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Fact or fake: Did a Winter Park candidate's Airbnb rentals violate city rules?



Pete Weldon (left) and Todd Weaver (Orlando Sentinel staff file)

By **Mike Lafferty**

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The statement

Spring is in the air, which means it's the time of year when Winter Park candidates go for the throat. This year only one of the two open seats is contested. Incumbent [Pete Weldon](#), first elected in 2016, is facing challengers [Todd Weaver](#) and [Barbara Chandler](#) in the nonpartisan race. Voters go to the polls on [March 12](#).

Weldon has accused Weaver of violating city rules for short-term rentals. We're looking at this statement, which was part of a longer email from Weldon to supporters: "Todd has been running an AirBNB out of his home since at least 2016 and stopped last May when he decided to run for city commission. He has attained status as an 'AirBNB Super Host,' renting his place for many short term stays in violation of our laws for years."

The facts

Was Weldon right about Todd Weaver violating the city's rules by renting his home?

Winter Park is well-known for its attractive, wealthy neighborhoods, and the [city's code prohibits](#) renting a residence for less than one month. In January, the city received an anonymous email complaint about residents violating the city's rules on short-term rentals. The email included [a link](#) to

This communication is not inconsistent with the numerous short term rentals observed as advertised on AirBnB within a City of Winter Park residential neighborhood. There are multiple single family properties (pink provided below) being advertised and subsequently utilized as short term rentals. As is evident according to the reviews contained within the respective AirBnB advertisements as well as the observed non-Florida vehicle tags, that these properties are being used as short term rentals. The properties are located on the east side of the City of Winter Park, near the intersection of US Highway 168 and US Highway 421, near the intersection of US Highway 168 and Lake Bell Drive and other nearby streets within the neighborhood that are not functioning according to the residential zoning / code of the City. The residential area is primarily zoned for Model Code: 01 - Single Family Residential and Type Code: 0103 - Single Family Class III. It also appears that at least one property is utilizing a detached building as a short term rental. The information provided below is a public record within the OCAPPL.org website, is permitted as a FDOT - FDEQ - FDC - Gap. Please address accordingly.

Thank You!

Lakefront Cottage in Winter Park, Florida

Winter Park

- Entire cabin
2 guests 1 bedroom 1 bed 1 bath
- Sparkling clean
15 recent guests said this place was sparkling clean.
- Great location
90% of recent guests gave the location a 5-star rating.
- Great check-in experience
100% of recent guests gave the check-in process a 5-star rating.

Enjoy the lake, the quiet/ comfortable interior and outdoor spaces, while being close to downtown Winter Park and the central Florida attractions. Kayak around the spring-fed lake, or sit outside on either patio space and enjoy the views, the birds and the breezes.

Due to local ordinance, the cottage has a 30-day minimum rental period.

The bottom line

Weaver acknowledges that he had been renting the cottage next to his main home since 2016, and that guests often did not stay the minimum length of time required by the city. But Weaver says he was unaware of that rule and, once he learned of it, changed the ad to indicate a minimum 30-day stay was needed. That language is

Winter Park City Commissioner Pete Weldon said one of his challengers, Todd Weaver, has been renting his home in violation of city rules. Weldon's statement is not technically accurate because Weaver was renting a cottage on the property, not the home where he lives. However, his main point, that the rentals on Weaver's property violated city rules on short-term rentals, is correct. We rate Weldon's statement **Mostly Fact**.

Ratings categories: We rate statements as Fact, Mostly Fact, Mostly Fake or Fake. If you hear or read a statement you want checked go to [orlandosentinel.com/factorfakeform](https://www.orlandosentinel.com/factorfakeform)

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