

Phil Robinson remarks 6/9/22

1. I would like to voice some concerns and bring to light some inconsistencies that I see in the Scooter Ordinance being voted on tonight.
2. There is a statement in the ordinance that states that it wants to prohibit motorized skateboard and scooters for hire in the town of Irvington because it is "inconsistent with the comprehensive plan, and inappropriate for the health, safety and welfare of the citizens".
3. I take it to mean that such scooters cannot be rented by Tides Inn, Windswept, and Camp Irvington.
4. Page 31 of the comprehensive plan under "Key Takeaways" in the "Walking and Biking" section states "the benefits of investing in alternative forms of transportation within the Town include increasing accessibility for existing and future residents and visitors which in turn bolsters the village atmosphere that the Town has carefully cultivated throughout its history.Notably the same accessibility is often desired by young families, therefore investing in an expanded transportation network is an important step in ensuring that the town is providing for both current and future residents".
5. I am not trying to use the comprehensive plan argument to dissuade you from passing this ordinance, I am using it to say, don't include boilerplate language in an ordinance which may not be true.
6. The second issue is that the definition of motorized skateboard or scooter for hire is lifted directly from Virginia Code 46-2.100...verbatim....except the last phrase where it provides an exception for "personal assistive mobility devices" State definition also excludes "electric power assisted bicycles".....this exclusion does not appear in the Irvington definition, and I think we need to be consistent with state law in our definitions. In addition, Power Assisted bicycles are here, they look like, operate, and go just as slow as regular bicycles. I see no reason you can rent a manual bicycle, but can't rent a Power Assisted bicycle.and do we want to encourage use of the Tri Way trail when it opens up? This is a way to do it.
7. The issue at hand with scooters is the specific business model of bird scooters. I don't object to the scooters themselves, I see them around town, and I use them in DC. The objection to the Bird scooters is the abandonment issue that is the business model. I would suggest legislating against that particular issue, saying that abandoned bicycles, scooters, etc on town sidewalks, roads, and property can be confiscated by town staff (or a contractor) and storage fees and fines imposed. It will keep bikes on bike racks, and will make it unprofitable for scooter companies.
8. If a Bird scooter opens up in Kilmarnock, Pittman's Corner or White Stone, this proposed ordinance will not prevent anyone from taking a ride to Irvington, and dumping their scooter on an Irvington sidewalk
9. I suggest you reexamine what you are trying to do here and legislate specifically against what you find objectionable, not the scooters themselves. You are only limiting local businesses by passing this ordinance, and not actually addressing the objectionable issue.
10. Consider section 91 of the town code under "nuisances" similar to unmown grass or abandoned cars. A ordinance saying the town can pick up bikes, scooters, etc that are not stored on private property or in a suitable bike rack, may go a long way to solving the particular issue at hand.