

October 1, 2019

Dear Mr. Banks,

I am writing to advise the Harrisonburg Planning Commission that I strongly oppose the proposed "special use permit for short term rentals" at 907 Ridgewood Road.

This permit would adversely effect all neighbors on Ridgewood Road and Oak Hill Drive. Concerns include:

1. Increased traffic and parking
2. Uncertainty in maintaining the peace and tranquility of the neighborhood.
3. Decreased residential property values

Having life long ties to this neighborhood, I am concerned for the safety and general well-being of my neighbors. This "special use permit" would allow a dangerous transient atmosphere.

I respectfully urge the Commission NOT to approve this "special use permit".

Sincerely,  
Rebecca Wilson

Rebecca Wilson  
805 Oak Hill Drive  
Harrisonburg, Virginia 22801

## Alison Banks

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**From:** Abe Shearer <shearer.abe@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 1, 2019 1:19 PM  
**To:** Alison Banks  
**Subject:** 907 Ridgewood Rd SUP

Alison - I hope you are doing well.

The purpose of this email is to convey my opposition to the SUP application for short term rentals at 907 Ridgewood Road.

To be clear, Airbnb is a great concept, and I use them occasionally when travelling. However, the Forest Hills neighborhood, which is only R-1 single family residences, is just not a suitable location for the transient nature of this concept.

There's only about 30 homes, one single road in and out, and families with young children. Having unknown visitors in and out on a day by day basis is just not a good idea in such a secluded / private area (which is likely one of the biggest reasons most of us chose to live here).

I have other concerns, but candidly, my hope is that the mere fact that the bulk of our neighborhood is opposed should be sufficient ground for denial.

Thank you,

Abe  
802 Oak Hill Drive

## Alison Banks

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**From:** Hobey Bauhan <hobey@vapoultry.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 1, 2019 3:56 PM  
**To:** Alison Banks  
**Subject:** Special Use Permit for Short Term Rental - 907 Ridgewood Road

To: Harrisonburg Planning Commission

c/o: Alison Banks, Senior Planner/Zoning Administrator

My wife Ginna and I would like to express our opposition to the request before the Harrisonburg Planning Commission from Claudia M. McClean for a special use permit to allow a short-term rental at 907 Ridgewood Road within Forrest Hills subdivision, which is a R-1, Single-Family Residential District.

We have lived at 1100 Ridgewood Road in the Forest Hills neighborhood for more than 20 years. Our concerns about the proposal include increased traffic and parking; disruption of peace and tranquility; decline in property maintenance; and decreased property values. Please maintain the character and integrity of existing historic neighborhoods such as Forest Hills by opposing this special use request.

Thank you for your consideration.

Hobey and Ginna Bauhan  
1100 Ridgewood Road  
Harrisonburg, VA 22801  
540-478-8199

## Alison Banks

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**From:** DONNA WOODRUFF <dwoodr5753@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 1, 2019 5:39 PM  
**To:** Alison Banks  
**Subject:** Potential Airbnb in Forest Hills (at 907 Ridgewood Road)

My name is Donna Woodruff. My address is 1101 Ridgewood Road. I am opposed to having an Airbnb in my neighborhood for the following reasons: the streets in our neighborhood are very narrow with no sidewalks; parking could be a problem and anyone who purchased the house if it became available in the future would automatically be able to have an Airbnb at that property. Our neighborhood has many small children walking and bicycling in the streets. Several houses in our small neighborhood have been robbed in the past.

## Alison Banks

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**From:** Alex Doyal <alex.doyal@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 2, 2019 8:18 AM  
**To:** Adam Fletcher; Alison Banks; Thanh Dang  
**Subject:** 907 Ridgewood Road Airbnb

Dear council members,

I am writing as a concerned neighbor in the division of Forest Hills. I live at 901 Oak Hill Dr.

I am against a potential Airbnb in the neighborhood. My concern is that having an Airbnb in the neighborhood would be detrimental to the cohesiveness of the neighborhood.

I have small children who like to play in the neighborhood with other children. We are fortunate to have a neighborhood with one entrance and exit points. All of the families in the neighborhood are fairly closely knit, and we know each other's children well. Introducing an Airbnb will have the possibility of more unknown entities in the neighborhood on a regular basis. And I believe, that this would be harmful for the neighborhood, as well as for the comfort level of parents in the neighborhood.

I also have concerns that introducing an Airbnb or short term rentals into the neighborhood could further decrease property values in the neighborhood.

I am very aware that we are uniquely fortunate to live in such a neighborhood of all single families, we're all the neighbors know each other, and all the children know each other. This is becoming a more rare situation for housing in Harrisonburg. I believe it is reasonable, however possible, to do what we can to preserve The neighborly feel of our neighborhood.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Regards,

Alexander Doyal

## Alison Banks

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**From:** Biesecker, Amanda Glenn - biesecag <biesecag@jmu.edu>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 1, 2019 8:25 PM  
**To:** Alison Banks; Thanh Dang; adam.fletcher@harrisonburgva.com  
**Subject:** Opposition to Special Use Permit 907 Ridgewood Road

Dear members of the Harrisonburg Planning Commission,

I write to urge you to **reject the special use permit for 907 Ridgewood Road** and avoid allowing transient strangers in this safe, friendly and quiet single-family neighborhood. I cannot emphasize enough that the use of 907 Ridgewood Road for housing transient tenants destroys the character and value of this neighborhood. Using the 907 Ridgewood Road property as a short-term rental (including Airbnb) would be detrimental to our neighborhood for the following reasons:

- 1) When I moved to Harrisonburg, I bought this home because it is a safe family neighborhood. I know my neighbors, and our children play together. They ride bikes, draw with sidewalk chalk, and walk around the block. It breaks my heart to think of the "stranger danger" conversation we will need to have if transient strangers suddenly start renting out the home across the street by the night. Our children deserve better than worrying about what strangers might be on the block while they swing in the yard, and we all want to preserve this very quiet neighborhood.
- 2) Our property values, especially those of us on this very block, will undoubtedly be materially harmed by a short-term rental. Surely, one of the selling points of this location is its family-friendly atmosphere. There are not many neighborhoods like Forest Hills within the city limits, and the location of these homes is the primary reason people buy here.

**Please, please allow us to keep this neighborhood the way it is, safe for our children to play and safe for the investment of our money in the Harrisonburg housing market.** I am grateful that the Planning Commission so carefully evaluates these permits, and I thank you for considering my letter during discussion.

Respectfully,

Amanda Biesecker, homeowner, neighbor, and mother  
910 Ridgewood Road  
540-292-4326

## Alison Banks

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**From:** hunter <hunter@mchonejewelry.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 1, 2019 9:20 PM  
**To:** Alison Banks; Thanh Dang; Adam Fletcher  
**Subject:** Opposition to Short Term Rental at 907 Ridgewood Rd

Good evening,

I wanted to say thank you for sending me a letter "Notice of Public Hearing" regarding short term rental at 907 Ridgewood Rd. I appreciate the opportunity to share my concerns.

The Forest Hills neighborhood is a R1 zoned neighborhood with all single family homes. I do not see how it would be appropriate to allow this home or any home within our neighborhood to rent out rooms or the whole house to someone who is not related to them. If multiple people who were not related wanted to rent a home, in which the homeowner did not live in, for a certain period of time (say month to month or 1 year lease) it would not be allowed within this zoning district. I realize subject to article DD that this period is limited to less than 30 consecutive days, which I feel makes the situation worse. There are people that are going to be coming and going as their rental periods start and stop and overlap with the next guests. I feel this creates a transient-like environment within a neighborhood that is all single family homes.

If this neighbor (or any homeowner within a R1) wants to rent a room or have a roommate, that is their by use right, which I have no issue with. The homeowner would be living within the home with the roommate or tenant and can ensure their tenant will exhibit proper peaceful behavior as they live within their space and our neighborhood.

I am in opposition to this short term rental special use application and any short term rental application within a R1 zone. In my opinion I feel short term rentals undermine the whole reason we have zoning ordinances. R1 is meant to be occupied by families or individuals who are making the decision to be a permanent part of a community, whether that is by purchasing a home or signing a lease to make the property their home, it is done with the intent to live there on a daily basis and be a part of that community. Having individuals come and go serves no part of a R1 neighborhood.

Thank you for the time to voice my concerns.

-Hunter Woodard  
903 Ridgewood Rd

## Alison Banks

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**From:** Elaine Behl <elainebehl@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 2, 2019 10:47 AM  
**To:** Alison Banks; Thanh Dang; Adam Fletcher  
**Subject:** 907 Ridgewood Road Special Use Permit

We are writing to encourage the Planning Commission to deny the Special Use Permit request for 907 Ridgewood Road.

This neighborhood was zoned R-1 and we purchased our property in 1984 with the expectation that it would remain so. Introducing a commercial element would create issues for families living here that historically have not been a concern. Among these are:

- 1) Transient persons who may engage in illegal activities given the proximity to I-81 and the known drug trafficking on that corridor.
- 2) Loss of the "neighborhood" feel and peace and quiet this neighborhood affords given its single means of ingress/egress.
- 3) Concern for the safety of the neighborhood children due to increased traffic, transient individuals, and possible illegal activity.
- 4) Possible decrease in property values

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Joseph and Elaine Behl  
918 Oak Hill Drive  
Harrisonburg, Va.



## Alison Banks

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**From:** Sherry Leffel <sherryleffel@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 2, 2019 2:15 PM  
**To:** Alison Banks; than.dang@harrisonburgva.gov; Adam Fletcher  
**Subject:** Special use permits

Dear Planning Commission members,

I am writing to express my opposition to the application for a short term rental request from Claudia McClean at 907 Ridgewood Road.

This neighborhood is zoned R-1, Single Family Residential District and has been such since the late 1950s.

Our neighborhood is a little different in that our streets are very narrow with very little street parking. In many places the street is so narrow that it is difficult for two cars to pass each other. If there is a car passing the school bus, usually both have to pull over into a yard (we have no curbing) to get past each other. Needless to say if there are cars parked on the street, there is even more of a problem. This will also tend to be a problem for emergency vehicles. We work very hard to maintain our yards.

There are many small children in our neighborhood and many children who ride the school bus. The bus does not stop at each house; so the children need to walk from the bus stop. Since there are no sidewalks, they need to walk on these narrow streets. I feel that adding unfamiliar traffic poses a risk to these children.

To me, the purpose of zoning is to protect all citizens. If an area is zoned R-1, then there should be no commercial businesses. Otherwise, why have zoning?

This opens this area to transient traffic and the "slippery slope" of student rentals.

Thank you for consideration,  
Sherry Leffel  
1107 Ridgewood Rd.

## Alison Banks

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**From:** Mike Frazier <mike.frazier55@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 2, 2019 3:02 PM  
**To:** Alison Banks  
**Subject:** Airbnb Special Use Permit -907 Ridgewood Road

Good afternoon Ms. Banks,

I want to email you in regards to my opposition of the request for the special use permit to allow an Airbnb residence in my neighborhood. My wife and I live nearly directly behind the home (933 Oak Hill Drive) and would prefer not to have the possibility of transient guests staying there. We're concerned that it opens up the potential to have short term renters who do not respect the peace and quiet of our neighborhood and the possibility of nuisance neighbors. With soon to be two daughters, I have always appreciated knowing my neighbors well enough that I would not be concerned if they we're playing in the backyard unsupervised.

Thank you for your consideration!

Mike Frazier

## Alison Banks

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**From:** Henriques, Carissa Ann - henriqca <henriqca@jmu.edu>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 2, 2019 3:30 PM  
**To:** Thanh Dang; Alison Banks; adam.fletcher@harrisonburgva.com  
**Subject:** Opposition to Special Use Permit

Dear Members of the Harrisonburg City Planning Commission:

I am a home owner at 911 Ridgewood Road in Harrisonburg, and on behalf of my household, I am writing to formally oppose the Special Use Permit requested by the owner of 907 Ridgewood Road (Claudia McClean).

As a parent of three young children who often play in the neighborhood via bike, scooter, and walks around the block, I am constantly concerned for the safety of my children. The additional traffic and transient populations who seek to inhabit the house adjacent to mine present a real safety concern for my children and the many others who often play in the streets between houses. Visitors to the area are often not aware of or sensitive to the safety of small children in the neighborhoods through which they pass. Short-term rentals at 907 Ridgewood would open the door to high speed vehicular traffic, unfamiliar visitors, and the possibility for domestic disturbance (noise/traffic).

Further, if a Special Use Permit is granted, it would set a precedent for future short-term rentals in our neighborhood. As we are located adjacent to the university, and very close to athletic venues, it is in our neighborhood's best interest to maintain our R-1 zoning in order to ensure the overall safety of all of our residents and integrity and value of our homes. One only has to look one street down—to Greenbrier Ave—to see how short-term rentals have degraded the appearance, safety, and value of their residences.

It is in the interest of safety of my family and the overall integrity of the neighborhood that we strongly oppose this permit. Thank you for time and attention to this matter, and I look forward to speaking with you all in the future about this concern.

Kind Regards,

Carissa Henriques  
911 Ridgewood Road  
540.246.6515 mobile

## Alison Banks

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**From:** Ashlyn Holz <holzfamily6@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 2, 2019 5:38 PM  
**To:** Alison Banks  
**Subject:** REJECT special use permit in Forest Hills

Dear Harrisonburg Planning Commission Members:

We urge you to reject the special use permit for 907 Ridgewood Road. We are relatively new in the area, and are so grateful for the actively connected Commission members.

We believe that a special use permit for this neighborhood, short-term rental and vacation rental, would be a detriment to this area. The community would not be intact as we know it. We chose this neighborhood as a quiet respite in a city, a place where we can walk safely and our kids can ride bikes in the neighborhood. We are also getting to know the neighbors and are growing close as a community of trusted families, of all types. But having a transient tenant would break down the safety and sense of community here.

We are also concerned about the property value, in that a rental tenant has little investment in the house. One attractive nature of this neighborhood is the well-kept homes and long-term investment in the properties.

Please reject the proposed short term rental, or any rental option, in this neighborhood. It isn't a place for vacationers or people who aren't committed to the longevity of the homes and the community among the neighbors.

Thank you,  
Tim and Ashlyn Holz  
924 Oak Hill Drive  
507-304-3006

## Alison Banks

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**From:** Lisa Gallagher <gallagherlj@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 2, 2019 9:39 PM  
**To:** Adam Fletcher; Thanh Dang; Alison Banks  
**Subject:** Special Use Permit Application: 907 Ridgewood Road- Short Term Rental

Dear Planning Commission,

I am writing in opposition to the special use permit application filed by Claudia McClean for short term rentals of 907 Ridgewood Road.

As Forest Hill residents, my husband and I have experienced all of the following in **broad daylight**:

1. A college aged student passed out **on** a vehicle in front of our house
2. Male urinating in the yard
3. Group of five knock down the wooden stop sign post and drag it away

None of this happened by someone renting in a house in this neighborhood. If they were short term renting, we would have even less ability to protect our children from this kind of deviant behavior. Please deny this permit request.

Sincerely,  
Lisa & Scott Gallagher  
905 Oak Hill Drive  
(540)383-8296

## Alison Banks

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**From:** Justin Henriques <jjhenriques@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 3, 2019 4:48 PM  
**To:** Thanh Dang; Alison Banks; adam.fletcher@harrisonburgva.com  
**Cc:** hwharrisonburg@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Opposition to Special Use Permit at 907 Ridgewood Road

Dear Members of the Harrisonburg City Planning Commission,

I am writing you to oppose the Special Use Permit requested by the owner of 907 Ridgewood Road. My house is a directly adjacent to this property.

As a parent of young children, I am very concerned about the increase in traffic in our neighborhood from those unfamiliar with the the roads. There are many families with young children, and it would be far too easy for individuals looking for an address or speeding around corners to miss the children riding bikes, scooters, or walking in the street, particularly because there aren't sidewalks in our neighborhood. Additionally, as special use permits transfer with from one property owner to the next, it is impossible to predict how future home owners of the property might manage and lease the property on a short term basis. Improper management could lead to many problems, including noise disturbances amongst other things.

The Planning Commission helps the city thrive through an appropriate mix of single-family residential and mixed use zoning. In this mix, it is important to keep some of the neighborhoods strictly residential. Repurposing homes for short-term rental that might otherwise be for long-term residential housing can strain an already supply-short residential housing market. Specifically for AirBnB rentals, analysis this year from the Economic Policy Institute (<https://www.epi.org/publication/the-economic-costs-and-benefits-of-airbnb-no-reason-for-local-policymakers-to-let-airbnb-bypass-tax-or-regulatory-obligations/>) finds that the costs to renters and local jurisdictions likely exceed the benefits to travelers and property owners. Their analysis suggests that AirBnB can contribute to rising home costs, less tax revenue for cities, and losses for local business.

Thank you for considering the voices from our neighborhood in your deliberations, and for your hard work in making Harrisonburg a thriving community.

Respectfully,

Justin Henriques  
911 Ridgewood Road  
(540) 246-9774