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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 28, 2020

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City requires Temporary Use permit for short-term rentals/AirBnBs

EAST PROVIDENCE, RI – The City had its first violators before East Providence Municipal Court this month. The property owners were in violation of a new ordinance (approved in May 2020), which takes an aggressive approach to illegal short-term rentals.

The new ordinance, introduced by Council Vice President Bob Rodericks and sponsored by Councilman Ricardo Mourato, requires property owners, who wish to rent their properties for short-term use, to apply for a temporary use permit.

“It is not the intent of the city to prohibit residents from renting their property according to state and local laws,” Council Vice President Rodericks said. “The law abiding residents should not suffer because of the few who break the law.

“Simply put, short term rentals require owner occupancy,” Rodericks added. “Our clear intention is to stop abuses as noted by several residents to the Council.”

“The City will be aggressively enforcing this ordinance,” Mayor Bob DaSilva said. “Residents living in residential neighborhoods deserve to live in and enjoy their property in peace.”

The permit, which automatically expires on January 1 of each year, is only issued if it does not cause or threaten to cause, a threat to public safety or public health, does not conflict with another previously authorized use, and the applicant shows proof of ownership.

Some of these rentals have been an incredible nuisance to neighbors with new, large rowdy groups moving in every weekend.

Short-term rentals of single-family, two-family, three-family, semi-detached or multi-family homes may be used as short-term rentals if they are owner-occupied.

If property owners wish to post their properties on AirBnB or other short-term rental websites, the property owners must live in the property/home full time and must have a City of East Providence Short-Term Rental temporary use permit.

Residents are urged to report suspected violators to the police. Offender's cases will be forwarded to the East Providence Zoning Dept., which will then prosecute the violation in East Providence Municipal Court.

If the short-term rental is rented for less than 28 days without a special use permit, the owner may incur a \$500 fine. Illegal rentals may be fined up to \$13,000 per month. Those fines may attach as lien on the real estate.

If the owner occupant wishes to rent out a portion of their property, they may do so if they acquire the temporary use permit. The permit must be annually acquired.

The owner of the short-term rental (defined as rentals of a period of less than 28 days) must also supply the following information within the home: visible printed materials with diagrams of all points of egress written in English, Spanish and Portuguese. The home must also have clearly-marked and visible fire extinguishers.