

EXCERPTS
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION MEETING
COLUMBIA CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBER
701 EAST BROADWAY, COLUMBIA, MO
October 9, 2025

Case Number 295-2025

A request by Stephen and Susan Bowles (agents), on behalf of SSBMO Properties, LLC (owners), to allow 502 South West Boulevard 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 three-bedroom, two bath home has an attached one-car garage and driveway capacity to support two UDC-compliant on-site parking spaces. The 0.29-acre subject site is located on the east side of South West Boulevard, approximately 50 feet south of Ridge Road and 100 feet north of West Lathrop Road.

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 502 South West Boulevard to be operated as a STR subject to:

1. The maximum occupancy shall not exceed six transient guests regardless of occupancy allowed by the most recently adopted edition of the International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC);
2. A maximum of 210 nights of annual usage;
3. The one-garage space shall be made available while the dwelling is in STR use.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Thank you. Before we go to questions for staff, if any of my fellow Commissioners have had any contact with outside parties to this case, please disclose so now. Seeing none. Are there any questions for staff? Just to clarify, they got two letters and then applied and there is another unregistered nearby, is that --

MR. HALLIGAN: There is no other short-term rentals within 300 feet.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Okay.

MR. HALLIGAN: And after the second -- in the midst of the second letters being sent out, they were able to apply after -- or before the requested compliance date on the second set of letters.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Thank you. Appreciate that. All right. Seeing no other questions for staff, we will go to public comment.

PUBLIC HEARING OPENED

MS. GEUEA JONES: Will the first member of the public who wishes to speak on this case please come forward. Yes. Please speak into the microphone. We allow three minutes for individuals, six minutes for the applicant or any group.

MS. MATTHEWS: Okay. Thank you.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Name and address for the record. Sorry.

MS. MATTHEWS: Pardon?

MS. GEUEA JONES: Name and address for the record.

MS. MATTHEWS: Heather Matthews, 503 West Boulevard South. So being new to this, I have some questions and I'm hoping they are appropriate for this forum. I understand that there are -- or I don't understand. There are a maximum number of units that can be in an area; is that right?

MS. GEUEA JONES: No, not exactly. If there are -- if you are within 300 feet of another one, that is a reason for us to decide to deny you, but it's weighed against other factors, it's not an automatic.

MS. MATTHEWS: So obviously I have concerns because this is a residential area primarily, and from the research that I've done, short-term rentals are not necessarily beneficial to residential areas, and particularly since it is in, in my opinion, one of the beloved area being the older section of town, so what protections do homeowners have with regards to these Airbnbs or these short-term rentals. For example, let's say the Airbnb is rented and the -- there's a lot of noise, and a loud party, what -- what do we do in that case?

MS. GEUEA JONES: So we do have a hotline that you would be able to call. The owner has to have someone within city limits who can go and respond. If there are -- remind me of the number of violations -- two violations, they get their license pulled.

MS. MATTHEWS: And how quickly do they have to respond?

MS. GEUEA JONES: They have to respond immediately.

MS. MATTHEWS: Immediately.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Yes.

MS. MATTHEWS: Okay. So -- and we apply to them if there is property destruction or something that happens?

MS. GEUEA JONES: I would also report that Neighborhood Services through the hotline. In a lot of these cases, the Airbnb owners have given their personal information to the neighbors, and I would suggest that if the applicant is here tonight, you try to get that information from them.

MS. MATTHEWS: And what do we do about security? I mean, obviously, if we're in an area with only 300 feet separating these Airbnbs and the downtown historic area is definitely an appealing area to purchase in, what do we do as more and more of the properties are -- are purchased for essentially hotel purposes? Do we have any sort of plans for increased security or protection because, essentially, the area becomes a commercial area, and we are -- we already would suffer the effects of either decreased property value because -- on the one hand, because people don't want to move into a commercial area, the area that has essentially been -- experienced a form of gentrification where the homeowners and the renters, the people who are invested in the community, have been pushed out by these -- these Airbnbs and/or increase value where people can't -- single families and renters with families can't move in. But we also have the problem of increased security. Now we have people who are coming in and out of the area who we don't know. Am I safe to put my young children in the backyard with strangers now who are now,

you know, hotels around me? What type of provisions have been made to address those things?

MS. GEUEA JONES: I would say that that is a general policing problem, and it is the same as it would be if you didn't know your neighbors, even if they live next to you for years.

MS. MATTHEWS: I think it's a little different because they -- I would know who they are. I wouldn't know these strangers, up to six in this case, but in some cases, many more. So the City hasn't really made any provisions other than general policing? All right. Thank you for answering my questions.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Thank you very much for your comments tonight. Any questions for this speaker? Thank you very much. Next speaker? Oh, we do not -- please try not to applaud just so we can keep going on between as quickly as possible. Is there someone else who wants to speak on this case, please come forward.

MS. GRAVES: Rebecca Graves, 1108 Chantilly Court. I actually came for the case following this one, but they're similar short-term rentals, and I'd like to accentuate what the previous speaker said about the detriment that short-term rentals have on homeownership. So the City of Columbia already has a pressing need for affordable housing, and a lot of these short-term rentals are in places where people could hope to buy a house as a first time or maybe a second time homeowner, and I think this is going to cut into that because real estate gets more expensive because it's more lucrative when you rent it, especially short-term rentals. So I think that weighs against putting in short-term rentals. Thank you.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Thank you very much. Any questions for this speaker? Seeing none. Next person to speak on this case, please come forward. Just come on up, ma'am.

MS. BOWLES: I'm Susan Bowles, I'm the homeowner. We have had the house for eight years. It is our second home. We spent Thanksgiving, Christmas there for the last five years. We learned about the house because we stayed there as an Airbnb person. The person had owned it for nine years before we bought it. So this home has been an Airbnb, it's nothing new. We've never had -- our neighbors, we know them. The house right next door to us just sold this fall, so I don't think it was a detriment to them. We are friends with both people on each side. They spoke to us and said they supported it, but they weren't -- they had other things going on and weren't going to come tonight. But they have met many of the people that have stayed there, especially if they've stayed longer than just the weekend. They even shared stuff from their garden with them. We've never had issues with guests that have been detrimental to the neighborhood. There hasn't been a problem, and I don't feel that -- we have kept the house up. We have installed -- we have had dead trees cut down. We've had other things done which some of the owners that live there full time on the street have not. And I feel like we're good homeowners and that we don't just use it as an Airbnb. It is a second home.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Thank you. Questions for this speaker? Oh, please stay, ma'am. Commissioner Wilson?

MS. WILSON: Thank you for coming forward. You -- hopefully, you heard their questions about security. Do you guys have any security measures?

MS. BOWLES: We have automatic locks on the door, but we are going to install some lights, you

know. We don't have those that record anything right now, you know.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Other questions? Commissioner Brodsky?

MR. BRODSKY: You mentioned that you have owned the house for eight years?

MS. BOWLES: Well, since 2018, so seven years. This is -- we're starting our seventh year -- or eighth year, we're starting.

MR. BRODSKY: Okay. And you've had it as an Airbnb this -- the whole time?

MS. BOWLES: Yes.

MR. BRODSKY: And the owner before you also had it as an Airbnb --

MS. BOWLES: Yes.

MR. BRODSKY: -- so it's going to --

MS. BOWLES: And I don't know how many -- I know we stayed there, like, nine years prior to that, so at least nine, ten years, and she had family in the neighborhood and we had two sons when we bought it and grandchildren here, and that's one reason we bought it.

MR. BRODSKY: Great. Thank you for that additional clarification. And then I did want to -- I'm not trying to put you on blast here, but just curious. You know, staff did send you a letter on June 30th and July 30th, and it took until late August to -- to submit for the CUP?

MS. BOWLES: We started gathering the stuff in July. We didn't see the one in June, so I don't know whether it went to our home here or our home there, but whatever reason. I had -- in May I had triple bypass surgery, and so things have been a little bit, you know, hectic and different at our house, and my husband had three stints two and a half weeks before I did, so we've had a great year. So I don't -- I didn't -- we didn't intentionally ignore it. I don't know whether we -- I don't know what happened. I don't know whether it got lost in the shuffle with cards and stuff, honestly, or if, you know, we thought it was just a flyer type thing, you know, from the City, but we didn't realize until we got the second one, and then we started the procedure and got stuff from the banks and got stuff from the -- from our trust and those kinds of things to get it together for them.

MR. BRODSKY: So thank you very much for -- for answering that. That's something I will probably ask of all the short-term rentals that we see going forward, so thank you very much.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Any final questions? Thank you very much for being here. Anyone else to speak on this case, please come forward. Seeing none. We will close public hearing and go to Commissioner comment.

PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED

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

MR. BRODSKY: I'll just make a quick comment. You know, I think we've had a lot of these cases where a property has been functioning as an Airbnb for quite a while, hasn't caused any issues in the neighborhood. And for me, at least, I think that's where I'm going to land on this one. So if there aren't any other comments --

MS. GEUEA JONES: Commissioner Stanton?

MR. STANTON: I just want to make a public service announcement that there is a hotline. You have been -- you have been introduced to the owner, if you didn't know who she was. Those are the fail-safes. She has the responsibility of being a good neighbor, so get her number and get the hotline number. There's things in place; we worked on this a long time. There are security measures to protect the neighborhood. And the system is in place, the system is working, so make sure you have all the tools you need to ensure that if she is allowed to have a short-term rental, that she's compliant and is a good neighbor. And all those places -- all those things are in place, so get with staff or one of us and we can get the number to you. You'll have the weapons you need.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Any other Commissioner comments? Commissioner Stockton?

MS. STOCKTON: I haven't really brought this up with all these short-term rentals, but I've lived next to several in a previous town, not Columbia, and also lived next to long-term rentals. And I'm here to testify to you that the long-term rentals were the issue, not the short-term rentals. And, in fact, they raised our home value because Airbnb owners, short-term rental owners tend to put a lot of money to be able to market those. So I'm not going to guarantee that that's going to be the case with this and all the other cases we're hearing tonight, but that was my personal experience. I think that there's a lot of safeguards around these, and I do understand the affordable housing argument, but that's why the City and this Commission, prior to me being here, has put in all these safeguards to make sure that there's not a huge high density of them. There's -- there's some guardrails, which other municipalities don't do. So I -- I think we are trying, but we still appreciate the feedback and want to continue to hear that, but I just wanted to let you know that was my own personal experience. So I can tell you lots of stories about that long-term rental, but I'll leave it there.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Any other Commissioner comments? Commissioner Wilson?

MS. WILSON: Are we ready to entertain a motion? All right. In the matter of 502 South West Boulevard, short-term rental conditional use permit request, I move to approve the requested short-term rental subject to the maximum occupancy of six transient guests, a maximum of 210 nights of annual rental usage, and the one garage space be made available while in short-term rental use.

DR. GRAY: Second.

MR. STANTON: Second.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Commissioner Gray already seconded.

MR. STANTON: Oh, okay.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Motion made by Commissioner Wilson, 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: Ms. Geuea Jones, Dr. Gray, Ms. Ortiz, Mr. Stanton, Ms. Stockton, Mr. Walters, Ms. Wilson, Mr. Brodsky, Mr. Darr. Motion carries 9-0.

MR. BRODSKY: The motion carries.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Thank you. That recommendation will be forwarded to City Council. Next case for the evening: