

Re: Bill 6-23; ZTA 23-01

Housing-Shared Economy Rental/Access Residential Uses Sharing Economy Rental #Sharing Economy #Private Pool Rental

Dear Council Members,

As a resident, long-standing taxpayer, and homeowner in Montgomery County, I write in opposition to the measures referenced above for a number of common-sense reasons. I am also writing to share my personal experience, in the hope that this does not happen to others.

First let me say that this is not “sharing” and should not be referred to as such—The Harvard Business Review debunked the nomenclature back in 2015 in their article, “The Sharing Economy Isn’t About Sharing at All.” Let’s not sugar coat things. This is a for-profit scheme in which one individual household benefits while the neighbors collectively pay the cost as their “commons” is agressed, as the safety, peace and tranquility of residential neighborhoods is harshly compromised.

I speak from personal experience. I live next door to a family that has been renting their pool since 2020. Our entire block has been disturbed. During the season (extended by a heater), there are cars morning, noon and night. Like a beach parking lot, there are groups of individuals in bathing suits, carrying floaties and equipment, while others sit parked outside waiting their turn.

I have nothing against these individuals fortunate enough to be able to pay \$60 hour and up to use a private pool, but I now have a stream of strangers walking past my side kitchen door to get to the rental pool — startling me and my family every time as groups pass through what used to be a private safe space. Some come to my house and have to be redirected, some wave as they pass, some kids run screaming by.

Noise-wise, it’s like a party when a group arrives, so much so that I do not use my own back patio any more, and keep my doors and windows closed. So much so, that my neighbors across the street, down the block and around the corner see the cars, hear the noise, and ask me what is going on. This is not like the noise that a single family and residents might produce from time to time, who have an absolute right to enjoy their homes. This is a constantly renewed stream of paying “guests” seeking to extract the maximum enjoyment from their paid time poolside.

I realize I am fortunate to live in a residential zone. But Montgomery County is largely residential—that is its comparative advantage, respect for zoning its hallmark. Is the Council going to agress the entire County’s tranquility so that a few individuals can benefit—and more than anyone the Swimply app, which we note is investing heavily in this campaign?

No jurisdiction in the country has legalized Swimply, and for good reason. As others have pointed out, it poses a danger to users health and safety, and will be impossible for the County to regulate. With all due respect, I am disappointed to see this nationally recognized County cave to these special interests.

I urge you to vote down Bill 6-23, which will benefit a privileged few while disturbing the safety, health, peace and tranquility of many, and, as on our block, sadly, will hamper many communities’ ability to enjoy respectful neighborly relations.