



From the desk of  
**DEAN TRANTALIS**  
Fort Lauderdale City Commission • District II

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# Vacation rental rules lack enforcement

## City needs to do better to prevent neighborhood problems created short-term renters

Almost 18 months have gone by since the City Commission agreed to strictly regulate vacation rentals. The decision was met with great fanfare from residents who had long been upset by the actions of people who bought property just to rent them out on a transient basis.

Unfortunately, the promised enforcement has turned out to be little more than words. After all this time, only a limited number of properties have registered with the city as required, and complaints about rowdy vacationers and their garbage and traffic continue to roll into City Hall on a daily basis.

Some cases are incredibly brazen. One home on Castilla Isle was the site of a major party in mid-December that lasted until the wee hours before dawn. There were hundreds of guests, live DJs and a cash bar. Some partiers even arrived by golf carts from parking lots on the beach. Needless to say, surrounding homeowners were not happy.

There are some owners who are very responsible, who have registered and kept their properties from being turned into a scene of Animal House. But nothing is more frustrating than when you pass a law designed to help people and then watch weeks turn into months of minimal enforcement by those tasked with that responsibility. No matter how many times I have brought this to the attention of the city



manager, it seems to fall on deaf ears.

The state legislature restricts how much enforcement we can legislate. However, the ordinances we passed are very straight-forward.

Any person operating a vacation rental must register with the city and have the property inspected to ensure that it meets minimum standards. Owners must keep a guest registry, have a local 24/7 contact to address emergencies, and post pertinent information on laws about noise, trash and parking. There are also limits on the number of guests and where they may park.

Still, just a few more than 200 properties have registered. That seems extremely low. Just a cursory scan of vacation rental websites shows thousands of properties are available as vacation rentals. Since we enacted our first laws in 2015, why are we still behind the 8-ball?

Now we're told that Code Enforcement recently signed a contract with a company that will scour vacation rental web sites for properties listed in Fort Lauderdale. They'll turn the lists over to code officers to investigate if the properties are registered and complying with the law. Really? What have these investigators been doing all this time?

Our new Acting Police Chief Rick Maglione says he'll now pitch in with an aggressive plan to deal with short-term rental issues. But, he says he needs to buy some equipment like noise meters and to train officers before we will see results.

Let's hope we finally see progress because these rogue vacation rentals with their hard-partying guests are devaluing our neighborhoods and diminishing the quality of life of those who call Fort Lauderdale home. Our commission district has been heavily impacted, not just the Las Olas Isles and neighborhoods on the barrier island but also inland communities like Poinsettia Heights and Victoria Park.

Here's some other news from around District 2:

### Middle River Terrace

I'm proud to announce that playground equipment will soon be installed in Middle River Terrace Park. The city signed an agreement with KaBOOM!, a nonprofit that helps provide community playgrounds.



Middle River Terrace Park lacked playground equipment, and residents have worked for several years to change that. Without KaBOOM!'s help, city long-range budget plans scheduled a playground to be added in 2020. The playground is expected to be built on June 2 with the help of community volunteers.

### Sunrise and 15th

I'm also pleased to announce that the city has finally signed a contract to remedy the extreme flooding that regularly occurs at the intersection of Sunrise Boulevard and Northeast 15th Avenue following rain storm. Work should begin shortly.

We hoped the flooding would decrease as a result of the Florida Department of Transportation's rehabilitation work on Sunrise last year. However, the opposite occurred. FDOT and the city discovered that construction crews unintentionally terminated the stormwater connection at this location, causing more water to pond around the drain.

Sincerely,







Commissioner Trantalis talks to residents before receiving a Community Partner for Equality award from Equality Florida at Nick's Italian Restaurant.



Commissioner Trantalis joins his colleagues in honoring builder Jorge Perez during an annual tribute event by Riverwalk Fort Lauderdale at the Riverside Hotel.



Commissioner Trantalis joins his colleagues in marching down Las Olas Boulevard during the annual St. Patrick's Day Parade and Festival.



Commissioner Trantalis welcomes Acting Police Chief Rick Maglione to his quarterly neighborhood crime meeting at the Iron Workers Union Hall.



Commissioner Trantalis and Mayor Jack Seiler help break ground on the Wave on Bayshore condominium project in the North Beach Village area.



Commissioner Trantalis joins Andrew Gordon, president of the Victoria Park Civic Association, and other residents at the neighborhood's annual spring festival.