



# Godfrey Village Board Debates Definition Of “Hotel”

by Dalton Brown, News Reporter  
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GODFREY - Godfrey's legal definition of the term "hotel" was the subject of much discussion and debate at this week's [Village Board of Trustees meeting](#). The need for an updated definition stems from a short-term rental operator not following the rules, then claiming to be a "hotel," according to Planning and Zoning Commission Attorney Ryan Connor.

"When we took up the issue of short-term rentals - when all those became special use permits - as soon as that happened, one of the individuals that was causing the problem that created the special use problem in the first place said, 'Well that's fine, I don't need to be a short-term rental, I'm a hotel now,'" Connor said.

When Connor looked into the village's current definition of a hotel, he said it essentially had so few guidelines that "any place where you found yourself laying your head for money" could be considered a "hotel." In an attempt to keep this person from operating a "hotel" without any of the regulations or taxes normally required of hotels, Connor proposed tightening up the village's definition of the term and drafted an ordinance to do so.

"If you're going to say that you're a hotel in the Village of Godfrey, you have to be compliant with because you better be paying your hotel taxes," Connor said.

"You can't say you're a hotel and not be compliant with the , because that's what this person was going to try to do, obviously - they were going to say they were a hotel, not function like a hotel, not be regulated like a hotel, and not pay taxes like a hotel, but say that 'I identify as a hotel.'"

While trustees agreed with the general premise of changing the definition, they disagreed with some of the technical details of Connor's ordinance, such as the minimum number of rooms required for a building to be considered a "hotel."

The ordinance originally proposed a minimum of eight rooms, a number which Connor said was "pulled out of thin air" and proved far too low for trustees' comfort. Trustee Craig Lombardi suggested a minimum of 25, which Trustee Jeff Weber disapproved of. After lots of debate and discussion, a minimum of 60 rooms was decided on; special use permits would be available for application in cases of boutique hotels or similar proposals with fewer than 60 rooms.

Trustee Rick Lauschke suggested removing some terminology from the new definition which he felt was too vague or could be interpreted too liberally - for instance, any

“place where sleeping or rooming accommodations are furnished” could be considered a “hotel” under the new definition, a phrase Lauschke suggested removing entirely. The new definition also allowed for “hotels” to be leased on an “hourly” basis, which Lauschke also suggested removing.

While Connor drafted an ordinance on the subject, it was only up for discussion at this week’s meeting, not a vote - village officials are likely to take action on the item at a future meeting once trustees’ suggestions are worked into a new version of the ordinance.

A full recording of the March 5, 2024 Godfrey Village Board of Trustees meeting is available at the top of this story, on the [Riverbender.com Facebook page](#), or on [Riverbender.com/video](#).