEA JONES: You are not even close to alone in people who are confused by the term, but we use it because of the tax code.

MR. MITCHELL: Yeah. All right. Thank you.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Thank you. Anyone else to speak on this case? Seeing none. We will close public comment.

#### **PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED**

MS. GEUEA JONES: Commissioner comment. Any Commissioner comments on this case? Seeing none. Would someone like to make a motion? Commissioner Stanton?

MR. STANTON: Madam Chair, I would like to entertain a motion.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Please do.

MR. STANTON: As it relates to Case 70-2026, 1706 Nelwood Drive, STR conditional use permit, I move to approve the requested STR CUP subject to the following: Maximum occupancy of six transient guests, and a maximum of 210 nights of annual rental usage.

DR. GRAY: Second.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Motion made by Commissioner Stanton, seconded by Commissioner Gray. Is there any discussion on the motion? Seeing none. Commissioner Brodsky, may we have a roll call.

**Roll Call Vote (Voting "yes" is to recommend approval. Voting Yes: Mr. Darr, Ms. Geuea Jones, Dr. Gray, Ms. Ortiz, Mr. Stanton, Ms. Stockton, Ms. Wilson, Mr. Brodsky. Motion**

**carries 8 to 0.**

MR. BRODSKY: The motion carries.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Thank you. That recommendation will be forwarded to City Council.