



CITY OF HARRISONBURG COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

409 SOUTH MAIN STREET, HARRISONBURG, VA 22801

OFFICE (540) 432-7700 • FAX (540) 432-7777

June 1, 2026

**TO THE MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF HARRISONBURG, VIRGINIA**

SUBJECT: *Consider a request from Kevin T. and Denise F. Goertzen for a special use permit at 1315 Carrera Lane*

**EXTRACT FROM THE DRAFT MINUTES OF HARRISONBURG PLANNING
COMMISSION MEETING HELD ON: May 13, 2026**

Chair Baugh read the request and asked staff to review.

Ms. Soffel said the applicant is requesting a special use permit (SUP) per Section 10-3-34 (7) to allow a short-term rental (STR) in the R-1, Single-Family Residential District. The +/- 30,086-square foot property is addressed as 1315 Carrera Lane and is identified as tax map parcel 18-R-16. If approved, the applicant plans to operate a short-term rental on the property. The applicant is currently operating a homestay at this location.

In 2019, the City adopted regulations associated with short-term transient lodging, commonly referred to as Airbnbs. These regulations were amended in September 2020 to create the by right “homestay” use. To operate a homestay, the property must be the operator’s primary residence, may host up to four guests, and may operate up to 90 nights per calendar year. If the operator wants to operate outside of what is permitted through a homestay, they may apply for an SUP to operate an STR.

The applicants purchased the property in October 2025 and have been operating a registered homestay. The previous property owners had operated a registered homestay since 2021. The applicants want to operate the short-term transient lodging for more than 90 nights per calendar year, and thus need an SUP to operate an STR. The applicants have stated that they will have one accommodation space, and will limit the number of guests at one time to no more than four. There is one off-street parking space and a separate entrance to the STR.

In their letter, the applicants state that the space above the garage is a 438 square foot apartment including a kitchenette, eating area, couch, queen bed, and full bath. It was noted during staff’s review that the space above the garage contains a gas stove that was installed without a permit. The applicant has been informed of this and also informed that a second kitchen is not allowed in

the space above the garage because the space is separated from and cannot be accessed from the dwelling. (Note that second kitchens are allowed in single-family detached dwellings in the R-1 district if there is “free flow” and full access throughout the unit and the living areas are not closed off to create a space that would function like a second dwelling.) A notice of violation for installing the gas stove without a permit and for having a second kitchen will be issued, and the property must be brought into compliance within the timeframe set forth in the notice of violation. While the applicant must remove the gas stove, they will be able to keep the sink, refrigerator, and have small cooking appliances in the space.

Land Use

The Comprehensive Plan designates this site as Low Density Residential and states:

These areas consist of single-family detached dwellings in and around well-established neighborhoods with a target density of around 4 dwelling units per acre. The low density residential areas are designed to maintain the character of existing neighborhoods. It should be understood that established neighborhoods in this designation could already be above 4 dwelling units per acre.

The proposed SUP does not add additional dwelling units or increase density.

Transportation and Traffic

A traffic impact analysis (TIA) was not required for the SUP request.

Public Water and Sanitary Sewer

Staff has no concerns with the requested SUP regarding water and sewer matters.

Housing

The City’s Comprehensive Housing Assessment and Market Study (Housing Study) places the subject site within Market Type B, which has “neighborhoods [that] are characterized by high income earning households, large volumes of housing sales and lower population growth.” The Housing Study further notes that houses in these markets are quick to sell and that “[p]riorities and policies that are appropriate to Market Type B areas include the preservation of existing affordable housing while at the same time working to increase access to amenities.”

The proposed STR is located in a finished spaced above the attached garage. The property is zoned R-1, where only one single-family detached dwelling is allowed. The request does not remove a dwelling unit from the long-term rental housing inventory.

Public Schools

If the special use permit is approved, no additional dwelling units would be added to the property; therefore, the student generation is zero.

Conclusion

After review of this request, staff believes it shares similar characteristics to other applications for STRs that have received approval. Staff recommends approval of the SUP with the following conditions:

1. All STR accommodations shall be within the existing accessory dwelling above the detached garage described in the application.
2. There shall be no more than one (1) STR guest room or accommodation space.
3. The number of STR guests at one time shall be limited to four (4).
4. Minimum off-street parking spaces do not need to be delineated and can be accommodated utilizing the driveway or other areas on the property.
5. Prior to operation, the operator shall submit to City staff a completed Short-Term Rental Pre-Operation Form. Furthermore, the operator shall maintain compliance with the items identified in the Pre-Operation Form when short-term rental guests are present.
6. If in the opinion of Planning Commission or City Council, the short-term rental becomes a nuisance, the special use permit can be recalled for further review, which could lead to the need for additional conditions, restrictions, or the revocation of the permit.

Ms. Soffel asked if there were any questions.

Chair Baugh invited the applicant or applicant's representative to speak to their request.

Kevin and Denise Goertzen, the applicants, came forward to speak to their request. Ms. Goertzen said we are open for any questions you might have. We are in the process of closing up the gas line and adding a two-burner electric stove.

Mr. Goertzen said not an installed stove but have a hot plate.

Councilmember Dent said Thanh, is that okay?

Ms. Dang indicated yes.

Vice Chair Porter said you have operated this as a homestay previous to this point?

Ms. Goertzen said since October.

Vice Chair Porter said and no problems or issues? Any concerns from your neighbors?

Ms. Goertzen said we have issued letters to all of our neighbors. We have talked to most of them in person, and they are very supportive.

Vice Chair Porter said thank you for being proactive.

Chair Baugh asked if there were any more questions for the applicants. Hearing none, he opened the public hearing and invited anyone in the room or on the phone wishing to speak to the request.

Councilmember Dent said this is the most detail I have seen about the stove regulations.

Panayotis Giannakouros, a City resident, called in to speak to the request. He said Mister Chair, this is yet again a short-term rental which will almost surely be approved by City Council. Today, I would like to take the opportunity to look at the zoning that was described along with this short-term rental, R-1 residential, and to ask Planning Commission if we could start to rethink our zoning categories, what our zoning categories are for. Up to now, our zoning categories have focused on a desirable thing keeping harmful uses away from people, but it has also had a component of grouping certain types of living together which implicitly groups people together. What short-term rentals have tested in the several years that they have been brought one at a time before City Council... this zoning can also be used to keep people separated by their occupation and historically it has been by race. We need to have a thorough reconsideration of what our zoning is for. Our proposed zoning foundation for the Zoning [Ordinance] rewrite does not do that. It does not ask, "what is the goal of zoning?" I would hope that Planning Commission would initiate a thorough review of what the goals of our zoning are driven by a public input process. You are the body that initiates motions. Staff cannot do so. Please follow the spirit and the letter of that law to initiate a thorough review of our zoning so that issues like short-term rentals will not have to have us continually reinventing the wheel and saying Harrisonburg does not want to segregate people. It does not want to treat equally situated neighborhoods the same. It wants to recognize that there have been historic harms. Repair the historic harms and realize that we go into a new future of climate crisis and that takes stock of those resources and zones around sustainable and resilient life instead of continuing to carry forward the separating people from uses and separating people from each other. Thank you, Mister Chair.

Chair Baugh closed the public hearing and opened the matter for discussion.

Commissioner Jezior said the land is already being used. The house is already being used for this use, so it is just adding some more days. I do not think it is going to have any effect on the neighborhood or surrounding area.

Councilmember Dent said I have one question. I heard "registered homestay." I did not realize homestays had to be registered. What does that mean?

Ms. Soffel said it requires an annual registration with Community Development as well as the business license.

Councilmember Dent said I thought homestay was by right that you could do. You charge for it?

Ms. Soffel said it is by right, however, they have to register so that we know where it is occurring. They pay a \$25 fee to register it and that way they also ensure that they get their proper business license and taxes and so forth.

Commissioner Seitz said I move that we approve the request for special use permit at 1315 Carrera Lane with the stated conditions.

Commissioner Jezior seconded the motion.

Chair Baugh called for a roll call vote.

Commissioner Seitz	Aye
Commissioner Jezior	Aye
Councilmember Dent	Aye
Commissioner Alsindi	Aye
Commissioner Kettler	Aye
Vice Chair Porter	Aye
Chair Baugh	Aye

The motion to recommend approval of the special use permit request passed (7-0). The recommendation will move forward to City Council on June 9, 2026.