October 19, 2026

Dear Commissioners Mastervich, McCloskey, Kelpe, Snow, and Wajda, and Mr. Frydl and Ms. Golomb:

This letter is in regard to the October 22, 2026 work session of the Department of Planning and Zoning and the Planning Commission to '….review proposed revisions to the Greene County Zoning Ordinance provisions governing accessory dwelling units (ADUs),' this in response to '…the new Virginia statutory framework,' which refers to Code §15.2-2292.4, which goes into effect on July 1, 2027.

As I'm sure you are aware, over the past decade many localities across the country have eliminated zoning restrictions on the placement of ADU, as a strategy to increase the stock of 'affordable' housing. This philosophy informed the decision by the state legislature to draw up SB531 / Code §15.2-2292.4.[1]

Unsurprisingly, landowners, developers, real estate agents, and housing investment groups have leveraged the relaxation of zoning restrictions on ADU in order to generate impressive profits by renting these dwellings out as short term rentals (STR) on Air BnB, VRBO, and other portals.[2]

STR associated with ADU have been the source of considerable tensions in localities. For example, in San Diego, the rental of ADU as STR has led to anger on the part of residents who have to deal with rowdy behavior on the part of the short-term tenants.[3]

I note that the text of Code §15.2-2292.4 makes zero mention of STR. Also, neither the existing language of Article 22 / the County's ADU ordinance, as well as the alterations to the ADU ordinance drawn up by Ms. Golomb, for consideration on October 22, mention STR.[4]

I know the Planning Commission shares with me the dedication to making Greene County an inviting and welcoming place to live, and the County government and staff always are responsive to the concerns of residents on issues of zoning.

In this spirit, I encourage the Commission to consider adding language to the ordinance prohibiting STR at ADU.

As an example of such language, at their October 8, 2026 meeting the City Council of Staunton reviewed (and presumably adopted) the following draft text for the City Code, Chapter 18.111, 'Accessory Dwelling Units.' [5]

18.111.030 General requirements.
Accessory Dwelling Units shall be subject to the following standards

(1) A lease term for the rental of an ADU shall be 30 consecutive days or longer. An ADU is not permitted to be used as a homestay. The primary dwelling shall not be used as a homestay if an ADU is located on the property.

If the Commission is unwilling to incorporate similar text into the Greene ADU ordinance, then perhaps the Commission could recommend to the Board of Supervisors that any ADU owner wanting to rent the dwelling as a STR should be obliged to register that dwelling in the County's STR database. ADU owners who deploy STR without registering with the County should be penalized by an escalating schedule of fines.[6]

I recognize that the ultimate decision on ADU zoning ordinance language and policy rests with the Board, but I am confident that the Commission's endorsement of a prohibition on STR in ADU would be impactful to the Board's decision-making process.

Sincerely,

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[1] https://www.schillingshow.com/2024/05/16/guest-editorial-do-accessory-dwelling-units-really-provide-affordable-housing/
[2] https://www.biggerpockets.com/blog/real-estate-1097; https://crestbackyardhomes.com/raising-bar-adu-industry-collaboration-matters/; https://www.zenbusiness.com/start-a-business/construction/adu-development/; https://www.fergusonhome.com/adu-income-property/a27268?srsltid=AU7gw4UK0jnrXP1SbQY_xX0k5yoJ6d36SUQgBprD7SC8_4BpEOVJSvJQ;
[3] https://inewsource.org/2025/09/18/san-diego-affordable-housing-short-term-rental-vacation-ban/
[4] https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title15.2/chapter22/section15.2-2292.4/, "ADU Draft Changes 9/28/2026 skg" https://greenecova.portal.civicclerk.com/event/1129/files/agenda/3492
[5] https://www.ci.staunton.va.us/agendas-minutes, link to City Council Work Session and Regular Meeting, date of 10/08/2026 pdf file, page 46
[6] https://vernonreporter.com/viroqua-city-council-reviews-proposed-short-term-rental-ordinance-aimed-at-protecting-local-housing-inventory/