

Council Recap - November 7, 2023

Council members approved various changes to the short-term vacation rentals (STVR) program regulations Tuesday, including needing a four-fifths majority vote to lift the existing ban on new permits.

Council members also lifted the ban on new STVR permits for homeshares.

No new STVR permits have been issued in La Quinta, except in exempted areas, since August 4, 2020, when a moratorium was approved by the City Council. In May 2021, the Council voted to make the moratorium a permanent ban and included homeshares.

Exempt areas are those zoned tourist or village commercial, and communities developed to allow STVRs such as Legacy Villas, the Merv Griffin Estate, Signature at PGA West, Homewood Suites, Embassy Suites, and La Quinta Resort.

Homeshares are where the property owner remains on site throughout the rental period and is something proponents of Measure A on the November 2022 ballot sought in addition to a ban on STVRs in non-exempt residential neighborhoods. Measure A did not pass.

Under the current ordinance, existing permits can be renewed but are non-transferable. The amended ordinance will allow permits to carry over when there is a transfer of properties to trusts or entities whose beneficiaries and membership are the same as the original property owner or transfers to heirs, and do not constitute a change of ownership or result in the cancellation of an existing STVR permit.

The amended ordinance also adds an exemption for owners of large lots at least 25,000 square feet to apply for a STVR permit. They must go through an application process that includes notifying neighbors within 500 feet. Council will decide whether to grant the permit based on the merits of the application.

The amendments were approved 5-0. The ordinance comes back to Council for a second reading and vote on November 21, and goes into effect 30 days later on December 22.

Council delayed voting on whether to allow members of homeowners' associations (HOAs) to apply for an exemption from the ban in HOAs where STVRs are allowed under the Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions (CC&Rs), asking staff and the city attorney to bring it back as a separate item.

Additional highlights from Tuesday's City Council meeting:

- Council approved zoning ordinance amendments, including updating language to meet State housing law regulations for accessory dwelling units (ADUs), clarifying that they can be attached or located within a detached garage on the same property, and increasing the total floor area of an attached ADU from 800 to 850 square feet, or 1,000 square feet when there is more than one bedroom, if the primary dwelling is less than 1,600 square feet; modifying standards for tennis and game courts allowing for pickleball on private properties within specified guidelines; setting a citywide standard allowing flagpoles to be located at least 5 feet from a property line where a yard abuts open space, a golf course or a street, but continues to prohibit them on yards that abut other residential lots. Staff will return with a separate amendment allowing HOAs to determine where property owners can place flagpoles based on what is in their CC&Rs.
- Council continued to November 21 the proposed La Quinta Village apartments on the northeast corner of Washington Street and Avenue 50. The planned 252-unit complex would include 74 moderate-income affordable units and 178 market-rate. The developer made several changes to the plans, including eliminating buildings over two stories that drew opposition from neighboring residents, and changing the architectural style of the building from contemporary Mediterranean to Spanish Hacienda. Council members like the project, but because the property is listed as an affordable housing site to accommodate 280 very low- and low-income units in the City's 2022-29 Housing Element, even if approved by Council, additional alternate site or sites must be identified to accommodate the 280 units and must be reviewed and approved by the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). The developer identified a vacant lot on the northeast corner of Washington Street and Fred Waring Drive to accommodate the 280 units, which nearby residents and the property owner opposed, saying the land is zoned for commercial development. Council suggested two other properties, including land the City recently purchased on Dune Palms Road and Highway 111, which could accommodate 180 units, and property on the southeast corner of Washington Street and Avenue 50, where 64 very low- and low-income units are planned. Staff will identify other potential sites and present them to the Planning Commission November 14, then return to the Council with the commissioners' recommendations.

The La Quinta City Council meets twice monthly on the first and third Tuesday at 4 p.m. at City Hall. The next scheduled meeting is November 21. We invite the public to attend to stay in the know of all things LQ.

Mark your calendars for the December 5 Council meeting when the City hosts its annual Open House from 5 to 6 p.m. at City Hall.



If you can't make it to a meeting or missed a meeting, you can livestream or watch the video online at <https://laquinta.12milesout.com>.

Agenda packets with staff reports can be viewed on the City's website, www.laquintaca.gov, or received via email or text by signing up for Quail Mail.